

**JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF SOMERSET
RIVERS AUTHORITY (PLEASE NOTE – ALL
PUBLIC MEETINGS ARE TAKING PLACE
VIRTUALLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE).**



**Friday 12 February 2021
2.00 pm Virtual Meeting**

To – The Chair and members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority

Cllr S Coles (Chair) (Somerset West & Taunton), Cllr John Hunt (Vice-Chair) (Somerset CC), Cllr B Smedley (Sedgemoor), Cllr A Betty (Sedgemoor), Cllr A Groskop (Somerset CC), Cllr L Lisgo (Somerset West & Taunton), Cllr P Maxwell (South Somerset), Cllr S Osborne (South Somerset) and D Vigar (Parrett Internal Drainage Board) and W Welland (Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board)

All Somerset County Council Members are invited to attend.

Issued By Scott Wooldridge, Strategic Manager - Governance and Democratic Services
– 4 February 2021

For further information about the meeting, please contact Jamie Jackson on 01823 359040 or Email: jajackson@somerset.gov.uk or Fiona Abbott on 01823 357332 or Email: fabbott@somerset.gov.uk

Guidance about procedures at the meeting follows the printed agenda.

This meeting will be open to the public and press, subject to the passing of any resolution under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This agenda and the attached reports and background papers are available on request prior to the meeting in large print, Braille, audio tape & disc and can be translated into different languages. They can also be accessed via the council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

Are you considering how your conversation today and the actions you propose to take contribute towards making Somerset Carbon Neutral by 2030?



RNID typetalk

AGENDA

Item Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority (Please Note – all public meetings are taking place virtually until further notice).- 2.00 pm Friday 12 February 2021

****Public Guidance notes contained in agenda annexe****

1 Membership update (Pages 11 - 14)

To update the Panel on changes to membership since the last meeting.

Mendip Council - 2 vacancies on the Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Cottle and Cllr Leyshon have both stood down as members on the Panel. Mendip Council have advised that they intend to fill the vacancies at its Council meeting on 22 February 2021.

The current terms of reference of the Scrutiny Panel are attached for information.

2 Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair for 2021

To seek nominations for the Chair and Vice Chair positions for 2021.

3 Apologies for absence

4 Declarations of Interest

Details of all Members' interests in District, Town and Parish Councils can be viewed on the Council Website at [County Councillors membership of Town, City, Parish or District Councils](#). The Statutory Register of Member's Interests can be inspected via request to the Democratic Service Team.

5 Minutes from the previous meeting held on 17 July 2020 (Pages 15 - 20)

The Panel will consider the accuracy of the attached minutes.

6 Public Question Time

The Chair will allow members of the public to ask a question or make a statement about any matter on the agenda for this meeting. **These questions may be taken during the meeting, when the relevant agenda item is considered, at the Chair's discretion.**

Item Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority (Please Note – all public meetings are taking place virtually until further notice).- 2.00 pm Friday 12 February 2021

7 **Quarter 2 2020/21 Finance Report** (Pages 21 - 26)

To consider the report.

Note:

The 2020/21 detailed commercially sensitive update has been circulated to the Panel.

8 **SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget 2021-22** (Pages 27 - 46)

To consider the report.

Note:

The Confidential 2021-22 enhanced programme list with costs (Appendix 3 to the report) has been circulated to the Panel.

*** **Possible exclusion of the press and public**

Please note: -

Although the main reports for **agenda items 7 and 8** are not confidential, there are supporting appendices to these agenda items, available to the Panel, which contain exempt information and are therefore marked as '**confidential – not for publication.**'

At any point, if the Panel wishes to discuss information within the appendices then the Panel will be asked to agree the following resolution to exclude the press and public:

Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider passing a resolution under Regulation 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the press and public from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, within the meaning of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:

Reason: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Item Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority (Please Note – all public meetings are taking place virtually until further notice).- 2.00 pm Friday 12 February 2021

9 **Heart of The South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Project Update**
(Pages 47 - 48)

To consider the report.

10 **Flood Action Plan Review**

Verbal Update

11 **Raising Awareness of Riparian Responsibilities** (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider the report.

12 **Date of next meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 2 July 2021 – 10.00 – 13.00.

13 **Any other urgent items of business**

The Chair may raise any items of urgent business.

Agenda Annexe

Guidance notes for the meeting

1. **Council Public Meetings**

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 have given local authorities new powers to hold public meetings virtually by using video or telephone conferencing technology.

2. **Inspection of Papers**

Any person wishing to inspect Minutes, reports, or the background papers for any item on the Agenda should contact the Committee Administrator for the meeting – Fiona Abbott on Tel: 01823 357332 or email fabbott@somerset.gov.uk or democraticservices@somerset.gov.uk Papers can also be accessed via the Council's website on www.somerset.gov.uk/agendasandpapers

Printed copies will not be available for inspection at the Council offices as this requirement was removed by the Regulations.

3. **Members' Code of Conduct requirements**

When considering the declaration of interests and their actions as a councillor, Members are reminded of the requirements of the Members' Code of Conduct and the underpinning Principles of Public Life: Honesty; Integrity; Selflessness; Objectivity; Accountability; Openness; Leadership. The Code of Conduct can be viewed at:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/organisation/key-documents/the-councils-constitution/>

4. **Minutes of the Meeting**

Details of the issues discussed, and recommendations made at the meeting will be set out in the minutes, which the Committee will be asked to approve as a correct record at its next meeting.

5. **Public Question Time**

If you wish to speak, please tell Fiona Abbott the Committees Administrator, by 5 pm 3 clear working days before the meeting date. Questions must directly relate to an item on the Committee's agenda and must be submitted in writing by the deadline.

If you require any assistance submitting your question, please contact the Democratic Services Team on 01823 357628.

At the Chair's invitation you may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the Committee's agenda – providing you have

given the required notice. You may also present a petition on any matter within the Committee's remit. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total.

A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting, after the minutes of the previous meeting have been agreed. However, questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting may be taken at the time when each matter is considered.

You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take a direct part in the debate. The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.

If there are many people present at the meeting for one particular item, the Chair may adjourn the meeting to allow views to be expressed more freely. If an item on the agenda is contentious, with a large number of people attending the meeting, a representative should be nominated to present the views of a group.

An issue will not be deferred just because you cannot be present for the meeting. Remember that the amount of time you speak will be restricted, to three minutes only.

In line with the council's procedural rules, if any member of the public interrupts a meeting the Chair will warn them accordingly.

If that person continues to interrupt or disrupt proceedings the Chair can ask the Democratic Services Officer to remove them as a participant from the meeting.

6. **Meeting Etiquette**

- Mute your microphone when you are not talking.
- Switch off video if you are not speaking.
- Only speak when invited to do so by the Chair.
- Speak clearly (please state your name before speaking)
- If you're referring to a specific page, mention the page number.
- Switch off your video and microphone after you have spoken.

7. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

If when considering an item on the agenda, the Committee may consider it appropriate to pass a resolution under Section 100A (4) Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 that the press and public be excluded from the meeting on the basis that if they were present during the business to be transacted there would be a likelihood of disclosure of exempt information, as defined under the terms of the Act.

If there are members of the public and press listening to the open part of the meeting, then the Democratic Services Officer will, at the appropriate time,

remove the participant from the meeting.

8. **Recording of meetings**

The Council supports the principles of openness and transparency. It allows filming, recording and taking photographs at its meetings that are open to the public - providing this is done in a non-disruptive manner. Members of the public may use Facebook and Twitter or other forms of social media to report on proceedings. No filming or recording may take place when the press and public are excluded for that part of the meeting. As a matter of courtesy to the public, anyone wishing to film or record proceedings is asked to provide reasonable notice to the Committee Administrator so that the relevant Chair can inform those present at the start of the meeting.

A copy of the Council's Recording of Meetings Protocol is available from the Committee Administrator for the meeting.

This page is intentionally left blank

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel Terms of Reference

Introduction

1. The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) was launched on 31 January 2015 to play a key role in flood protection for the county. It is run by a Board of partners including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Somerset Internal Drainage Boards, the Lead Local Flood and Highway Authority (Somerset County Council) and the other Somerset Local Authorities in their roles as Flood Risk Management Authorities.
2. The SRA Board is to provide a strategic overview of the continued delivery of the Somerset Flood Action Plan; Flood Risk and Water Level Management in Somerset; and to provide a public forum and single point of contact for collective decision-making in respect of Flood Risk and Water Level Management in Somerset.
3. The SRA Board also has responsibility for identifying, prioritising, sourcing funding and overseeing the delivery of additional flood risk and water level management work across the whole of Somerset.
4. At its 23 March 2016 Board meeting, the SRA Board agreed to the establishment of a Joint Scrutiny Panel (similar to the Joint Waste Scrutiny model), which would meet twice a year, at the most critical and important times. This would ensure that officer attendance at Scrutiny Committees would be minimised, whilst providing all relevant partners with the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the SRA Board.

Role of the Joint Scrutiny Panel

5. To examine the activities of the SRA and provide assurance to the SRA's constituent councils and partners that it is operating effectively.
6. To encourage wider involvement in the work of the Somerset Rivers Authority.

Membership

The Joint Scrutiny Panel shall consist of two non-executive elected members from each of the five Somerset councils and one from each Internal Drainage Board, totalling 12 Panel members.

It is a matter for each Local Authority and the Internal Drainage Boards to nominate or terminate the appointment of members serving on the Panel. The length of appointment is a matter for each partner represented on the body.

Meetings

The Joint Scrutiny Panel will meet twice a year for the business stated. Additional meetings will be arranged as required.

The date and time of each meeting will be agreed by the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel, in conjunction with the support officer.

The host authority will be responsible for issuing the papers and producing the meeting notes to all attendees. This will be done electronically. The Panel member and/or the Local Authority or Internal Drainage Board they represent will be responsible for any additional costs or services, including:

- Any printing or stationery requirements
- Any travel and subsistence expenses incurred i.e. car parking costs, fuel
- Any equipment required for site visits, i.e., appropriate footwear, hard hat, etc

Quorum

The quorum for the Joint Scrutiny Panel shall be 6 representatives, with a minimum of 1 representative from 4 separate partners.

Election of Chair

The Joint Scrutiny Panel shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair annually.

Agenda Items

The Scrutiny Panel Chair and Vice-Chair shall agree each meeting agenda in consultation with the support officer and liaison with the Senior Manager of the Somerset Rivers Authority.

Agenda Items for the next meeting shall be a standing item on the Panel's agenda.

Voting

It is intended that agreement will be reached by consensus, however if a vote is required each Panel Member will have one vote. In the event of a tie the Chair shall have the casting vote.

Members' Conduct

Members of Local Authorities and Internal Drainage Boards on the Joint Scrutiny Panel will be bound by their own Codes of Conduct. All Panel Members will need to comply with the principles of the Host Authority's Members' code of conduct as it applies to the declaration of interests, and compliance with the principles of public life set out by the Nolan Committee on Standards in Public Life.

Panel members are encouraged to participate fully in meetings, but must be aware of the limitations in capacity of officers to respond to detailed, individual queries between meetings.

Declarations of Interest

Members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel must declare any interest during meetings of the Panel (and withdraw from the meeting if necessary) in accordance with their Council's Code of Conduct or as required by law.

Openness and Transparency

All meetings of the Joint Scrutiny Panel will be open to the public unless it is necessary to exclude the public in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Confidentiality

In accordance with their Council's Code of Conduct, elected Members of the Joint Scrutiny Panel must not disclose any information considered 'exempt' in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Host Authority

The Joint Scrutiny Panel will be hosted under Local Government arrangements by Somerset County Council and supported by officers from the County Council's Democratic Services team.

Review of Terms of Reference - The Joint Scrutiny Panel will review its Terms of Reference on an annual basis.

The Terms of Reference were last reviewed and approved at the meeting held on 20 September 2019.

**JOINT SCRUTINY PANEL OF SOMERSET RIVERS AUTHORITY
(PLEASE NOTE – ALL PUBLIC MEETINGS ARE TAKING PLACE
VIRTUALLY UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE).**

Minutes of a Meeting of the Joint Scrutiny Panel of Somerset Rivers Authority held on
Friday 17 July 2020 at 10.00 am

Present: Cllr S Coles (Chair), Cllr A Betty, Cllr A Groskop, Cllr John Hunt (Vice-Chair),
Cllr L Lisgo, Cllr L Leyshon, Cllr B Smedley and D Vigar and W Welland

Other Members present: Cllr D Hall and Cllr T Munt

Apologies for absence: Cllr N Cottle, Cllr P Maxwell and Cllr S Osborne

1 **Apologies** - Agenda Item 1

Apologies were received from Cllr N Cottle, Cllr P Maxwell and Cllr S Osborne.

Cllr Leyshon advised that Cllr N Cottle is no longer able to attend daytime meetings. Jamie Jackson to contact Mendip Council for a replacement representative.

David Vigar and Wendy Welland mentioned that they had not received the minutes or the Agenda Pack. It was also mentioned that there seemed to be a slight issue with the meeting invitations sent out via Teams for District Council representatives. Jamie Jackson agreed to investigate.

2 **Declarations of Interest** - Agenda Item 2

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

3 **Minutes from the previous meeting held on 31 January 2020** - Agenda Item 3

The minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2020 were confirmed as correct record.

4 **Public Question Time** - Agenda Item 4

There were no questions from members of the public.

5 **Terms of Reference** - Agenda Item 5

The Panel noted the change in membership with D Tratt being replaced by W Welland.

Jamie Jackson reminded the Panel that the Quorum for the meeting is 6 representatives, which includes 4 from the Partnership.

6 **Dredging Benefits Report.** - Agenda Item 6

Rob Kidson gave a detailed presentation to the Panel which provided an update on the benefits of water injection dredging (WID) methods and covered the following matters: -

- Early experiences 2014 onwards
- SRA commissioned dredging strategy – to find more cost-effective methods of dredging
- 2016 maintenance trials – trying Hydrodynamic dredging method – no removal of sediment from channel to bankside
- Outlined the dredging trials equipment – cutter suction / water injection and merits of them
- Explained water injection process and control, where the silt goes, monitoring and 'when it could come back'
- The characteristics of WID and when best to do this, and
- outlined the next steps – repeat maintenance dredging – awaiting new survey data to see where silt has returned and seeking to carryout first time dredging work on Northmoor to M5 reach.

It was noted that the Northmoor to M5 work is not covered by the existing environmental protocol agreed with the Environment Agency. A further assessment is required to check whether a full environmental impact assessment is required before work can begin.

The Panel thanked Mr Kidson for the informative presentation and noted that in order for SRA funding to continue if Somerset becomes a single Unitary Authority, SRA will need to become a separate body.

7 **SRA Scrutiny End of Year Report** - Agenda Item 7

The draft 2019-2020 Annual Report was shared with the SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel which provided detailed information on what activities have been funded by the SRA and delivered by SRA partners over the course of the year.

It was noted that the primary purpose of the July Scrutiny Panel meeting is to review activity over the previous twelve months. The Panel was invited to review the draft annual report in advance of the meeting and take the opportunity to raise any questions or queries with officers at the meeting.

The following comments were made: -

- The 2019 elections have made the SRA slightly smaller in membership as West Somerset and Taunton Deane merged to become one council.
- SRA and EU funding is currently supporting the work being done on the Somerset Levels, to gain greater resilience to Climate and economic change, and this needs to continue at District level. Should we move to a Unitary Authority, the work will need to continue.
- Comment made that the Bleadon Sluice, which sits on the boundary between Somerset and North Somerset, has not worked properly for several years. David Mitchell advised that the issue has been raised previously with the Environment Agency and agreed to raise it again.

Agreed: -

1. To note the draft Annual Report which outlined the achievements of the SRA and its partners over the course of 2019-20.
2. That the Panel review the annual report and provide thoughts and comments on the format / progress / achievements to David Mitchell as soon as possible to help inform future reports.

8 **Highways Scheme Assessments** - Agenda Item 8

Neil McWilliams gave a presentation to the Panel on SRA Works and provided information on the following:

- gully emptying
- future work programme including silk trap emptying
- Creation of new drainage assets and infrastructure to improve flood resilience and/or reduce the impact of flooding events
- Capital schemes
- Scheme details on the Stogursey and Shurton Flood Relief Scheme.
- SRA profile and reporting – communications, public awareness and also financial reporting matters.

During the discussion Cllr Hunt asked for a direct contact number for blocked drains and who cleans the Galmington stream – Neil McWilliams agreed to take this back for action. He also advised that a map will be shared showing the Gully cleansing sites which he will forward to be circulated.

The Panel thanked Mr McWilliams for the helpful updates and agreed that the update be noted.

9 **Key project updates** - Agenda Item 9

The Panel received a report from David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority, which provided an update on the latest position with regard to some key

projects. The Panel noted that key projects are projects regularly reported on to the SRA Board and which are usually of a larger scale and value and the report provided an overview of project progress, significant changes or risks that have occurred since the previous Scrutiny Panel meeting on 31st January 2020, covering the following matters:-

Oath to Barrowbridge Dredging – it was noted that work continues to monitor the effects of the dredge to determine whether any further environmental mitigations are required.

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier – it was noted that the decision on the Transport and Works Order (TWAO) is ultimately taken by the Secretary of State following consideration of any representations made. A list of the problems encountered will be shared outside of this meeting. An estimate of current project timeline is:

Assumed date for TWAO decision	Late 2020 (Excludes Covid-19 impact)
Complete Tender and FBC approval	Late 2021
Main contracts	2022-2025
Barrier should be operational	Late 2024

Sowey/King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) Enhancement Scheme – noted that the project is working to a very tight timeline. Delivering projects in and around the highly designated environmental sites of the Somerset Levels and Moors is extremely challenging. The project team and SRA partners are working hard to ensure the project is delivered.

Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviations Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS)

At the end of January 2020, the SRA Board confirmed its ongoing support for TSFAIS and its wider objectives, subject to the condition that any interventions made as part of the Scheme must have no significant impact downstream of Taunton.

In February 2020, a Full Council meeting of Somerset West and Taunton agreed to prioritise three initial local interventions. These are:

1. Optimising flood water storage at Longrun Meadow through building 1500 metres of raised embankments up to 1.8 metres high. This will benefit 687 properties.
2. Raising low spots in the River Tone's flood defences from Frieze Hill to Town Bridge. This will benefit 508 homes, businesses and facilities such as the police station and council offices, BT exchange and French Weir surgery, plus the A3027 and A3088.
3. Raising Firepool Lock gates to prevent River Tone floodwater entering the Bridgwater and Taunton Canal at Firepool, which reduces the risks of

overtopping into Maiden's Brook and then Allen's Brook in Bathpool, and also raising 750metres of River Tone defences between Firepool Lock and the A358 Obridge Viaduct. This will benefit 219 properties.

Somerset West and Taunton Council has £6m put aside for building projects 1 and 2. Further funding for project 3, and other TSFAIS elements, is being sought. In March 2020, as part of the SRA's budget and Enhanced Programme of works for 2020-21, the SRA Board agreed to put £300,000 towards the detailed design and delivery of the three interventions listed above.

The Panel was advised that additional information on the matters reported are also contained in the draft Annual Report.

Agreed: -

That the latest position with key SRA projects be noted.

10 **Quarter 4 Finance Report** - Agenda Item 10

The Panel considered the Qtr 4 Finance Report which provided information on the financial position at the end of financial year 2019-20.

It was noted that this report, together with the associated document, deliver the financial reporting requirements consistent with the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Constitution and Local Memorandum of Understanding. Somerset Rivers Authority does not deliver projects, instead the partners that make up the SRA partnership deliver projects on behalf of the SRA and once projects are complete, claim back the cost of the works.

Agreed: -

That the financial performance of the SRA for financial year 2019 – 2020 be noted.

Note:

The 2019-20 detailed commercially sensitive update has been circulated to the Panel.

11 **Any other urgent items of business** - Agenda Item 11

No items were raised.

(The meeting ended at 12.53 pm)

CHAIR

This page is intentionally left blank

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel

Quarter 2 2020-21 Finance Report

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

1. Review and comment on the financial performance as at the end of quarter two of 2020-21.

Background and context

This report provides information on the financial position at the end of quarter two which is the latest period full financial data is available.

Somerset Rivers Authority does not deliver projects, instead the partners that make up the SRA partnership deliver projects on behalf of the SRA and reclaim funding after contractors / suppliers are paid. This results in a delay between what SRA delivery partners have spent and how much has been claimed from the SRA. This means that the amount claimed may not reflect the amount of work which has been completed by SRA partners.

There are two main sources of funding which the SRA draws on:

- a. Local Partner Funding – money raised annually by an additional amount on Council Tax and direct contributions from the Internal Drainage Boards.
- b. Growth Deal Funding – £13.049m of funding allocated in 2014 through the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (HotSWLEP) for specific large-scale capital projects.

1. Local Partner Funding Financial Performance

TABLE A: Local Partner Funding Quarter 2 2020-21 Summary						
Workstream	2020/21 Pro-gramme £,000	Claimed Q1+2 2020-21 £,000	Forecast			(Under)/Over spend See Section 2 £,000
			Q3+4 2020-21 £,000	2021-22 £,000	2022-23 Onwards £,000	
W1a Dredging and River Management (large)	3,624	57	129	2,476	521	(441)
W1b Dredging and River Management (small)	245	34	84	100	27	0
W2 Land Management	571	146	139	291	20	25
W3 Urban Water	721	20	200	346	155	0
W4 Resilient Infrastructure	1,869	221	438	1,171	0	(39)
W5 Building Local Resilience	545	23	108	278	136	0
Administration & Staffing	345	87	184	74	0	0
Contingency	635	0	0	0	635	0
TOTAL	8,555	588	1,282	4,736	1,494	(455)

Table A shows that the total available funds at the start of the year was £8,555k. Of this amount £5,612k was carried forward from 2019-20 and £2,943k was raised in the 2020-21 precept. The majority of funds are allocated to specific schemes, with £635k currently being held in contingency.

- 4% of funds are forecast to be spent on the administration and staffing of the SRA.
- 7% is held as contingency.
- 89% allocated to specific projects in the Enhanced Programme.

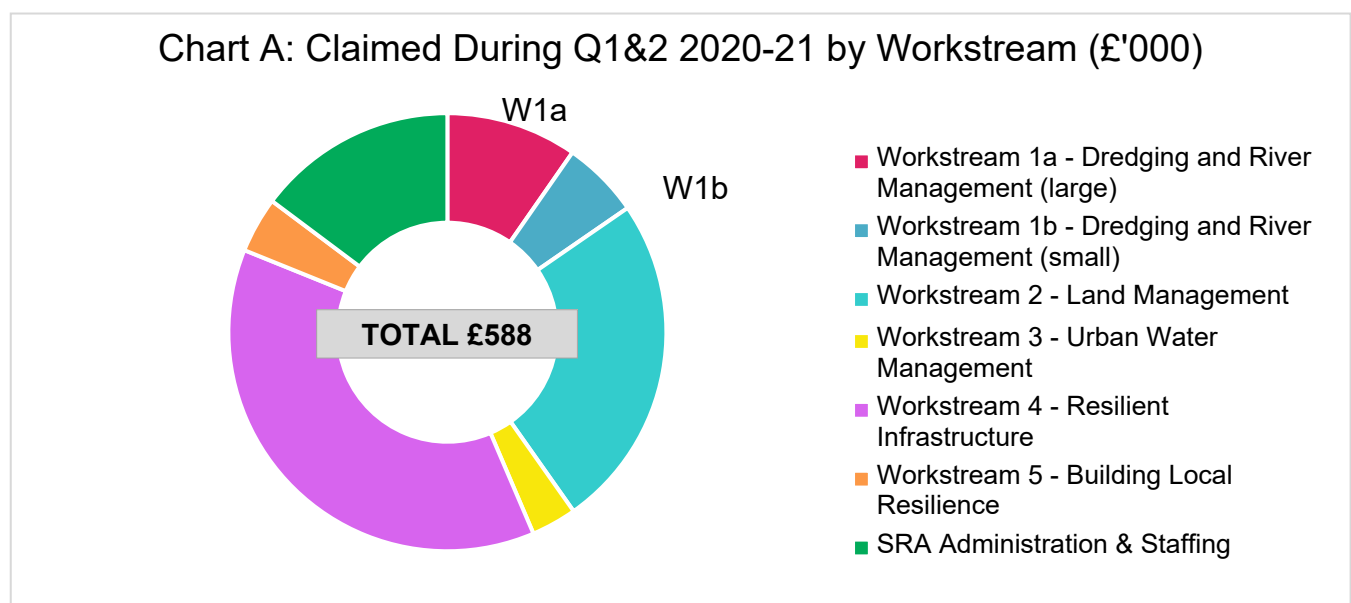
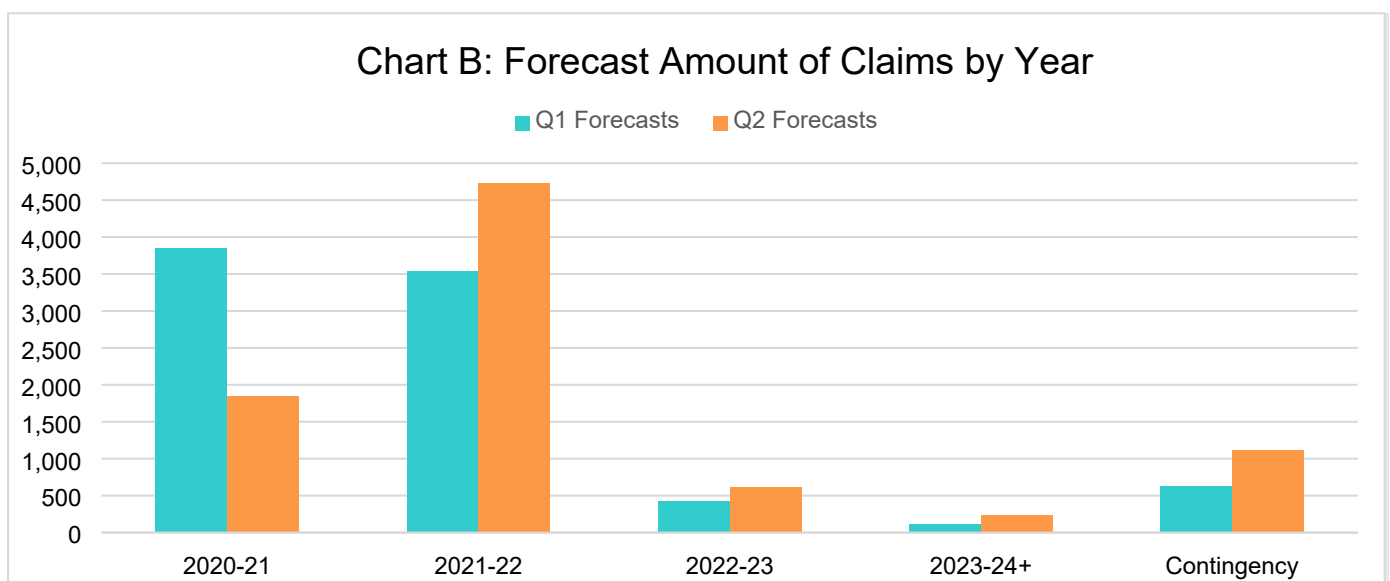


Chart A shows a breakdown of the total amount spent during quarters one and two of 2020-21.

Many of the approved schemes within the SRA Enhanced Programme are not planned to be completed during the same financial year in which they have been funded due to the complexity of the work being delivered.

Chart B shows that the majority of works are forecast to be completed either in 2020-21 or 2021-22. There are a number of larger schemes, such as the three local interventions for the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme and the Rode Flood Management Project which are due to be completed in 2022-23 onwards.

Since quarter one, forecasts for when funding will be claimed from the SRA have changed significantly. In quarter one, the forecast claims up to the end of the 2020-21 financial year totalled £3,845k, this has now reduced by £1,975k to £1,870k in part, due to the impact of COVID-19 on works. Reasons for the larger movements are listed below;



- Most of this value (£975k) relates to the Sowy/ King’s Sedgemoor Drain Enhancement Scheme, the completion date for this project has been pushed back by 12 months in agreement with the Heart of the SW LEP.
- Asset upgrades at frequently jettted sites with a budget value of £75k are now forecast to be delivered in 2021-22 due to the timeframe required for the design work prior to construction.
- £143k relates to the annual maintenance dredging of the River Parrett which has been postponed whilst dredging takes place between Northmoor and the M5.

- The previously reported forecasted claim for the Pioneer Dredge (£210k) for Northmoor to M5 (Parrett) was reported as Local Partner funding (LP). This was an error as this claim forecast was for Growth Deal funding so should not have been included under LP funding.
- The remaining balance relates to smaller movements on several schemes.

2. Re-allocation of Local Partner Funding between Budget and Contingency

Final claims returned by delivery partners during quarter two identified the following underspends as shown in Table B. Table C shows the detail for a request to top up an existing budget for Hills to Levels and Natural Flood Management to Slow the Flow.

Table B: Re-allocation of funds to contingency (underspends)			
Scheme	Delivery Partner	Reason	Amount £,000
Stogursey and Shurton Highway Flood Relief Works	Somerset County Council Highways	Underspend on completion of project.	17
Pioneer Dredging – River Parrett (Northmoor to M5)	Parrett Internal Drainage Board	Scheme is now utilising the Water Injection Dredging method, which is more economical in delivery than the traditional dredging method.	441
Amount to re-allocate to contingency			458

Table C: Re-allocation of funds from contingency			
Scheme	Delivery Partner	Reason	Amount £,000
Hills to Levels and Natural Flood Management to Slow the Flow	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SW	Top up to existing grant to provide match funding for an EU funded floodplain restoration project on the River Aller at the National Trust's Holnicote Estate in West Somerset.	25
Amount to re-allocate from contingency			25

Following approval by the SRA Board in December of the movements in Tables B and C the SRA contingency increased by £433k from £635k to £1,068k. This means that SRA contingency funds as at the end of Q2 2020-21 equals 12.5% of Local Partner funds (currently 7%), with the remainder allocated to specific schemes.

3. Growth Deal Funding Financial Performance

A variation request was approved by HotSWLEP in October 2020. The agreement extends the period in which the SRA can claim funds from March 2021 to March 2022.

TABLE D: Growth Deal Funding Quarter 2 2020-21 Summary						
Project	Funding Agreement Allocation £,000	Claimed as at end Q2 20/21 £,000	Forecast Claims 2020-21		Forecast Claims 2021-22 £,000	Under-spend £,000
			Q3 £,000	Q4 £,000		
Sowy/King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancement Scheme	7,976	6,269	287	477	943	0
Pioneer Dredging	2,458	1,787	181	289	0	201
Land Management	550	547	3	0	0	0
Bridgwater Tidal Barrier	2,000	2,000	0	0	0	0
Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Scheme	65	65	0	0	Project 0	0
TOTAL	13,049	10,668	471	766	943	201

At the end of quarter two, £10,668k of the total £13,049k Growth Deal funding had been claimed from the SRA by delivery partners. The total claimed during quarter two is £427k. The £201k underspend on the Pioneer Dredging will be reallocated to the Sowy/King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancement Scheme as per the variation request approved by HotSWLEP in October 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Review and comment on the financial performance as at the end of quarter two of 2020-21.

Note:

The quarter two 2020-21 detailed commercially sensitive update has been circulated to the Panel separately.

Date: 3 February 2021

Authors: Rebecca Hall - Finance Manager, David Mitchell – SRA Manager

This page is intentionally left blank

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

SRA Enhanced Programme and budget 2021-22

RECOMMENDATION

The Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Review and comment on the draft 2021-22 Tranche 1 and 2 Enhanced Programme proposals and budget.
- Consider any recommendations they wish to make to the SRA Board in relation to the 2021-22 Enhanced Programme.

Purpose of the item

To review and comment on the draft 2021-22 Enhanced Programme and budget in advance of the SRA Board considering the proposals at their meeting on 5 March.

2021-22 Enhanced Programme – background and context

2021-22 will be the seventh year that the SRA will fund an 'Enhanced Programme' of projects to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset residents. This extra level of protection is funded by a shadow precept raised by the County and District Councils. The Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) also contribute £10,000 each per annum. The final figure will be confirmed in February 2021 following council budget setting, but it is estimated that the shadow precept and IDB contribution for the financial year 2021-22 will total £2.923m.

2021-22 Enhanced Programme – latest status

An initial 10 proposals with a total value of £1.88m were submitted by SRA Delivery Partners in August 2020. All proposals were scored against criteria reflecting the aims and objectives of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan (FAP), which is overseen by the SRA. They were then reviewed by SRA Technical Group members at a meeting on November 13, and by SRA Management Group on 20 November. The SRA Board provisionally approved funding of these proposals at their meeting on December 11, 2020.

The effects of the coronavirus pandemic have had an impact on the creation of the SRA's Enhanced Programme 2021-22. The process of building a programme has had to be extended, because various restrictions and changes have slowed some matters down. A 2nd

Tranche of proposals was received during December 2020. These proposals are still being reviewed with a final decision on which projects can be funded due to be taken at the March 5, 2021 SRA Board meeting.

The first half of this paper covers the Tranche 1 proposals which have been provisionally approved and the second half summarises the Tranche 2 proposals which have yet to be considered by the SRA Board.

Tranche 1 2021-22 Proposals

SRA projects are sorted into five workstreams as set out in the FAP, though in practice different elements sometimes overlap.

Table A shows the total value of bids received under each workstream heading. Workstream balance is taken into account by the SRA Board when agreeing the Enhanced Programme.

Table A: Workstream Summary

Workstream	Title	Value (£000s)	% of total
W1	Dredging & River Management	£550	29%
W2	Land Management	£470	25%
W3	Urban Water Management	£60	3%
W4	Resilient Infrastructure	£675	36%
W5	Building Local Resilience	£125	7%
	Total	£1,880	

A short description of the Tranche 1 schemes, which have been provisionally approved, is set out below with additional detail provided in Appendix 1.

There are currently two proposals in **Workstream 1** (Dredging & River Management).

The first is for a contribution to the Environment Agency’s major scheme to repair and refurbish **Dunball Sluice**, where King’s Sedgemoor Drain flows into the River Parrett north of Bridgwater. Dunball Sluice is crucial to the effective management of flood risks in the River Parrett catchment – which covers 1050 square miles – and a thorough overhaul will help to keep it working well for another 35 years.

The second proposal is for a study of how flood risks in **Dulverton** could be reduced by restoring the town's medieval weir and the Leat that loops off it. Both the weir and the Leat are eroded and damaged.

There is currently one proposal in **Workstream 2** (Land Management including Natural Flood Management - NFM). This single proposal contains many separate elements. It includes specific proposals in the Mendip District Council area, following on from earlier SRA-funded sub-catchment analyses across Mendip. Altogether there are seven main elements, including the design and implementation of 20 small-scale NFM schemes countywide, and four nature-based schemes in Mendip. Other W2 elements include match-funding for five major NFM projects led by other bodies, land management initiatives to help stop roads flooding, a range of activities to promote better soil management, an online NFM auction encouraging farmers and landowners to bid for funding, and modelling and monitoring of works done.

There is currently one proposal in **Workstream 3 (Urban Water Management)**. This is a Sedgemoor District Council bid for an investigation into flooding problems in the large area that feeds into the lakes at Apex Leisure & Wildlife Park and Haven Holiday Park in **Burnham On Sea**. The aim is to identify improvements that will provide better protection against flooding and more effective long-term management of local drainage systems. Around 100 properties in the Maple Drive area of Burnham could particularly benefit.

There are currently five proposals in **Workstream 4 (Resilient Infrastructure)**. The first is for a Mendip District Council project that follows on from a major SRA-funded investigation into almost every aspect of flooding and foul sewer problems in **Beckington** near Frome. This project will reduce the risks of future widespread flooding in the village by designing and delivering drainage system improvements.

Also, under W4 four programmes of enhanced maintenance are being planned for the SRA by Somerset County Council's Highways Department. The aim is to help keep roads open in places highly susceptible to flooding, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding. There are three countywide programmes covering enhanced gully emptying, enhanced drain jetting and enhanced silt trap jetting and an enhanced trash-screen clearing programme within the Somerset West and Taunton area.

Workstream 5 (Building Local Resilience) is focused on getting Somerset better prepared for flooding. The main element is funding for the continued employment until March 2023 of the SRA's Community Engagement Officer and Community Engagement Support Officer.

The officers will undertake an extensive programme of activities across Somerset. The programme will include working with small businesses, schools and flood groups.

Tranche 1 proposals were provisionally approved for funding from the 2021-22 SRA shadow precept by the SRA Board on 11 December 2020

Provisional SRA staff and overheads budget

Spend Category	£000s
Staffing (4 fte)	£178
Overheads, legal, finance, governance, audit etc.	£40
Natural England support	£12
Small projects and studies	£20
Total	£250

Tranche 1 Summary

- The total value of the provisionally approved Tranche 1 proposals and the SRA staff and overheads budget is £2.130m.
- The estimated value of the shadow precept and IDB contributions for 2021-22 is £2.923m.
- The difference between the available shadow precept and the value of Tranche 1 bids plus the SRA staff and overheads budget is £0.793m.
- Under Item 8 'Finance Report' the panel was made aware that the SRA currently has £1.068m of contingency funds.
- The remaining precept and contingency funds create opportunity for a further £1.861m to be allocated to SRA projects.

Tranche 2

At the SRA Board meeting on 11 December, members approved seeking a second tranche of SRA grant proposals to make full use of the opportunity presented by the contingency funds and remaining precept funding.

A further 18 proposals have now been received with a total value of £4.329m. The call on SRA funds exceeds the available funds by £2.468m. Tranche 2 of proposals is in the process of being reviewed and scored by the SRA Team in consultation with Technical Group

officers. Once assessed, a proposed programme of schemes will be presented to SRA Board members for their consideration on March 5. As well as the scores for each proposal, geographic spread and workstream balance are taken into account when preparing the final prioritised list of schemes for the Enhanced Programme

Table B Tranche 2 workstream summary

Workstream	Value of proposals £000s	% of total value	No. of Proposals
W1	£3,345	77%	4
W2	£287	7%	6
W3	£82	2%	1
W4	£615	14%	8
Grand Total	£4,329	100%	19

A summary of each of the 18 Tranche 2 proposals received is provided in Appendix 2.

Confidential Appendix 3, provided separately to the Joint Scrutiny Panel, provides further detail on all proposals and their estimated costs.

RECOMMENDATION

The Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- Review and comment on the draft 2021-22 Tranche 1 Enhanced Programme proposals and budget.
- Review and comment on the draft 2021-22 Tranche 2 Enhanced Programme proposals

Date: February 2021

Author: David Mitchell, Jonathan Hudston, Somerset Rivers Authority

Appendices:

Appendix 1: 2021-22 Tranche 1 scheme summaries – no costs

Appendix 2: 2021-22 Tranche 1 scheme summaries – no costs

Appendix 3: **Confidential** 2021-22 Enhanced Programme List – with costs – provided separately

Appendix 1 Tranche 1 Scheme Summaries

SRA Reference	TITLE	SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY/WORKS	Workstream
FWMDCLM01-22	Hills to Levels – Land Management and NFM to Slow the Flow	<p>Somerset Rivers Authority funds the biggest range of natural flood management (NFM) activities in the UK, as part of Hills to Levels. This work has so far won two national awards.</p> <p>There are six main elements to be delivered for the SRA by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW) and a further element to be delivered in partnership with Mendip District Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implementation of 20 small-scale and natural flood management capital works to detain water in the upper catchment and reduce peak flows • Provide funding towards a larger capital scheme at Merriott, de-culverting a 300m stretch of the Merriott Stream just upstream from Merriott village. • Encourage better soil management techniques and cropping changes which will improve the infiltration of water and reduce run-off. • Respond to at least 40 highway flooding and Lead Local Flood Authority referrals where land management can help provide a solution. • Operate another reverse auction in the summer/autumn 2021 to deliver enhanced land management changes and engage more land managers with SRA messages. • Carry out modelling or monitoring at sub-catchment scale to demonstrate the effectiveness of the NFM measures that have already been installed or constructed. • In partnership with Mendip District Council deliver at least 4 holistic nature-based solution projects in prioritised sub-catchments in Mendip with known flooding issues. These projects will employ a range of NFM techniques including ‘Stage Zero’ where appropriate. 	W2
EA1 7	Dunball Sluice Refurbishment	<p>A contribution to the Environment Agency’s major scheme to repair and refurbish Dunball Sluice to help to keep it working well for several more years. The works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The repair of potential defects in the vertical gates and sheet piled walls. Review and refurbish the deterioration of the concrete elements of the sluice. • Investigate and repair the leakages of the side flow culvert on the north side. • Investigate and repair the failure of seals on 	W1

		<p>penstocks within the structure and defects to the steel top frame structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade elements of the penstock lifting gear and investigate issues with counterweights/counterweight baskets • Review the operational issues with silt management around the structure and issues with wind-blown sand reaching mechanical components and the functionality of control panel • Review the lack of eel passage 	
LASWT01	<p>Dulverton Leat/Weir Flood Prevention & Elevation Project</p>	<p>To provide funding towards a feasibility study (Phase One) of the Dulverton Leat and Weir restoration and upgrade project being delivered by Somerset West and Taunton Council. The study will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the cost plan and draft drawings that were carried out in Spring 2020 and undertake 'before and after' flood alleviation modelling based on these designs. • Undertake the required ecological surveys prior to Phase Two. • Seek planning and any other necessary approvals required for the works to be identified for Phase Two. <p>The suggested flood alleviation works (Phase Two) below are dependent upon the findings from Phase One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out extensive work to the upper and lower weirs to reinforce the structure with more robust natural materials. • Undertake extensive repairs to the Leat floor/ bed and reinforce the structure • Clear all debris, vegetation, tree trunks and any foreign material from the Leat, walls and the immediate bankside and to consider the most practical and pragmatic way to reduce the volume of debris reaching the village. • Realign the banks where trees will be removed. 	W1

LAMDC07	Beckington Drainage Works	<p>To deliver the identified high priority works that came out of the Beckington Drainage Assessment previously funded by the SRA. The works will provide improved resilience to surface water flooding and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culvert repair, enhancement and remediation works at Warminster Road • New trash screens with access for maintenance upstream of Goose Street. • Improvements in management and maintenance • Additional inspection manholes along Goose Street, Warminster Road, Frome Road and Castle Street • Improved access to upstream watercourses for routine maintenance • Carry out further CCTV surveys to assess condition of uninspected sections • Install natural flood management attenuation features upstream 	W4
LHA03-22	Across Somerset Enhanced Gully Emptying.	<p>Gullies in places most at risk of flooding across Somerset are cleansed once a year by Somerset County Council. Extra SRA funding means that approximately 20,000 gullies can be emptied twice a year. The aim is to help keep roads open in places highly susceptible to flooding, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding, all in line with the objectives of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan. This year gully-emptying is part of a five-pronged attack on highway flooding problems across Somerset, along with drain jetting, silt-trap emptying and trash screen clearance and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads. Together these works benefit residents, businesses and visitors.</p>	W4
LHA04-22	Across Somerset Enhanced Drain Jetting.	<p>Extra SRA-funded drain jetting targets places across Somerset at high risk of flooding. Drains are usually only jetted by Somerset County Council on a reactive basis: that is, once they have become blocked. Pro-active jetting is designed to stop drains from getting blocked in the first place, by removing silt and debris. The aim is to keep roads open during times of flood. Across Somerset Enhanced Drain Jetting is part of a five-pronged SRA attack on highway flooding problems, along with gully-emptying, silt-trap emptying, trash screen clearance and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads. Together these works help to keep roads open, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding. They reduce annoyance and inconvenience for residents, businesses and visitors.</p>	W4

LHA130	Enhanced Trash Screen Clearance in Somerset West and Taunton	<p>Trash screens are cleansed reactively by Somerset County Council. The SRA funding will support an enhanced cleansing regime by mechanically cleansing 36 trash screens as part of a proactive annual programme in the Somerset West and Taunton Area.</p> <p>This SRA funded programme of trash screen clearance is designed to mitigate high risk areas and to alleviate localised highway flooding, with associated safety benefits to highway users. It will keep roads open, communities accessible and safeguard properties from flooding.</p> <p>Enhanced Trash screen clearance is part of a five-pronged SRA attack on highway flooding problems, along with gully-emptying, silt-trap emptying, drain jetting and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads.</p> <p>Together these works help to keep roads open, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding. They reduce annoyance and inconvenience for residents, businesses and visitors.</p>	W4
LHA122-22	Across Somerset Enhanced Silt-trap Emptying.	<p>Silt-traps are designed to reduce flood risks by collecting silt washed out from land near roads and preventing it from clogging up highway drainage systems. Somerset has around 80 silt-traps (not including cattle grids) at places known to be susceptible to flooding.</p> <p>Extra SRA funding enables Somerset County Council's Highways Department to carry out a programme of proactive cleansing, so that traps themselves do not get blocked up, but work as they should. Across Somerset Enhanced Silt-trap Emptying is part of a five-pronged SRA attack on highway flooding problems, along with drain jetting, gully-emptying, trash screen clearance and the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads.</p> <p>Together these works help to keep roads open, make them safer, preserve access for communities, and safeguard properties from flooding. They reduce annoyance and inconvenience for residents, businesses and visitors.</p>	W4

LASWT01	Apex/ Haven/ Maple Drive BOS Surface Water Management Study	<p>SRA funding will enable Sedgemoor District Council to carry out a Surface Water Management study of the lakes at Apex & Haven Holiday Park, Maple Drive and the local sewer network.</p> <p>The study will determine the current level of flood protection and outline what improvements can be carried out to achieve a better flood protection and longer-term management solutions to future proof the system.</p>	W3
FAPW501-22	Building Local Resilience	<p>This is a continuation of previously funded Building Local Resilience actions. This funding would enable the SRA Community Engagement Team to continue to build local resilience by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising awareness of what can be done by residents and communities through engagement activities and events, and by providing advice, information and support as and when needed • Working in partnership with other organisations seeking to build social capital and encourage preparedness in communities at risk, including participating in and jointly chairing the Somerset Prepared multi-agency partnership. • Supporting existing and emerging community groups such as local flood groups and flood networks including facilitating the delivery of training and assisting with the management of the small grants scheme for community resilience. • Investigating a mapping exercise to develop links between existing flood groups to encourage them to work together on a District / Catchment basis • Deliver a community film project with Somerset Film which will engage communities with water use and flood risk management using audio-visual material. • Building on previous engagement with small businesses. • Engaging with schools in at-risk areas. This activity will look at the unique nature and local challenges of the landscape in Somerset and provide a more locally specific approach than other school engagement programmes being delivered nationally or regionally. • Contributing time and expertise to other SRA projects within the Enhanced programme including Adapting the Levels and the Community Flood Information projects. 	W5

Appendix 2 Tranche 2 Scheme Summaries

Ref	TITLE	SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY/WORKS	
EA17	Bridgwater Tidal Barrier	<p>Bridgwater Tidal Barrier is a major project led by the Environment Agency and Sedgemoor District Council. Designed to help protect more than 11,300 homes and 1,500 businesses, it has three main elements: a tidal barrier on the River Parrett at Chilton Trinity, 4.3km of new flood defence banks and 2.8km of raised banks downstream at Chilton Trinity, Comwich and Pawlett, and fish and eel passage improvements at 12 sites upstream of the barrier site.</p> <p>Most funding for this major project will come from central government major project funding. However, a local contribution towards the project is also required to secure the national funding. Sedgemoor District Council is responsible for assembling a local match-funding package. The council is seeking a contribution from the SRA in recognition of the important role the Barrier will play in protecting Somerset residents, homes and businesses.</p>	W1
EA18	Dunball Smoothing	<p>A project to complement other River Sowey-King's Sedgemoor Drain works already funded by the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership and the SRA. The plan is to remove obsolescent obstructions which reduce the capacity of the river channel – and cause problems with turbulence – near Dunball Sluice. This work would help to increase the maximum flow of water that can be discharged from King's Sedgemoor Drain to the Parrett estuary, and so reduce flood risks to homes, land and roads.</p>	W1
LP-SA	Strategic Mitigation Plan Implementation	<p>A Strategic Approach to Mitigation project is being led for the SRA by Natural England. Its three main aims are to reduce costs and risks, to enable flood risk management schemes in the county to go ahead, and to secure a wide range of environmental benefits. Specifically on the Somerset Levels, and in relation to major projects such as dredging and ongoing River Sowey-King's Sedgemoor Drain enhancements, Natural England has identified a series of actions that need to be implemented. SRA funding is therefore being sought for 1) the development of a protocol for monitoring the condition of the Somerset wetlands, 2) the development of a methodology for mapping wider wetland areas</p>	W1

		of critical importance to winter waterfowl, 3) initiating the updating of Water Level Management Plans and establishing operational protocols including a set of Environmental Trigger points across Somerset, and 4) developing alternative solutions to the current suite of Raised Water Level Areas.	
FWLM04	Tivington Farm floodplain reconnection	The National Trust's Riverlands project in Porlock Vale is developing innovative approaches to working with natural processes. At Tivington Farm in the upper catchment of the River Aller it is proposed to undertake restoration work that will reduce flood risks for nearly 100 properties down through to Allerford and Bossington and for the A39 and several B roads, and substantially benefit wildlife and the local landscape and environment. This project is part-funded by the EU's Interreg2Seas programme and by the Environment Agency. Match-funding is being sought from the SRA for works including modelling and design	W2
FWLM06	Somerset Beaver Strategy	<p>This proposal involves Somerset Wildlife Trust, the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest, the National Trust, the Beaver Trust, and Exeter University. These partners would liaise with bodies including the Environment Agency, Natural England, the NFU and Country Land & Business Association, the fisheries sector, Internal Drainage Boards and local flood groups.</p> <p>As beaver populations are already becoming established in Somerset catchments, notably in the Somerset Frome, West Somerset Streams, and in catchments bordering Somerset, the partners judge that a Somerset Beaver Strategy is now urgently needed, to guide and co-ordinate the future management of beavers across the county. SRA funding is being sought to ensure that all interests and impacts are properly considered, both to optimise the benefits that beaver activity can offer – such as reduced flood risks, better water quality, and habitat and biodiversity improvements – and to mitigate conflicts and potential damage, for example to water infrastructure</p>	W2
FW LM	Across Somerset Natural Flood Management:	There is a growing interest in – and demand for – natural flood management (NFM) measures across Somerset. This	W2

	Mapping and Targeting	<p>proposal is designed to review what has been achieved by the SRA and others over the last six years, to strengthen coordination between different organisations and individuals, and to better target future activities in key areas. The Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW) is seeking SRA funding to enable work with Westcountry Rivers Trust on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mapping ALL existing Somerset Natural Flood Management (NFM) schemes by type of intervention. 2. Producing NFM targeting maps to identify sites and sub-catchments offering the greatest potential for NFM and future flood-friendly Land Management delivery (based on slopes, types of soil and catchment, hydrology, etc). 3. Zoning the most suitable and effective NFM measures in different areas 4. Ground-truthing potential larger sites to determine the feasibility of NFM, checking in-field and making initial contact with landowners. 	
WWT01	Doniford Catchment Parish NFM Project	<p>A bid from the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW) to enhance a Green Recovery Challenge Fund (GRCF) project in West Somerset. The GRCF is funded by Defra and administered by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The GRCF West Somerset project will help communities in Bicknoller, Elworthy, Sampford Brett and Stogumber to create parish-level NFM opportunity maps, establish parish NFM action groups and deliver NFM measures.</p> <p>Extra SRA funding is being sought by the WWT and FWAG SW to enable complementary work with farmers and landowners, in particular to develop whole farm NFM plans and to deliver a series of NFM measures. The local aim is to help tackle the long history of flooding problems suffered by Doniford catchment communities. The wider ambition is to create a parish-based model for action that could be reproduced across Somerset.</p>	W2

FWLM03-22	Trees For Water Action Fund	<p>The SRA first funded Trees for Water in the Enhanced Programme for 2020-21. It is a tree and hedge planting action fund designed to help local communities reduce flood risks resulting from surface water run-off issues. The project is run by Reimagining the Levels in collaboration with the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW). Despite the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, the project has had a successful year with many useful sites being volunteered.</p> <p>Further SRA funding is now being sought to enable the project to continue. In 2020-21 Trees for Water targeted Mendip and South Somerset. It is now proposed in 2021-22 to include Somerset West and Taunton and Sedgemoor.</p> <p>The Fund is particularly designed to suit strategically important sites not large enough for Countryside Stewardship grants and not special enough in conservation terms to concern Natural England. Trees for Water is meant to be flexible, bespoke and un-bureaucratic.</p>	W2
SWT01	Westhay Moor water management network re-connection	<p>A project to upgrade pipe networks and balance the hydrology of the Westhay Moor National Nature Reserve (NNR) in the Avalon Marshes. Its aim is to soak up more water on the site, thereby reducing local flooding problems and water flows downstream and increasing local resilience for farmers and wildlife. In line with the Somerset Flood Action Plan objective of ‘making the most of the special characteristics of Somerset’, this project would also improve biodiversity at the National Nature Reserve, as part of a longer-term plan to establish a Super NNR in the area.</p>	W2
W RT	Watertight – School to Home	<p>A project designed by Westcountry Rivers Trust as a follow-up to the EU-funded SPONGE2020 work done in Taunton since 2016 by Westcountry Rivers Trust and Somerset County Council. Its focus would be on developing a deeper engagement with water management issues within a school in the Taunton area and its associated community. A particular aim would be to create a better understanding of all aspects of the water cycle, including water use and disposal within school grounds, and the potential impacts of different courses of action on flooding and pollution. In</p>	W3

		<p>practice this would involve pupils and staff in workshops, and in carrying out whole-school water audits to understand current management and opportunities, including the design and construction of blue/green Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to remove rainwater from the sewer network and use the water to create new rich and diverse habitats.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">LLFA26</p>	<p>Minehead Integrated Catchment Study & Flood Alleviation and Resilience Strategy</p>	<p>Minehead suffers from a complex interaction of fluvial, tidal, surface water and foul drainage systems. No single authority is responsible for addressing flooding in Minehead.</p> <p>The West Somerset Catchment Flood Management Plan (2009) identified 1000 properties as being at risk from a 1% annual exceedance probability (AEP) fluvial flood event. The Minehead Surface Water Management Plan (2012) identified 576 households susceptible to the 0.5% AEP shallow surface water flooding scenario. The likelihood of these events occurring will increase with the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>Somerset County Council (SCC) as Lead Local Flood Authority has identified a need – and an opportunity – to bring together the work of several flood risk management authorities to develop a 25-year strategy for flooding in and around Minehead. SCC and Wessex Water are proposing to put £60k of match funding towards the total cost of an integrated study, and a further contribution is being sought from the SRA.</p> <p>The aim is to establish a long-term action plan for managing flood risk from all sources. Investment now would increase the likelihood of attracting future capital investment through public funds. The study would form a robust evidence base to secure funding for future projects and inform negotiations during the granting of new planning permissions: this will maximise public gain through private developments.</p>	<p>W4</p>

LHA133	<p>Improving flood resilience of the A358, Williton Road – Combe Florey.</p>	<p>Part of the A358 near Combe Florey is experiencing more frequent full-width carriageway flooding caused by run-off from adjacent agricultural land. Large quantities of fine soil are migrating on to the carriageway and blocking existing highway drainage systems, which cannot cope with the volumes coming down.</p> <p>This repeated flooding of the A358, which forms part of Somerset County Council's Precautionary Salt Network, not only has an impact on travelling motorists, it also affects the council's winter operations.</p> <p>The A358 is one of only two main routes into – and out of – West Somerset. The A358 is also a county freight route.</p> <p>The proposal being made to the SRA is for the installation of a new filter drain system. In addition, structural repairs would be undertaken where necessary, and sections of the carriageway re-profiled to make more effective use of existing assets. Roadside ditches and grips would also be cleared or re-constructed to enable surface water to discharge more effectively from the highway.</p> <p>Efforts will be made to encourage better land management practices by local landowners so as to reduce run-off from adjacent fields. Options for natural flood management interventions on adjacent land will also be investigated.</p>	W4
LHA134	<p>Realignment of existing culvert, Charlton Road - Creech St Michael.</p>	<p>Charlton Road is a no-through road prone to surface water flooding. Somerset County Council's Highways Department would like to relieve this problem for around 30 local properties by installing a new culvert. The existing system cannot cope with the volume of water that flows down a ditch and has to make two 90-degree turns</p>	W4
LH A1	<p>Marston Magna Valve Replacement Scheme</p>	<p>In the SRA's Enhanced Programme 2020-21, Somerset County Council's Highways Department was awarded funding for a Rimpleton and Marston Magna catchment survey. The survey's purpose is to identify improvements and strategies that will reduce flood risks to people's homes and local roads. Records show that 18 properties and several roads in Rimpleton have been affected by flooding, while roads hit in Marston Magna include the A359.</p> <p>Recent initial investigations found a problem with some non-return valves along the Mill Stream in Marston Magna next to the A359. SRA funding is now being sought to</p>	W4

IDB29		replace those flap valves so as to reduce flood risks for this section of the A359	
	Robins Lane, Burtle; culvert replacement and ditch restoration	Robin's Lane in Burtle on the Somerset Levels has a history of flooding. The problem is that an undersized culvert overtops and floods the road on a bend which is particularly hazardous in freezing conditions. Excess flows run across the road to a dilapidated roadside ditch and on towards a second undersized culvert before they finally discharge into an adequately sized and maintained network. Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium is bidding for SRA funding to replace the inadequate culverts with ones of higher capacity, and to restore around 300 metres of the roadside ditch. The beneficiaries would include local residents and businesses.	W4
LHA130	The Mead – Ilchester Pipe Work	A proposal from Somerset County Council's Highways Department to address a localised road flooding problem near a small number of properties at The Mead, Ilchester. SRA funding would be used to pay for slip-lining or pipe-bursting an existing length of pipe which runs from a highway gully and under a private garden into a ditch. This improvement would particularly help to reduce the need for repeated and expensive reactive interventions (such as jetting and root-cutting) by the Highways Department	W4
	Community Flood Resilience Scheme, Whitestaunton & Northay	<p>The small South Somerset settlements of Whitestaunton and Northay have experienced surface water and land flood events at various times. Both communities are situated at the bottom of a 'bowl' and so rely for flood alleviation upon the effectiveness of existing drainage systems and individual assets.</p> <p>Somerset County Council's Highways Department is seeking SRA funding for a suite of actions to improve the collection of surface water from the carriageway upstream of Whitestaunton and Northay.</p> <p>Works would include jetting/CCTV surveys of existing drainage assets, structural repairs undertaken where necessary, re-profiling of sections of the carriageway to make more effective use of existing drainage assets, road edge ploughing to improve the functioning of existing highway drainage assets, clearing of roadside ditches and/or creation of permanent 'grips' to enable surface water</p>	W4
LH A1			

MDCLLFA01		to discharge from the highway, and the installation of a number of cut-off drains (silt traps) at critical locations.	
	Flood Resilience Options Appraisal for the River Sheppey Communities	<p>The sub-catchments of Croscombe and Shepton Mallet are historically prone to flooding. The most recent event occurred in October 2020 when 19 properties flooded internally with many roads impacted and made impassable for a period of time. The fluvial, pluvial and groundwater flood risk within these two sub-catchments is not currently fully understood, nor is the interplay between different mechanisms. An integrated whole catchment study is therefore required to better understand the issues involved and to identify solutions. No single organisation is in a position to fund such a study.</p> <p>Through this bid to the SRA, Mendip District Council is proposing to review ALL parts of the catchment along the Sheppey (including the main river) in partnership with the Environment Agency, Somerset County Council and Wessex Water to determine the most cost-effective solutions for a complicated drainage network.</p> <p>Key outputs of the study will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of the need for additional measures for reducing blockages and maintenance in the future; • Consultation with landowners on land management practices and any potential implementation of NFM measures; • Identification of ways in which community engagement can be used to improve resilience; • Costed Action Plans for the delivery of identified mitigation options to inform future funding bids. <p>Completing this study will increase the likelihood of securing future investment to deliver the costed action plans.</p>	W4

This page is intentionally left blank

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

Title: Heart of The South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Project Update

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Note and comment on the latest position regarding LEP funded projects.

Purpose of the item:

To update the Panel on progress with Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funded projects recognising that the end of financial year 2020 - 21 was the original date by which all LEP funds were to be spent.

Background and context

In 2015 the Heart of the South Wes LEP allocated £13.049m of 'Growth Deal' funding to the 'Somerset Flooding' project. The project was described in the funding agreement as:

Phase 2 of the Somerset Levels and Moors 20 Year Flood Action Plan and consists of a package of measures to reduce the duration, depth and frequency of flooding on the Somerset Levels and Moors. This will safeguard houses, commercial premises, communities and infrastructure on the Somerset Levels and Moors and increase business confidence, contributing to the creation of new jobs and new houses.

The project funding was originally split across five distinct categories:

Category	Growth Deal £m	Status
Dredging and river management	£2.45	Spend complete
River Sowy / Kings Sedgemoor Drain enhancements (including Beer Wall and Chedzoy)	£7.984	In progress
Bridgwater Tidal Barrier	£2.0	Spend complete
Land Management	£0.55	Spend complete
Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements	£0.065	Spend complete
Total	£13.049	

LEP funding is provided by central government through the department of Business Energy and Skills. Government set a deadline for spending of LEP funds of the end of March 2021.

Latest status

The financial year 2020 – 2021 is the final year of the LEP funding allocation. The SRA Board have been keenly focussed on successful delivery of all LEP funded projects. SRA partners have worked exceptionally hard over the LEP funding period to deliver a significant amount of work to provide an extra level of flood protection for Somerset using the LEP funding.

At the end of 2020-21 Quarter 2 £10.668m of the £13.049m of LEP funding has been spent. A further £1.23m is forecast to be spent by the end of March 2021. This will leave approximately £1.14m of funding unspent. £943k of this underspend is allocated to the River Sowey – Kings Sedgemoor Drain enhancement. £201k is underspend from dredging and river management as a result of delivering the final elements of this work under budget.

During the summer of 2020 it became apparent that it would not be possible to spend all of the LEP funds by the agreed deadline. This was in part due to the impact of Covid-19 but it was also as a result of the complexity of delivering projects on the environmentally sensitive Somerset Levels and Moors. The SRA Board took steps to work with the LEP to secure permission to draw down the remaining LEP funds after the March 2021 deadline. A funding variation request was submitted to and approved by the LEP in October 2020 ensuring that none of the £13.049m originally allocated to Somerset Flooding will be lost to the project.

The remaining £1.44m will be used to complete phase one of the River Sowey – King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancement scheme. This is the first phase of work to deliver an increase in capacity in what is the flood relief channel for the River Parrett. Extensive mitigation activities have already been completed in preparation for work on the river banks and in the river channel itself between September and November 2021.

Detailed project information on all the LEP projects can be found on the SRA website - <https://www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk/> .

Summary:

90% of Heart of the SW LEP funding allocated to the Somerset flooding project will have been spent by the deadline of March 2021. The SRA Board took steps early to ensure that the remaining 10% will be available to the SRA partners during financial year 2021-22, ensuring that the full £13.049m allocated to the Somerset Flooding project will be used to reduce the duration, depth and frequency of flooding on the Somerset Levels and Moors.

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Note and comment on the latest position regarding LEP funded projects.

Date: 04 February 2021

Author: David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority

Somerset Rivers Authority Joint Scrutiny Panel Paper

Raising awareness of riparian responsibilities

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

1. Note David Jenkins' *Report of a review for the arrangements for determining responsibility for surface water and drainage assets* and its two recommendations for national moves by the Environment Agency and Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to review guidance on riparian owners' responsibilities, to promote that guidance, and to consider further steps.
2. Note that Defra has accepted Mr Jenkins' two recommendations about riparian responsibilities and that Somerset Rivers Authority has offered to pilot initiatives.

Purpose of this item

To draw attention to a report by David Jenkins, Chair of the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board member. Among other things, the report deals incisively with riparian responsibilities - that is, the obligations that come with owning a watercourse.

This paper picks out some of the issues identified by Mr Jenkins and outlines what it is proposed to do nationally and locally in response.

Background

The subject of riparian responsibilities is one that has often stirred the SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel and the SRA Board. For example, a significant chunk of the Panel's meeting in September 2019 was devoted to discussing it, and it was picked up again in January 2020.

Partly prompted by the Panel's deliberations, on 24 July 2020 the SRA Board asked SRA Senior Manager David Mitchell to report back on 11 September 2020 with some initial thoughts about what could realistically be done in Somerset to raise awareness of riparian responsibilities.

Various issues were discussed at an SRA Technical Group meeting on 14 August. Questions for debate included current activities and gaps in Somerset as regards

riparian responsibilities; SRA partnership working and the role of the SRA's Riparian Responsibilities Officer; and "What do we want people in Somerset to feel, think and – crucially – **do** differently as a result of any awareness-raising activities?" One subject discussed was the sale and purchase of properties and land, and what could possibly be done to raise awareness about riparian responsibilities during this process, because it tends to get people far more interested than usual in matters concerning ownership and responsibilities.

On 26 August 2020 Defra published a review into surface water and drainage issues by the Chair of the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee, and SRA Board member, David Jenkins. Mr Jenkins' *Report of a review for the arrangements for determining responsibility for surface water and drainage assets* has a section devoted to 'Riparian and landowners' responsibilities' (pages 50-56; the full report can be accessed using this link [Report of a review of the arrangements for determining responsibility for surface water and drainage assets \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/91111/report-of-a-review-for-the-arrangements-for-determining-responsibility-for-surface-water-and-drainage-assets.pdf)). Page 53 features Somerset Rivers Authority and the SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel, and records the panel's "concern that public funds should not be used to relieve landowners of work and costs that should properly be the landowners' own responsibility".

Mr Jenkins commends an online guide to *Owning a Watercourse* published by the Environment Agency. This guide

"sets out the responsibilities of an owner as being to report an incident of flooding, blockage, pollution, unusual changes in the flow, or collapsed or badly damaged banks, to the Environment Agency. It also sets out the owner's obligation to let water flow naturally, and to remove blockages if they obstruct or impede this. It states that the owner should leave all other trees, branches and shrubs, as they can help prevent flooding by varying the shape and flow of the channel and reduce erosion, and should also keep any trash screen, weir, mill gate or other structure clear."

However, Mr Jenkins finds that misconceptions, inconsistencies and frustrations over riparian responsibilities are widespread across the country. In National Flood Forum surveys, the issue is regularly one of the top three that people are concerned about. Mr Jenkins says "a common theme" in many written submissions to him is "that riparian owners' responsibilities with regard to flood risk management and maintenance are ill defined and poorly understood". He adds that he has "given considerable thought, and discussed with others" how matters could be improved but "there has not been a single or predominant view that has emerged, other than a consensus that this is a significant issue that the public interest calls to be addressed".

One vital point highlighted by the Environment Agency to Mr Jenkins is that “there is no responsibility for flood and coastal asset owners to maintain their defences to a particular standard or the ability for risk management authorities to enforce a level of maintenance”.

This is particularly relevant when thinking about any awareness-raising activities that might try to get riparian owners in Somerset doing more maintenance. In situations where there is no consensus about necessary standards or levels, it is harder to get people to agree what should be done.

So there are limits as to what the SRA can reasonably be expected to achieve with regards to riparian responsibilities, that is over and above what is done by other Flood Risk Management Authorities such as the Environment Agency, the Internal Drainage Boards and Somerset County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority.

New national approaches suggested by Mr Jenkins to this “complex and difficult topic” include, in summarised form:

- ascertaining, clarifying, and publicising the responsibilities of riparian owners under the existing law;
- changing the law so that riparian owners become duty-bound to maintain assets or features to a particular standard;
- entering into agreements with riparian owners, to accommodate or maintain structures or features on their land, which make a contribution to surface water flood risk management, “possibly involving payment of public funds” (maybe through Defra’s new Environmental Land Management Scheme);
- getting the Environment Agency to provide an advisory framework to facilitate risk management authorities entering into agreements with landowners to accommodate or maintain structures or features on their land, which make a contribution to surface water flood risk management.

Defra and the Environment Agency indicated to Mr Jenkins that they were not attracted to the last two suggestions.

Next steps

In his review, Mr Jenkins made two recommendations about riparian responsibilities. Namely:

- That in accordance with the commitment set out in the Surface Water Action Plan, the Environment Agency, in consultation with others as appropriate, review their guidance to landowners on *Owning a watercourse*, in particular to ensure that this is as clear and comprehensive as possible on riparian owners' responsibilities for maintenance of watercourses and related features, and that this guidance be promoted widely to those affected by it;
- That Defra consider what further steps the public interest requires to be taken, to ensure the maintenance of privately owned watercourses and related features, including culverted watercourses.

The Government has accepted these recommendations.

Defra's Flooding Minister is the Taunton Deane MP Rebecca Pow. On behalf of the SRA Board, Chair Cllr David Hall wrote to Ms Pow in October to welcome the Government's acceptance of Mr Jenkins' recommendations on riparian responsibilities and to encourage Defra to expedite this work. As Cllr Hall put it: "The Board hopes that the actions will be taken swiftly because the SRA is keen to do its bit to raise awareness of riparian responsibilities, and we would like to be able to act in a way that complements what Defra and the Environment Agency will be doing. If there are initiatives we can pilot in Somerset, we should be delighted to help."

Ms Pow's reply in December affirmed the Government's commitment to ensuring that riparian landowners are "clear on their responsibilities and better engaged in the protection of their communities".

She added: "We will be looking to all our stakeholders to help raise awareness and understanding about riparian responsibilities. This could include raising the profile of the Environment Agency's guidance on owning a watercourse (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>). I would welcome the Authority's support in using and promoting this guidance locally."

The SRA has begun to use and promote this guidance more, for example in correspondence.

On the second of Mr Jenkins' recommendations, Defra has pointed out separately that the government's July 2020 Policy Statement on *Flood and coastal erosion risk management* includes "a commitment to review of the statutory powers and responsibilities to map, monitor, inspect and maintain all assets. This will aim to ensure that responsibilities are clear and that there are effective powers in place to enable inspection and maintenance to be undertaken."

More generally, Defra says it is carefully considering how the commitments and actions from the Policy Statement on *Flood and coastal erosion risk management*, the July 2018 *Surface water management action plan* and Mr Jenkins' review combine and complement each other.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Joint Scrutiny Panel is asked to:

- 1.** Note David Jenkins' *Report of a review for the arrangements for determining responsibility for surface water and drainage assets* and its two recommendations for national moves by the Environment Agency and Defra (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) to review guidance on riparian owners' responsibilities, to promote that guidance, and to consider further steps.
- 2.** Note that Defra has accepted Mr Jenkins' two recommendations about riparian responsibilities and that Somerset Rivers Authority has offered to pilot initiatives.

Author: Jonathan Hudston, Somerset Rivers Authority

Date: 2 February 2021

This page is intentionally left blank