



## **EXECUTIVE**

**Wednesday, 6 March 2024**

**10.00 am**

**John Meikle Room, The Deane House, Belvedere  
Road, Taunton TA1 1HE**

### **SUPPLEMENT TO THE AGENDA**

To: The members of the Executive

We are now able to enclose the following information which was unavailable when the agenda was published:

Agenda Item 12

Executive Decisions in relation to Somerset Council's role as Host Authority and Accountable Body to the Somerset Rivers Authority partnership (Pages 3 - 86)

To consider the report.

***Appendices to follow:***

- Appendix 1 - DRAFT SRA 2024-25 Memorandum of Understanding and Constitution
- Appendix 2 - SRA Board paper 2024-25 Enhanced Programme and Budget
- Appendix 3 - CONFIDENTIAL 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions WITH COSTS
- Appendix 4 - 2024-25-SRA Enhanced Programme scheme descriptions
- Appendix 5 – Draft Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy and Flood Action Plan 2024-2034

## Appendix 1 **PROPOSED CHANGES SHOWN IN BLUE** **DRAFT - 2024-25 Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Local Memorandum of Understanding & Constitution**

### 1. Background and Context

#### 1.1 The Parties

Somerset Council (SC), the Axe Brue and the Parrett Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Environment Agency, Natural England, Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and Wessex Water (together the “Parties”) comprise the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). These Parties, to whom this Local Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) applies, are those agreed to be represented on the SRA Board.

#### 1.2 The Somerset Flood Action Plan

The Parties, together with Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) - formerly MHCLG - the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government - are committed to reducing flood risk and increasing resilience to flooding in Somerset via implementation of the Somerset Flood Action Plan, including the delivery of its Vision for the Levels and Moors (*Appendix One*). The SRA Board agreed that this will require additional expenditure on water and flood risk management and that this should be secured via an SRA precept.

#### 1.2a the Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024 – 2034

During 2023 and 2024 the parties worked together to produce a new *Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034* and it’s associated action plan which follows on from the original 2014 Flood Action Plan and sets new objectives for the SRA. The parties are committed to continuing to work together as the Somerset Rivers Authority to deliver this strategy.

#### 1.3 Memorandum of Understanding 8 December 2014 and sustainable funding mechanism

Pursuant to the commitment in para 1.2 above, on 8 December 2014, a Memorandum of Understanding was agreed by the local authorities, the IDBs, Defra and DLUHC which confirmed funding totalling £2.7m available to the SRA for 2015-16. That MoU included a commitment to work together to review the options for a sustainable local funding solution for the work of the SRA from 2016-17 onwards and provide an assessment of the options for consideration by Ministers in July 2015.

In September 2015, it was decided that the preferred funding mechanism was the establishment of the SRA as a precepting body and the Chairman of the SRA wrote to both the Secretaries of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and for

Communities and Local Government with a view to discussing and agreeing how to implement this as soon as possible.

The government in its response to the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Efra) Committee report on Future Flood Prevention, published in February 2017, gave a commitment to put the long-term funding of the SRA on a statutory basis when parliamentary time allows.

#### **1.4 Local Government Finance Settlement 2016-17**

The Local Government Finance Settlement 2016-17 included the provision of alternative notional amounts for council tax levels so that pending the establishment of the Somerset Rivers Authority as a precepting body, Somerset County Council and all Somerset district councils (now a single unitary authority Somerset Council) could set a shadow precept of up to the equivalent of a 1.25% increase in Council Tax, for the purpose of funding the Somerset Rivers Authority.

The 1.25% is fixed at 2016-17 levels. The 1.25% remains in the Council Tax base year on year as long it is raised for the purpose originally intended.

#### **1.5 This Local Memorandum of Understanding (Local MoU)**

This Local MoU document is not intended to be legally binding on the Parties, but the Parties agree to the Local MoU, intending to honour their obligations set out in it. It will cover the period up to 31 March 2025. Section 2 of this Local MoU sets out a constitution for the SRA. Information on background papers, technical terms and acronyms, can be found in Appendix Two.

#### **1.6 Term & Amendment**

This Local MoU shall come into effect on 1 April 2024 and shall continue in force unless terminated in accordance with this Local MoU. It will be reviewed before the end of the financial year, no later than 31 March 2025.

Proposals for amendments should be communicated to the SRA Senior Manager, no less than 30 days ahead of any Board meeting at which they would need to be considered. Proposals would then be circulated for comment, and any recommendations made to the SRA Board would, in accordance with its decision-making arrangements, be decided by a simple majority.

#### **1.7 Previous Arrangements**

Prior to this Local MoU, the Parties have worked collaboratively in relation to the Somerset Rivers Authority through a Local MoU dated June 2023. Those arrangements will be superseded by the arrangements put in place under this Local MoU.

Signed by Cllr **Mike Stanton** as  
a representative of **Somerset  
Council**

**Date**

Signed by **Tony Bradford** on  
behalf of the  
**Parrett Internal Drainage  
Board**

**Date**

Signed by **Rebecca  
Horsington** as a  
representative of the  
**Parrett Internal Drainage  
Board**

**Date**

Signed by **Ian Withers**  
on behalf of the  
**Environment Agency**

**Date**

Signed by Cllr **Michael  
Caswell** as a representative of  
**Somerset Council**

**Date**

Signed by **Jeff Fear**  
on behalf of the  
**Axe Brue Internal Drainage  
Board**

**Date**

Signed by **Andrew Gilling** as a  
representative of the  
**Axe Brue Internal Drainage  
Board**

**Date**

Signed by **Claire Newill**  
on behalf of **Natural England**

**Date**

Signed by **David Jenkins**  
on behalf of the  
**Wessex Regional Flood &  
Coastal Committee**

**Date**

Signed by Cllr **Dixie Darch** on  
behalf of **Somerset Council**

**Date**

Signed by **Cllr Simon Coles** as  
a representative of **Somerset  
Council**

**Date**

Signed by **Cllr Harry Munt** as  
a representative of **Somerset  
Council**

**Date**

Signed by **Cllr Ros Wyke** as a  
representative of **Somerset  
Council**

**Date**

Signed by **Matt Wheeldon** on  
behalf of **Wessex Water**

**Date**

## 2. Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) - Constitution

### 2.1 Legal Status of SRA

The SRA will continue as an unincorporated association. This does not require any new statutory powers. In participating in this association, the Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMAs, see para 2.3.1) are acting in accordance with the co-operation duty under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010, Section 13.

The SRA Board has agreed it is committed to enabling the necessary legislation to be enacted to establish the SRA as an independent precepting body as soon as possible.

The government in its response to the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Efra) Committee report on Future Flood Prevention, published in February 2017, gave a commitment to put the long-term funding of the SRA on a statutory basis when parliamentary time allows.

### 2.2 Purpose of the SRA

**2.2.1** To bring together and co-ordinate the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Somerset Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Lead Local Flood and Highway Authority (Somerset Council - SC) and Wessex Water in their roles as FRMAs.

**2.2.2** To provide a strategic overview of the continued delivery of the Somerset Flood Action Plan, [the Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034, it's associated action plan](#) and Flood Risk and Water Level Management in Somerset.

**2.2.3** 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.

**2.2.4** To identify, prioritise, find funding for and oversee the delivery of additional flood risk and water level management work across the whole of Somerset, over and above that which the FRMAs are able to justify within their existing funding streams and to prepare an annual programme detailing that work, to raise the necessary funds and to oversee its delivery.

**2.2.5** To enable the FRMAs to take on a broader role, to ensure that Somerset's flood risk and water level management activity benefits from the collective wisdom, experience and knowledge of all its members.

**2.2.6** To undertake the detailed planning and, with government, put in place the necessary arrangements for the establishment of the SRA as a precepting body.

**2.2.7** To achieve long-term sustainable flood risk management funding for Somerset.

### 2.3 Scope of Activities

**2.3.1** The geographic scope of the SRA is the whole of the area administered by Somerset Council.

**2.3.2** The SRA does not diminish the responsibilities of the individual Parties or those of riparian owners. The existing FRMAs and their existing associated funding streams, responsibilities and accountabilities continue, and their existing powers and discretions are unaffected. However, opportunities will be taken to join up delivery where agreed.

**2.3.3** The SRA makes publicly available, in one place, information about all the planned inland flood risk and water level management activity in Somerset, funded from Somerset FRMAs' and other local partners' existing budgets. This information is called the Somerset Common Works Programme.

**2.3.4** The SRA prepares an annual Enhanced Programme detailing the additional work outlined in 2.2.4. The SRA funds and commissions the delivery of such actions, details of which in respect of the 2024 - 25 Enhanced Programme, can be found in Appendix Three.

**2.3.5** The SRA co-ordinates the implementation of the Somerset Flood Action Plan whose outstanding actions are contained in either the Somerset Common Works Programme or the Enhanced Programme. [The SRA oversees and coordinates the delivery of the new Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034 and it's associated action plan.](#)

**2.3.6** Public Sector Co-operation Agreements under the Flood & Water Management Act 2010 section 13(4) will be used as appropriate.

**2.3.7** Where works are undertaken by a Party, the practices and procedures of that Party shall apply. Each of the Parties shall take responsibility for its own liabilities, including insurance: for example, through appropriate insurance cover or indemnity of Members and officers.

**2.3.8** The SRA will not include within its scope activities associated with emergency response and recovery.

**2.3.9** The SRA will not generally include within its scope of activities issues associated with coastal flood risk. In instances where the SRA Board agrees that a coastal flood risk project supports Flood Action Plan objectives, grant funding could be considered.

## **2.4 Funding**

**2.4.1** Funding totalling £3,078,886 (TBC) will be available to the SRA for 2024-25, raised by Somerset Council and the Parrett and Axe Brue IDBs as follows:

<b>Authority</b>	<b>Contribution</b>
Somerset Council	£3,058,886
Somerset Internal Drainage Boards	£20,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,078,886</b>



**2.4.2.** Somerset Council will account for the use of all funds to the Parties as set out in para 2.7.

## **2.5 Host Authority**

**2.5.1** As recipient and accountable body for the funding contributions, Somerset Council shall act on behalf of the SRA Board as Host Authority.

In particular it shall:

- Provide the services of its Chief Financial Officer and Monitoring Officer at no cost
- Provide accounting, financial analysis, accounts payable and receivable
- Provide procurement services to all contracts SC awards on behalf of the SRA and, on request, on those of the SRA's delivery partners as required
- Employ any Host Authority staff and provide Human Resources (HR) and Information Technology (IT) services in support of them and the SRA website
- Respond to requests for information
- Carry out such other functions as may be agreed

**2.5.2** The costs of the Host Authority in this role shall be covered by the funding available to the SRA and shall be separately identified in the SRA budget for the year as shall any interest accruing in respect of funding made available at the beginning or during the year.

**2.5.3** The SRA shall, where relevant and unless otherwise agreed, operate in accordance with Host Authority practices and procedures, including the following:

- Procedural standing orders for the conduct of meetings
- Financial regulations
- Equalities policies
- Policies for dealing with access to information and data protection
- Employment Policies
- Formal decision-making procedures

## **2.6 Conduct of SRA Board Members**

Members of Somerset Council, IDBs and Regional Flood & Coastal Committees are bound by their own codes of conduct, as are staff of the Environment Agency, Natural England and Wessex Water.

SRA board members, including any co-opted members, will in particular 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.

## **2.7 Obligations**

**2.7.1** As the accountable body for the funding, Somerset Council shall ringfence the funding, provide quarterly information on spend to date against budget and interest accrued to the SRA Board.

In particular, Somerset Council will apply its normal financial probity and accountability controls, and will maintain reliable, accessible and up-to-date accounting records with an adequate audit trail for at least six years.

**2.7.2** Other Parties shall pay to the Host Authority their contribution (see para 2.4.1) following receipt of an invoice from the Host Authority.

**2.7.3** All parties shall provide timely information relating to progress, costs, benefits and impacts in connection with their roles as delivery partner in relation to the SRA 2024-25 Enhanced Programme (*see Appendix Three*).

**2.7.3** The Parties shall, by 31 March 2025, agree the budget for 2025-26 arrangements as to the way in which SRA funding for 2025-26 shall be spent, managed and accounted for. These shall include mechanisms for handling any underspends against budget, for managing the risk of cost increases, and for facilitating the flow of funding from Somerset Council to meet agreed expenditure incurred by another Party.

**2.7.4** Somerset Council will settle all payments within 30 days of agreement and submission.

## **2.8 Member Organisations (The Parties)**

Somerset Council, the Axe Brue and the Parrett IDBs, the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and Wessex Water.

## **2.9 SRA Board**

**2.9.1 Composition of Board:** 6 representatives from Somerset Council, 2 representatives from the Parrett Internal Drainage Board, 2 representatives from the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board and 1 representative each from the Environment Agency, Natural England, Wessex Water and the Wessex Regional Flood and Coastal Committee. The Board will consist of 14 members.

**2.9.2 Authority of Board:** The SRA Board has the authority to:

- Agree the SRA annual Enhanced Programme and authorise Somerset Council to release SRA funding for the delivery of its current year's activities
- Endorse programmes that reduce both the risk and impact of flooding and other activities supporting the delivery of the Vision and the [original Flood Action Plan and the Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034 and it's associated action plan](#) to be carried out by the Parties
- Determine the scope of services provided by Somerset Council as Host Authority

**2.9.3 Appointment of Board Members and Period of Office:** The Parties have appointed representatives to serve as members of the SRA Board. Board members

shall hold office until written notification of their removal and/or replacement is received by the Host Authority or shall cease with immediate effect if they cease to hold office within that member organisation.

**2.9.4 Nomination of Deputies to Attend Meetings:** Each of the Parties shall nominate a deputy for its appointed Board member, to attend and to vote at any meeting of the Board in place of the appointed Board member, who for any reason is unable to attend.

**2.9.5 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair:** The SRA Board will elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair who are members of the Board. Thereafter, and until the SRA is set up as a separate precepting authority, they will hold office until they cease to be members of the Board or at the two-year anniversary of the last election, whichever is the earlier. If neither the Chair nor Vice-Chair is present, then a member shall be elected from those present to act as Chair for that meeting.

**2.9.6 Co-option of additional Board Members:** The SRA Board shall have the power to appoint additional non-voting members to the Board. The process for co-option is to invite expressions of interest following agreement to do so by the SRA Board. Any expressions of interest would need to be accompanied by a curriculum vitae setting out relevant skills and experience of the invited individual or representative of the invited organisation. To ensure that adequate time is available for consultation on any co-option proposal any expressions of interest should be forwarded to the SRA Senior Manager, for circulation to Board Members for comment no less than 30 days ahead of any Board meeting at which they would need to be considered. Proposals would then be put as recommendations to the SRA Board, and in accordance with its decision-making arrangements, be decided by a simple majority.

**2.9.7 Voting:** Decisions to be made by a simple majority of voting members attending. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair shall have a casting vote. In the event of a disclosable pecuniary interest and/or a prejudicial interest arising, a member will need to abstain from participation in accordance with normal practice.

**2.9.8 Quorum:** A minimum of 9 voting members, including the accountable body for the funding.

**2.9.9 Access to Meetings and Information:** SRA Board meetings will be open to the public. Papers will be published on the SRA website five clear working days prior to meetings. Minutes of Board meetings will also be published on the website.

**2.9.10 Public Speaking and Questions:** Guidance is published on the SRA website as follows:

***“Public Question Time***

*“You may ask questions and/or make statements or comments about any matter on the agenda. The length of public question time will be no more than 30 minutes in total, unless extended at the discretion of the Chair.*

*“If you wish to speak at the meeting then you will need to submit your statement or question in writing by 5pm one full working day before the meeting. This can be done by sending an email to [sra@somerset.gov.uk](mailto:sra@somerset.gov.uk)”*

*“A slot for Public Question Time is set aside near the beginning of the meeting. However, questions or statements about any matter on the agenda for this meeting may, at the chair’s discretion, be taken at the time when each matter is considered.”*

*“You must direct your questions and comments through the Chair. You may not take direct part in the debate, unless invited to do so by the Chair.”*

*“The Chair will decide when public participation is to finish.”*

*“The amount of time you speak will be restricted normally to three minutes only, although it can be extended at the discretion of the Chair.”*

**2.9.11 Frequency of Meetings:** A calendar of meetings for each Board year will be approved by the Board and published by the beginning of each financial year. Full Board meetings are held quarterly, and extra meetings will be called in the event of an urgent decision.

**2.9.12 Attendance at Meetings:** Each of the Parties shall be responsible for meeting any remuneration, costs and expenses associated with attendance at meetings where the purpose is to represent their parent organisation.

**2.9.13** Where a Board representative is required to attend meetings or functions on behalf of the SRA travel and subsistence costs will be met by the SRA. Expenses and costs will be refunded in accordance with Somerset Council’s travel and subsistence policy.

## **2.10 Officer Support and Availability of Information**

**2.10.1** Where appropriate, the Parties shall make such of their officers and their information available for the purposes of the SRA, and for the Host Authority to meet its responsibilities, and in particular for updating and implementing the [original Flood Action Plan](#), [the Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034](#) and [it’s associated action plan](#), the outstanding works of all SRA Enhanced Programmes and Somerset’s Common Works Programme.

**2.10.2** An officer Management Group has been set up to oversee the delivery of the SRA’s Enhanced Programmes, and the outstanding actions of the Flood Action Plan [and the Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034](#) and [it’s associated action plan](#). Their terms of reference are set out in Appendix Four and members of the SRA Management Group are senior officers as follows:

- Kirsty Larkins (Chair), Somerset Council, Service Director - Climate, Environmental and Sustainability
- Donna Gowler, Natural England
- Iain Sturdy, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium
- Dr Rachel Burden, Environment Agency

- Ross Edwards, Environment Agency
- David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority
- Neil Ogilvie, Somerset Council, Flood and Water Management Service Manager
- Vicky Farwig, Wessex Water

**2.10.3** An officer Technical Group has been set up in support of the Board. Their terms of reference and membership are set out in Appendix Five.

## **2.11 Delegations / Urgent Business**

**2.11.1** The SRA delegations are outlined in Appendix Six.

## **2.12 Dispute Resolution**

**2.12.1** All disputes between the Parties on the meaning and interpretation of the constitution, and all disputes or differences in any way arising from the constitution, shall in the first instance be referred to the next meeting of the SRA Board for resolution.

**2.12.2** In the event that the dispute is not resolved through this mechanism, it shall be referred to a mediator in accordance with the Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) Model Mediation Procedure.

**2.12.3** All parties shall use their reasonable endeavours to conclude the mediation with 40 business days of referral of the dispute to mediation.

**2.12.4.** If the dispute is not resolved in accordance with para 2.12.2 within 40 business days, it shall be referred to an arbitrator to be agreed between the parties in dispute, and failing agreement, to an arbitrator appointed by the President of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, and the Arbitration Act 1996 shall apply to any such arbitration.

## **2.13 Withdrawal / Termination**

**2.13.1.** In order to withdraw from the SRA, any Party shall give not less than 3 months' notice in writing to the Host Authority to expire on 31 March in any year.

**2.13.2.** The Parties may agree to wind up the SRA through a decision of the SRA Board by giving not less than 3 months' notice to the Host Authority.

**2.13.3** If a Party serves notice to withdraw under para 2.13.1 above, or the Parties agree to wind up the SRA under para 2.13.2 above, the Host Authority shall arrange with that Party or the Parties, such operational, administrative and financial arrangements as may be agreed between the Parties.

**2.13.4.** A Party withdrawing from the SRA, or the Parties winding up the SRA, shall be entitled to receive a fair share of any assets held, offset by any liabilities, to be agreed between the Parties, at the date of the withdrawal or winding up, to be received when those assets are able to be realised.

**2.13.5** In the event of the Parties winding up the SRA all redundancy liabilities for directly employed SRA staff will, in the first instance, be met using remaining SRA funds. Should the SRA funds be insufficient then the funding partners (as set out in paragraph 2.4.1) will share the remaining liabilities across the funding partners in the same proportion as their annual contribution as at the start of that financial year.

## **2.14 Overview and Scrutiny**

**2.14.1** SRA scrutiny will be provided by Somerset Council. The format of SRA Scrutiny will be agreed with Somerset Council's Monitoring Officer in consultation with the SRA Chair.

**2.14.2** Officer support and administrative services for the SRA Joint Scrutiny Panel will be provided by Somerset Council's Democratic Services team.

## Appendix 1: A Vision for the Somerset Levels & Moors in 2030

- We see the Somerset Levels and Moors in 2030 as a thriving, nature-rich wetland landscape, with grassland farming taking place on the majority of the land. The impact of extreme weather events is being reduced by land and water management in both the upper catchments and the flood plain and by greater community resilience.
- The landscape remains one of open pasture-land divided by a matrix of ditches and rhynes, often bordered by willow trees. Extensively managed wet grassland dominates the scene with the majority of the area in agriculture in 2010 still being farmed in 2030.
- The floodplains are managed to accommodate winter flooding whilst reducing flood risk elsewhere. These flood events are widely recognised as part of the special character of the Levels and Moors.
- The frequency and duration of severe flooding has been reduced, with a commensurate reduction in the flood risk to homes, businesses and major roads in the area.
- During the summer months there is an adequate supply and circulation of high-quality irrigation water to meet the needs of the farmers and wildlife in the wetlands. On the low-lying peat moors, water levels have been adopted which conserve peat soils and avoid the loss of carbon to the atmosphere. Water quality has improved and meets all EU requirements.
- The Levels and Moors are regarded as one of the great natural spectacles in the UK and Europe with a mix of diverse and valuable habitats. Previously fragmented habitats such as fen and flower-rich meadows have been re-connected and are widely distributed. In the north of the area over 1,600 hectares are managed as reed-bed, open water and bog. Elsewhere the populations of breeding waders exceed 800 pairs. Each winter the wetlands attract large numbers of wintering wildfowl and waders regularly exceeding 130,000 birds. Wetland species such as Crane, Bittern and pollinator populations flourish.
- Optimum use is being made of the agricultural potential of the Levels and Moors, particularly on the higher land, whilst unsustainable farming practices have been adapted or replaced to secure a robust, sustainable base to the local economy
- New businesses, including those based on 'green tourism', have developed, meeting the needs of local people and visitors alike, while brands based on the area's special qualities are helping farmers to add value to the meat, milk and other goods and services that they produce.

- The internationally important archaeological and historic heritage of the area is protected from threats to its survival and is justly celebrated, providing a draw to visitors and a source of pride and identity to local communities.
- Farmers and landowners are rewarded financially for the public benefits and ecosystem services they provide by their land management including flood risk management, coastal management, carbon storage and the natural environment.

*Somerset Levels and Moors Task Force, 31 January 2014.*



## Appendix 2: Background Papers, Glossary of Terms & Acronyms

### A1.1 Background Information and previous meeting papers

- Background information and previous papers can be found on the Somerset Rivers Authority website at [www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk](http://www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk)

### A1.2 Technical Terms

- **Prejudicial Interest** - An interest of an individual Board member, which could be perceived to represent a conflict of interest with any matter considered by the Board
- **Public Sector Co-operation Agreements** - The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 enables an FRMA to arrange for a flood risk management function to be exercised on its behalf by another risk management authority. This can be done under a Public Sector Co-operation Agreement.
- **Riparian Owner** - An owner of land or property adjoining a watercourse.

### A1.3 Acronyms

- CEDR           Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution
- DLUHC        Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities
- Defra         Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- FRMA         Flood Risk Management Authority
- HR             Human Resources
- IDB            Internal Drainage Board
- IT             Information Technology
- MoU          Memorandum of Understanding
- SC             Somerset Council
- SRA          Somerset Rivers Authority



## Appendix 4: Terms of Reference – SRA Management Group

The SRA Management Group is a key part of the SRA structure providing a useful forum for consultation and information sharing between partners and the SRA Senior Manager about SRA progress and the business of the SRA Board. Members of the Group are drawn from senior officers of each of the SRA partners. The Group also oversees the delivery of SRA-funded activities and the outstanding actions of the Somerset Flood Action Plan, and delivery of [the Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034 and its associated action plan](#).

The Group is involved with these programmes of work:

1. The SRA current year's Enhanced Programme. This comprises the flood risk management works for which funding has been agreed by the SRA Board.
2. The outstanding actions of the Somerset Flood Action Plan that are not included in 1. above.
3. The outstanding works of prior years' Enhanced Programmes

The Group will:

- With regard to the delivery of all the SRA-funded programmes:
  - hold the SRA Technical Group to account by monitoring overall progress and exploring in more detail where delivery/progress is flagged red (using a RAG status)
  - review key risks and issues and identify additional actions where these are insufficiently mitigated
- Monitor, update and review the framework for SRA Enhanced Programmes and prioritisation criteria, advise the SRA Board and direct the Technical Group accordingly
- Review all proposals for change to the agreed SRA Programmes that are outside the SRA scheme of delegation and provide a recommendation to the SRA Board
- Review and comment on all the other work of the SRA Board
- Review, comment and share information on all matters relating to the work of the SRA
- Review the individual Flood Action Plan work streams – overall content and progress

### Membership

Members of the Group are senior officers as follows:

- Kirsty Larkins (Chair), Somerset Council, Service Director - Climate, Environmental and Sustainability
- Donna Gowler, Natural England
- Iain Sturdy, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium
- Dr Rachel Burden, Environment Agency
- Ross Edwards, Environment Agency
- David Mitchell, Somerset Rivers Authority

- Neil Ogilvie, Somerset Council, Flood and Water Management Service Manager

## Appendix 5: Terms of Reference – SRA Technical Group

The SRA Technical Group is a key part of the SRA’s structure. It consists of technical officers from SRA partners and associated bodies (such as Farming & Wildlife Group SouthWest) who can contribute expertise towards a co-ordinated and efficient programme of flood risk management works.

The Group helps with the delivery of Flood Action Plan actions.

SRA Technical Group responsibilities include the following:

- Work together to identify opportunities for cost-savings through joining up activities from partner organisations and considering joint/alternative delivery approaches
- Identify opportunities for schemes with multiple benefits that a single organisation may not be able to justify in isolation
- With reference to SRA Enhanced Programmes:
  - Identify and bring forward potential schemes for funding
  - Review the viability of schemes put forward, with respect to benefits, costs, environmental impacts and deliverability, using a set of scoring criteria derived from the main objectives of Somerset’s 20 Year Flood Action Plan and the [SRA Strategy 2024-34](#)
  - Prepare programmes of works from partners for approval by the SRA Board, taking demonstrable account of funding criteria and identifying delivery partners
  - Be accountable to the SRA Management Group for the delivery of SRA Enhanced Programme activities and provide information as required on progress with delivery
  - Provide a technical challenge (procurement strategy, flood risk management, project management) to implementation plans and performance
  - Identify any potential changes to Enhanced Programmes for recommendation to Management Group, and thence the Board
- Discuss issues of mutual interest in flood risk management with a view to improving practices and service delivery in Somerset
- Lead the delivery and regular monitoring of performance of actions in the Somerset Flood Action Plan [and of actions associated with the new Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034](#).

The Group has a “critical friend” role and as such officers from other organisations can take part of this Group to maximise the value it brings to the process.

## Membership

The Group will consist of a balanced mix of officers, including those from the following organisations, many of which contribute schemes to SRA Enhanced Programmes:

- Environment Agency
- Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium
- Somerset Council – (Lead Local Flood Authority, Highways, Civil Contingencies Unit)
- Wessex Water
- Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest
- Natural England
- Somerset Catchment Partnership
- Somerset Wildlife Trust

SRA Technical Group meets every 6 weeks.

In addition to the roles above, the Group can also make comment or recommendations on other activities such as consultation requirements for particular schemes, etc.

## Appendix 6: SRA Scheme of Delegation

### SRA decision-making processes

For as long as the SRA remains an informal partnership and not a legal entity, any decisions of the SRA Board are decisions 'in principle' and are subject to formal approval by its host authority and the accountable body for the funding it has access to. The host authority and accountable body for all the SRA funding is Somerset Council, which makes the necessary formal decisions with regard to programmes of work and spend according to the Somerset Council decision making processes including the Somerset Council scheme of delegations. These decisions, however, are informed by the SRA Board's decisions, and the decisions it makes under its own scheme of delegation; it is expected that Somerset Council's decisions will follow the SRA Board's decisions, unless they are either illegal, would put the host authority at undue financial risk, or go against Somerset Council's own code of conduct.

### SRA Delegations

The general principles guiding the SRA's scheme of delegations are as follows:

- The SRA Board approves all Programmes of work
- No works in any of the Board approved Programmes can be deleted without SRA Board approval
- No change can be agreed that means the total SRA expenditure exceeds the total funding available across all Programmes.
- All individual works within Programmes have tolerances set
- These delegations will be kept under review and amended as deemed necessary

The Programmes of work to which these delegations apply are shown below:

- The SRA's current year Enhanced Programme. This comprises the flood risk management works for which funding has been agreed by the SRA Board on 8 March 2024.
- Outstanding works from previous years of the SRA's Enhanced Programmes.

Changes to the Programmes can be made by the SRA Senior Manager, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the SRA Board, subject to the following:

- Each change requires a formal decision paper and a record of that decision will be kept
- A report of all changes made within the previous quarter will be reviewed by the SRA Board at the SRA Board meeting at the end of that quarter
- The SRA Management Group will review all changes made since the previous Management Group meeting.

The following changes can be made by the SRA Senior Manager in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the SRA Board.

1. Additional works can be added as long as they are the next affordable works on the prioritised list of works of the SRA Board approved Enhanced Programme. Tolerance up to £500,000.
2. New works proposed by the Technical Group can be added to the SRA's Enhanced Programme during the course of a year. Tolerance up to £20,000.
3. Cost increases to individual works in SRA Enhanced Programmes. Tolerance up to £500,000 or 30% of the original budget for that works, whichever is the smaller.



## Appendix 7: SRA Grant Guidelines

SRA grant guidelines are approved by the SRA Board and used to ensure a consistent approach to assessing proposals submitted for SRA funding.

### 1. Geographic scope

- Fundable works can be in or outside the county as long as they deliver Flood Action Plan objectives of benefit to Somerset. Spend outside the county boundary will only be in exceptional circumstances.
- The important factor is where the benefit is gained i.e. there is no requirement for equal spend geographically across the county
  - We will develop a programme annually that is balanced, geographically, and by type of activity, and will use judgement to assess this balance
  - The SRA will not generally fund works for protection from coastal flooding, with the coast as defined by The Coastal Protection Act 1949

### 2. Financial

- The SRA will fund those projects and schemes that deliver our objectives that cannot be funded from current funding streams
- SRA funding is to deliver extra over and above what would otherwise be affordable. SRA funding cannot be used to replace existing funding
- The SRA will expect that partners and other applicants have tried to secure other sources of funding before seeking SRA funding
- The SRA will encourage proposals which will lever in additional funding from other sources (i.e. jointly funded projects/works)
- The SRA does not fund emergency response and recovery actions which are the responsibility of the agencies best placed to respond to such emergencies.

### 3. The long view

- The SRA will assess proposals for funding against the following:
  - a) Whole life costs – to understand if there will be ongoing costs and how they will be funded
  - b) Community benefits/dis benefits – to understand what additional benefits a scheme may deliver and if there could also be negative impacts
  - c) Economic benefits/dis benefits – to understand how a proposal will support the local economy and also if it could have a negative impact on it
  - d) Environmental benefits/dis benefits – to understand what benefits or possible negative impacts a proposal may have on wider environmental issues
  - e) Addressing the Climate Emergency – to encourage projects which directly support Somerset's response to climate change by increasing resilience and encouraging adaptation to the effects of climate change
  - f) Long-term strategic plans – to understand how the proposal can support the strategic plans and objectives of other organisations

#### **4. Flood Risk and evidence**

- The SRA will support proposals that meet one or more of the *Somerset Rivers Authority Strategy 2024-2034* objectives
- Concurrent with taking action and delivering works on the ground the SRA will take the opportunity to gather evidence and monitor the impacts of its actions and activities
- The SRA will rely on technical professional judgement from SRA partners, combined with existing modelling, *where appropriate*, to assess in-combination effects across the catchments

#### **5. Responsibilities**

- The SRA only funds and undertakes works/projects that benefit the wider community
- The SRA expects property owners (land, buildings and infrastructure) to make themselves and their property more resilient and put plans in place to manage their flood risk
- The SRA will seek to raise awareness about riparian responsibilities and encourage riparian owners to fulfil those obligations and responsibilities

#### **6. Relationships and weightings**

- The SRA uses a scoring mechanism, based on the six Flood Action Plan objectives, to determine the relative importance of different types and scales of need, flood risk management work and different benefits/dis benefits

## Appendix 2 - Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

### 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board is asked to:

1. Approve the 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget
2. Agree that should the River Sowey- King's Sedgemoor Drain project not be confirmed as proceeding in 2024-25 by 30 April 2024, then some of the funds allocated to this project will be re-allocated to fund the reserve projects listed in Table D.

#### Purpose of the item

To review and approve the 2024-25 Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Enhanced Programme and Budget.

#### Background and context

2024-25 will be the tenth year that the SRA funds an 'Enhanced Programme' of actions to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset residents and businesses. This extra level of protection is funded by a shadow precept raised through council tax. The Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) also contribute £10,000 each per annum. The shadow precept and IDBs' contribution for the financial year 2024-25 will total approximately £3.079m. 2024-25 SRA funding was confirmed at Somerset Council's budget setting meeting on 20th February.

#### Latest status

Sixteen grant proposals with a total value of £3.687m were submitted by SRA partners in August 2023. It will not be possible to fund all actions as there are insufficient funds.

All grant proposals were scored against criteria reflecting Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan (FAP) aims and objectives. They were then reviewed by Workstream Leads and SRA Technical Group members at a meeting on 9 November 2023.

Development of the 2024-25 Enhanced Programme has been complicated by needing to allow for the possibility that further works – up to 1.8km of bank raising - on the River Sowey – King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) Enhancements Scheme (Phase 1) may or may not take

place during the 2024-25 financial year. This uncertainty is a result of there currently being no confirmed delivery partner to take forward the work. Somerset Drainage Board Consortium staff are investigating the feasibility of doing further work during 2024-25.

It is proposed that the 2024-25 Enhanced Programme includes an allowance for River Sowey - King's Sedgemoor Drain works as the SRA Board has stated that it wishes to see Phase 1 of this project completed. A list of reserve actions is also proposed so that if the River Sowey-King's Sedgemoor Drain project cannot proceed during 2024-25 other proposals can go ahead. A deadline of 30 April 2024 has been set for a decision on whether to proceed with the River Sowey-King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD). This deadline offers the correct balance between allowing time to investigate the feasibility of proceeding this year, and time to allow reserve actions to progress if the Sowey-KSD project does not.

## 2024-25 Budget Summary

Table A below presents the 2024-25 budget for approval. The estimated income of the shadow precept and IDB contributions for 2024-25 is £3.079m. The available contingency amount has been forecasted from the current Q3 2023-24 Finance Paper. (See ITEM 6)

**Table A**

<b>Forecast Income and Contingency</b>		
2024-25 shadow precept and IDBs' contribution		£3,078,886
Available contingency (subject to recommendation in Q2 2023-24 Finance Summary)		£580,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,658,886</b>
<b>Proposed Expenditure, Starting Contingency</b>		
SRA core staffing (4.2FTE) and overheads, legal, finance, governance, audit, etc.		£310,000
2024-25 proposed Enhanced Programme ( <i>Table B</i> )		£2,746,595
Starting Contingency		£602,291
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,655,886</b>

## Actions recommended to the Board for approval

**Table B** below lists the Actions that are recommended for approval. The 'location' column simply refers to the location an activity takes place, in many instances benefits of projects are realised across a wide area and in more than one area.

<b>SRA Reference</b>	<b>Title of Action</b>	<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Location</b>
IDB19-25	River Parrett maintenance: Water Injection Dredging and silt monitoring	W1	Somerset North

IDB19a-25	River Parrett maintenance: Enhanced Water Injection Dredging	W1	Somerset North
LP GD2-b - 25	Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements Scheme (KSD Bank Raising)	W1	Levels and Moors
EA17-25	Bridgwater Tidal Barrier (contribution)	W1	Bridgwater
FWLM01-24	Hills to Levels – Land Management and Natural Flood Management (NFM)	W2	Across Somerset
SCSouth01	Chard Reservoir Improvements	W3	Chard
SCWW01	Local flood risk management measures across Somerset	W3	Across Somerset
LHA03-25	Enhanced Maintenance: Gully Cleansing	W4	Across Somerset
LHA04-25	Enhanced Maintenance: Proactive Drain Jetting	W4	Across Somerset
SWT01	Adapting Somerset	W5	Across Somerset
WS5-3-25	Community flood warning systems	W5	Somerset East
SRALP16-25	Equipment and training grants for Somerset community groups	W5	Across Somerset

Appendix 1 provides detailed descriptions for each grant proposal listed above.

### Table C: Workstream summary

SRA actions are sorted into five workstreams as set out in the Flood Action Plan, though in practice different elements sometimes overlap.

Workstream	Title	Value	% of Total
W1	Dredging and River Management	£1,350,000	49%
W2	Land Management including NFM	£300,000	11%
W3	Urban Water Management	£526,595	19%
W4	Resilient Infrastructure	£425,000	16%
W5	Building Local Resilience	£145,000	5%
		<b>£2,746,595</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Reserve Actions

Actions listed in Table D will be held in reserve until a final decision is taken on whether to proceed with River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain works.

**Table D**

<b>SRA Reference</b>	<b>Title of Action</b>	<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Location</b>
LHA01-24	De-silting structures	W1	Somerset West and East
IDB19a-25	River Parrett Maintenance- Enhanced Water Injection Dredging (Top up)	W1	Somerset North
IDBEA01	Siphons Appraisal	W1	Somerset North and East
IDB33	Cobbs Leaze Clyce	W1	Somerset North
FWLM03-25	Somerset Trees For Water Action Fund	W2	Across Somerset

The estimated cost of reserve actions in table D totals £340,000. If the River Sowy-KSD project does not progress, some of the funds set aside for this will be used to fund the reserve projects instead. Funds not required for the reserve projects will be retained as a contribution to completion of River Sowy - King's Sedgemoor Drain works in future years, reducing the demand on any individual future year's precept.

### **Summary**

The 12 actions in Table B are recommended for approval as part of the 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme. It may not be possible to proceed with the River Sowy-KSD enhancements scheme during 2024-25.

The five actions in Table D are recommended as reserve projects should the River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements Scheme not be able to progress during 2024-25.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board is asked to:

1. Approve the 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget
2. Agree that should the River Sowy- King's Sedgemoor Drain project not be confirmed as proceeding in 2024-25 by 30 April 2024, then some of the funds allocated to this project will be re-allocated to fund the reserve projects listed in Table D.

**Date:** 28 February 2024

**Authors:** David Mitchell and Caroline Dunn, Somerset Rivers Authority

**Appendix 1:** 2024-25 SRA proposed Enhanced Programme action summaries

**Appendix 2:** Confidential: 2024-25 SRA proposed Enhanced Programme action summaries and costs

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## Appendix 4

### **Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) 2024-25 Enhanced Programme: descriptions of schemes proposed for inclusion, plus schemes on a reserve list**

#### **River Parrett maintenance: Water Injection Dredging and silt monitoring SRA reference: IDB19-25. Workstream 1**

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is proposing to continue funding a long-running programme of Water Injection Dredging (WID) and silt monitoring along the River Parrett between Burrowbridge and Northmoor. This work is part of a series of measures helping to reduce flood risks for around 1,300 homes and businesses, and around 7,500 hectares of land, including 5.3 miles (8.5 kilometres) of A-roads and 30 miles (48 kilometres) of minor roads.

The Parrett is a tidal river. Enormous volumes of sediments flow in from the sea and from the river's big catchment (roughly 478 square miles in size, or 770 square kilometres). When sediments build up along the river channel, there is less space left for water, and this lessened capacity can have bad consequences for the area through which the Parrett flows. Since the devastating floods of 2013-14, a lot of dredging has been done to increase and then maintain the Parrett's capacity. Through allowing more water to be conveyed, dredging helps to delay the running of spillways and the filling up of moors, and to create possibilities for earlier pumping. SRA funding for dredging also helps to bring peace of mind to people, especially given the wetness of the weather over the last 18 months and the large amounts of water this has brought down to the Somerset Levels and Moors.

Water Injection Dredging (WID) has been advanced as a technique for the SRA by the Parrett Internal Drainage Board since 2016. It is much cheaper, quicker and less disruptive than conventional dredging using excavators, partly because WID uses the Parrett's own tidal power. Moving along the river, a WID vessel pumps out high volumes of water targeted at sediment build-ups identified through silt monitoring and channel surveys. Sediments are forced off the river bed and then dispersed through natural processes, downstream as the tide goes out.

Regular silt monitoring and channel surveys also give the SRA and its partners greater understanding of how the Parrett system really works. Such knowledge has many uses, for example in helping to manage flows during times of flood.

## **River Parrett maintenance: Enhanced Water Injection Dredging** ***SRA reference: IDB19a-25. Workstream 1***

As well as continuing to support Water Injection Dredging along the River Parrett, Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is proposing to pay for additional work by the Parrett Internal Drainage Board (IDB) along the river's upper banks. The reason for this is that while Water Injection Dredging is effective in removing sediments from lower central parts of the Parrett's channel, the higher parts of the banks are accreting in places where Water Injection Dredging cannot reach. Over time this build-up will make it harder to maintain an acceptable cross-sectional river area.

A short trial of Enhanced Water Injection Dredging therefore began in January 2024. Enhanced because the trial was designed to see what would happen when an excavator moved material from upper bank sections and placed it in the path of the Water Injection Dredging vessel for washing out to sea on the outgoing tide. Using the river's own natural processes avoids the cost and effort of needing to dispose of material on land.

As the results of January's trial were encouraging, the SRA is now proposing to set aside funding for a further trial in 2024-25 or for a properly established programme of upper bank desilting works, possibly with an excavator mounted on a floating pontoon in the river, rather than one working from the land.

Enhanced Water Injection Dredging would only target the upper parts of banks where silt build-up makes it challenging to achieve an acceptable cross-sectional area. Enhanced Water Injection Dredging would be limited so that it:

- impacted only one bank in any reach of river
- impacted an acceptable proportion of the river, regardless of which bank was being worked
- would be a rolling programme over 5 years or so depending upon evidence and need

Water Injection Dredging on its own is expected to continue annually, as has been the case since this method was first used successfully on the Parrett in 2016.

## **River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) Enhancements Scheme (KSD Bank Raising)**

***SRA reference: LP GD2-b -25. Workstream 1***

In March 2023, Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board members agreed that all SRA partner organisations should continue to work together on moves necessary to

complete Phase 1 of the River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) Enhancements Scheme. Providing more capacity in the Sowy-KSD system, so that it can be used more flexibly and effectively, is a key aim of Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan, which is overseen by the SRA. Remaining Phase 1 works include up to 1.8km of bank raising on the left bank of the KSD. Options are being explored by SRA partners for getting this bank raising done.

It is therefore proposed to put money aside to help achieve this.

Works on the Sowy-KSD system are part of an ongoing SRA programme to reduce flood risks across 150 square miles, including moors upstream of Langport and moors west of the River Parrett. People, homes, farms, businesses, land and infrastructure will all benefit from a greater level of protection.

**Bridgwater Tidal Barrier (contribution)**  
***SRA reference: EA17-25. Workstream 1***

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier is a major project led by the Environment Agency and Somerset 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, 2.67 miles (4.3km) of new flood defence banks and 1.74 miles (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, the furthest up being Bradford-on-Tone beyond Taunton, and Ham Weir between East Lambrook and Martock. Other planned enhancements include a new cycle and foot bridge over the Parrett, and the creation of up to four hectares of wetland habitat and up to eight hectares of open water in borrow pits (pits from which suitable material has been taken for bank-raising).

Most funding for this major project – which is one of the biggest in the country - will come from central government major project funding. However, some local match funding is required to secure the national funding. As in previous years, Somerset Rivers Authority is making a local contribution in recognition of the important role that Bridgwater Tidal Barrier will fulfil in protecting Somerset residents, homes and businesses. In total in previous years, the SRA has contributed £3.27million towards the Barrier project, including £2million of Growth Deal funding that came through the SRA from the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

## **Hills to Levels: Somerset Land Management and Natural Flood Management (NFM)**

### ***SRA reference: FWLM01-24. Workstream 2***

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is proposing to keep funding a wide range of land management and natural flood management (NFM) activities, as part of the multiple award-winning Hills to Levels project. Works across Somerset would continue to have two main aims. Firstly, to reduce local flood risks for people, properties, businesses and roads in upper and middle catchment areas. Secondly, to help protect vulnerable lower areas from flooding, by slowing the flow of water down through the catchments of the Tone, Parrett, West Somerset Streams, Brue, Axe and Somerset Frome.

For 2024-25 there are four main strands, all to be delivered for the SRA by the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW).

1. Design and/or implement up to 25 natural flood management schemes to retain water in upper and mid catchments and reduce peak flows of water down to vulnerable areas. Examples of places expected to feature are:

- Manor Farm, Lufton, downstream of major developments on the west and north-west side of Yeovil in the Wellhams Brook catchment between Yeovil and Martock: outfall improvements are being planned to increase the capacity of an important water storage pond. The SRA has previously funded extensive NFM works in this area.
- Wellhams Mill, also in the Wellhams Brook catchment between Yeovil and Martock: some initial works are planned here following the completion of an SRA-funded study into the feasibility of creating a 4-acre storage pond, along with a series of upstream scrapes and small wetland areas, plus the partial re-instatement of the old Mill leat. Wellhams Brook flows under the A303 and down into the River Parrett.
- The Old Water Works and Huish Barn, Somerton: two sets of attenuation ponds are being planned near the River Cary.
- Middle Stone Farm, Brompton Ralph: ponds with a pipe, four bunds, scrapes, debris clearance and tree planting, to complement other nearby NFM schemes previously funded by the SRA.

2. Increase the use on up to 25 farms of soil management techniques and cropping changes which improve the infiltration of water and reduce run-off.

3. Funding for responding to 25 referrals of cases from Somerset Council's Highways Department or its Flood and Water Management team. Experts from FWAG SW

advisers may be called in to advise on cases where better land management could help to fix problems such as roads flooding because of run-off from fields. In such cases it makes sense to address causes as well as symptoms. Extra SRA funding enables this to happen with partners working together to tackle issues beyond their usual limited remits.

4. Modelling and/or monitoring at sub-catchment scale to demonstrate the effectiveness of NFM measures that have already been installed. Special attention will continue to be paid to the Merriott Stream de-culverting project to assess its value in reducing flood risks. The effectiveness of NFM measures taken in previous years to reduce road flooding will also be evaluated.

### **Chard reservoir improvements**

#### ***SRA reference: SCSouth01. Workstream 3***

Somerset Council has asked Somerset Rivers Authority to give additional funding for works at Chard Reservoir, which is owned by the council. The council is planning to fund two schemes to preserve the reservoir's safety, firstly to raise a low spot in an auxiliary overflow chute sidewall, and secondly to reinforce the downstream toe of the reservoir's dam near the stilling basin by using a concrete block system or gabion mattresses, with a watertight layer or membrane below.

SRA funding would allow for a concrete wall to be built along the upstream embankment crest of the reservoir next to Chaffcombe Lane. The main purpose of this wall - up to 1.1metres high - would be to reduce the risks of water overflowing from the reservoir during periods of heavy rain.

The council's Flood and Water Management team also hope to secure funding from transport sources for a path behind the wall, which could be used by walkers, cyclists and anglers.

Chard Reservoir is popular with many visitors as an 88-acre Local Nature Reserve. The works outlined here would all help to maintain its value for people and wildlife, while reducing flood risks predicted to get worse because of climate change.

### **Local flood risk management measures across Somerset**

#### ***SRA reference: SCWW01. Workstream 3***

A three-phase project to reduce local flood risks led by Somerset Council and Wessex Water as partners in Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). Phase 1 would consist of an initial assessment of various complex flooding issues, relating to the interaction of groundwater, surface water, road drainage systems, sewer networks,

rivers and other watercourses and in some cases the sea, and the effects of climate change. Phase 2 would consist of more detailed investigations and the development of detailed designs. Phase 3, of carrying out works. Places proposed for inclusion are:

- Bridgwater, Camden Road, Haygrove School, Penarth Road, Showground Road, and Stockmoor Road-Stockmoor Drive
- Frome, Lower Keyford
- Watchet
- Wookey
- Wellington, Payton Road and Burrough Way

The SRA has been asked to part-fund this project (along with Wessex Water and Somerset Council) because the issues needing to be dealt with do not fall under the remit of any other single organisation. In such situations, there is a danger of a piecemeal approach being taken to flood risk, drainage and land management problems. SRA funding would enable a range of partners to work together on local priorities, and produce better, more integrated results for local people and local environments. A further aim would be to increase local people's understanding of flood-related catchment and climate change factors, so they could become more resilient and better prepared.

### **Enhanced Maintenance across Somerset: Gully cleansing** ***SRA reference: LHA03-25. Workstream 4***

Gullies in places most at risk of flooding across Somerset are currently cleansed once a year by Somerset Council's Highways Department. Extra SRA funding would mean that around 25,000 gullies could be emptied twice a year.

In common with the other proposal for Somerset Enhanced Maintenance detailed below (Proactive drain jetting), the aim would be 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 and the SRA's new draft Strategy for 2024-34. These works would benefit residents, businesses and visitors. Where possible, particularly as regards proactive drain jetting, which can be arranged more flexibly, works would be dovetailed with the Hills to Levels system of highway referrals to reduce run-off from land onto roads.

## **Enhanced Maintenance across Somerset: Proactive drain jetting**

***SRA reference: LHA03-25. Workstream 4***

Extra SRA-funded drain jetting targets places across Somerset at high risk of flooding. Drains are usually only jetted by Somerset's Highways Department on a reactive basis: that is, once they have become blocked. Proactive jetting is designed to stop drains from getting blocked in the first place, by removing silt and debris.

Between 100 and 125 places would be expected to benefit from SRA funding in 2024-25, depending on various unpredictable factors such as the weather.

## **Adapting Somerset**

***SRA reference: SWT01. Workstream 5***

The main aim of this project would be to help adapt and increase resilience to flooding and other risks linked to climate change in Somerset. It has been proposed to Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) by Somerset Wildlife Trust. It would follow on from the Adapting the Levels project, jointly funded by the EU and the SRA between 2019 and 2023, and the SRA-funded project called Adaptations and Associations on the Somerset Levels & Moors in 2023-24. It would make use of previously developed resources - especially the well-received Climate Adaptation Toolkit - and of tried-and-tested formats, for example, for training sessions. As these earlier projects have progressed, other places have expressed an interest in getting involved, so there is pent-up demand.

The Adapting Somerset project would have two main strands, firstly for communities, secondly for councillors and organisations that engage with communities.

1. Somerset Wildlife Trust would help three communities - selected in consultation with the SRA and partners - to develop and start implementing bespoke local climate adaptation plans (along with - if they do not already exist - community emergency plans). The process would include reviewing climate change projections for Somerset, identifying local risks (particularly flood risks), discussing and choosing opportunities for local action, consulting residents, producing a plan and implementing one or more parts of the plan in a high-profile way to prove that adaptation can happen and to inspire continued implementation of initiatives from the plan.

After this engagement, case studies would be produced about all three communities. These case studies would describe communities' adaptation plans and how they were created, and give details of actions taken. Through Somerset's Local Community Networks and other routes, these case studies would then be used to

show other places what it is possible to achieve and hopefully thereby inspire more places to work together on local priorities, including flood risks.

2. Somerset Wildlife Trust would also organise and deliver two climate adaptation training sessions for councillors from Somerset Council and town and parish councils, and for other organisations that work closely with communities, such as the Community Council for Somerset with its village agents. The Trust hopes to increase awareness, understanding and ambition around adaptation and resilience approaches across Somerset, encouraging more action to be taken on (and in) the ground.

### **Community flood warning systems**

***SRA reference: WS5-3-25. Workstream 5***

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) wants to expand a project working with communities on very localised early flood warning systems. The new area proposed for inclusion is the River Cam valley in the east of Somerset. Places here were badly affected by a Major Incident of flooding in May 2023. Around 180 properties were flooded inside, in 16 villages and hamlets.

This project began in West Somerset in 2019 and was then widened out to include South Somerset and Mendip. Progress was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, but with valuable technical support from the Environment Agency, places now involved include Comberow and Roadwater, Monksilver, Sampford Brett and Croscombe.

In these places, local people using local knowledge have picked out hotspots for gathering vital pieces of information about what is happening in catchments during very wet times and what is therefore likely to ensue downstream. Hotspots have been kitted out with flood gauges and other equipment linked to online dashboards so that local people can monitor what is going on, get alerts and get prepared.

Around Porlock, Wadeford, and Forton and Tatworth, suitable sites are being investigated.

The project's two main new elements would be:

1) Developing a local telemetry system for River Cam valley communities by installing flood gauges and other equipment, working with local people and the Environment Agency.



2) Extending the subscription to an online dashboard system to three years for all the communities involved in this project across Somerset, again with technical support from the Environment Agency.

This project is pushing at the edges of what is now technologically possible at some very rural sites, especially in terms of transmitting data. A guide to help community groups develop their own local flood warning systems will be produced when more lessons have been learned about how different systems work, and about how the development and use of these systems can be tied in with other local flood resilience planning and community self-help and preparedness activities.

### **Equipment and training grants for Somerset community groups** ***SRA reference: SRALP16-25. Workstream 5***

Since 2016, Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) has funded around 30 small grants to help places across Somerset get better prepared for any flooding that might occur and better able to recover from such flooding. The money allocated by the SRA for these grants back in 2016 came from what was then called the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). The aim was to help people build up local resilience, as recommended in the 20 Year Flood Action Plan that was produced during the floods of 2013-14.

The original DCLG money has now nearly all been used. It is therefore proposed to provide some SRA top-up funding so that small grants for training and equipment can be given to communities across Somerset for another three years. The scheme is administered through the Somerset Prepared partnership, whose members include the SRA and the Environment Agency. Organisations and groups applying for grants are encouraged to focus on specific local needs - as one of the strengths of this scheme is having the flexibility to respond to such needs. Grants have previously been given for items such as pumps, hydrosnakes, portable sandbag fillers, storage sheds, protective clothing, torches and walkie-talkies. Applicants must contribute at least 20% towards the overall costs of equipment or training.

The SRA's two community engagement officers keep in touch with grant recipients to help the SRA understand what impacts grants have had, and to learn from successes and any failures, so that other places can benefit from people's experiences and knowledge and stronger, more expert networks can be created. All this supports one of the five objectives in the SRA's new draft Strategy for 2024-34, to "increase the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, while adapting to climate change".

## **RESERVED LIST OF POSSIBLE SCHEMES FOR 2024-25**

As explained in the main paper about the SRA 2024-24 Enhanced Programme and Budget (ITEM 7), a reserve list of proposals has been compiled for if money put aside for King's Sedgemoor Drain bank-raising is not needed over the coming year.

### **De-silting structures**

***SRA reference: LHA01-24. Workstream 1***

For several years Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) has given grants for de-silting structures. The idea has been that de-silting bridges and culverts, and re-aligning channels close to highways structures, improves the flow of watercourses, and increases the volumes of water they can carry. This reduces the risks of flooding for roads, nearby homes and land. Whole systems can work more efficiently when watercourse "bottle necks" are removed.

SRA funding is again being requested by Somerset Council for 2024-25 as de-silting structures is not done as a routine operation by the council.

Sites that would benefit from de-silting are identified by Somerset Council's highways department through the use of records kept by local highways officers, or concerns raised by other authorities or members of the public.

The council is currently proposing to de-silt three structures in 2024-25:

- Fishponds culvert near Bishops Lydeard under the A358, between the A358-West Street junction and the A358-B3224 junction
- Church Bridge over the River Brue on Patwell Street in Bruton
- Little Bridge on Stoke Trister Road between Stoke Trister and Cucklington

### **River Parrett maintenance: Enhanced Water Injection Dredging**

***SRA reference: IDB19a-25. Workstream 1***

As described above on the main list of schemes. Re-appearing here because if funding currently set aside for the Sowey-KSD ends up being re-allocated, then it is proposed to put more money - another £100,000 - towards Enhanced Water Injection Dredging.

### **Siphons appraisal**

***SRA reference: IDBEA01. Workstream 1***

Siphons are pipe structures which enable water to go underneath a river from one side to the other without entering the river itself. In some places they are crucial for the ongoing successful management of water levels on the Somerset Levels and Moors. Yet because they are below the beds of rivers, their condition is often unknown, and because they are often historic, it can be unclear who owns them and should maintain them.

Siphons failing to work properly (if, for example, they collapsed and large amounts of water then went where they were not engineered to go) could lead to widespread flooding in some areas and/or lack of water in others.

Given this uncertain situation, and the SRA's remit to enable works that would not otherwise happen, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium (SDBC) is proposing to use SRA funding to investigate three of the 14 siphons known to exist in the Axe-Brue and Parrett catchments. These three siphons have been chosen because they are considered to have the highest risk. One goes under the River Brue about 1.5 miles north-west of Baltonsborough in the Watchwell Drove-Butt Moor area, one goes under the River Sheppey on the eastern edge of Lower Godney, one goes under the Old River Axe on the southern edge of Cross.

SDBC has four main aims. Firstly, to assess the siphons' condition through CCTV surveys and site inspections of inlet and outlet structures. Secondly, to produce costed plans for what needs to be done to reduce flood risks and ensure the siphons' longevity. Thirdly, to seek funding for carrying out those plans. Fourthly, to identify suitable future siphon custodians. Achieving these goals would benefit residents, businesses including farms, road users, and the special environments of the Levels and Moors and visitors to them.

### **Cobbs Leaze Clyce**

#### ***SRA reference: IDB33. Workstream 1***

SRA funding for this Parrett Internal Drainage Board (IDB) proposal would enable the IDB to assess and draw up improvement plans for two important water control structures close to the River Parrett on Pawlett Hams, between Dunball and the Parrett's mouth. One of the structures is an IDB-owned tilting weir which controls the penning levels for Pawlett Hams. About 70 metres downstream from this tilting weir is an Environment Agency-owned outlet into the Parrett estuary. Both structures have problems. The tilting weir's gears need repairing and the structure has a number of leaks. The Environment Agency's outlet has undercut concrete wing walls and a penstock on its upstream side that does not currently work. The Environment Agency has plans in hand to repair this structure but not to upgrade it. The IDB wants to ensure that water levels in Pawlett Hams can be reliably managed - and it

believes that the tilting weir could be operated more effectively in future if the Environment Agency's outlet could also be upgraded.

In line therefore with its remit of encouraging partnership working and enabling things to happen that would not otherwise happen, the SRA is being asked to fund a thorough assessment of both structures and the drawing-up of various costed options for improvements, such as combining the function of both structures into a single entity, and adding an eel pass.

Improvements would bring various local benefits, including reduced flood risks, better water level management and better protection for nearby freshwater habitats of international ecological significance.

### **Somerset Trees for Water Action Fund** ***SRA reference: FWLM03-25. Workstream 2***

A fifth year of SRA funding is being sought for the popular Trees for Water initiative, which helps communities across Somerset to reduce flood risks arising from surface water run-off flow pathways. The project is led by Reimagining the Levels (RtL), working in collaboration with the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW). At the time of writing (29 February), more than 100 planting schemes have gone ahead since the Trees for Water Action Fund was set up in 2020.

Trees for Water is designed to suit strategically important sites not large enough for Countryside Stewardship grants and not special enough in conservation terms to concern Natural England. Landowners say they like it because it is bespoke, forward-thinking and un-bureaucratic.

In 2024-25, RtL and FWAG SW hope to be able to fund the planting of up to 20,000 trees or up to 30,000 hedge plants - though in practice schemes nearly always have a mix of both. As in previous years, it is anticipated that the Woodland Trust will provide free trees and shrubs (worth £20,000), while the value of the labour of over 100 RtL volunteers is judged to be £10,000. Planting is usually carried out by landowners and numerous volunteers.

The more trees, shrubs and hedges grow, the more they help to reduce water run-off. All sites are monitored by RtL's tree officer and RtL volunteers so that lessons can be learned and shared about successful times and techniques for planting and aftercare, and so the benefits arising from sites can be assessed over time.



# Somerset Rivers Authority

## SRA Strategy 2024 - 2034

*We reduce the risks and impacts of  
flooding across Somerset*

# Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is a unique partnership

Our partners work together to achieve more for Somerset



## Our core purpose is to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding

# Executive Summary

Somerset Rivers Authority's core purpose as a partnership is to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset.

Our partners are Somerset Council, the Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee and Wessex Water.

The idea for Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) arose during the winter floods of 2013-14, the wettest winter for 250 years. Around 150km<sup>2</sup> of the Somerset Levels were submerged for weeks: 165 homes were flooded, 7,000 businesses affected, 81 roads closed. The cost to Somerset was up to £147.5 million.

During this flood, a range of organisations from across Somerset pulled together a 20 Year Flood Action Plan. One of this Plan's main recommendations was that a partnership should be set up to improve local water management. Somerset Rivers Authority was duly launched in January 2015.

Our partners work together as the SRA to achieve more than it would be possible for them to achieve individually. SRA membership enables our partners to go above and beyond what they usually do, to carry out additional schemes and activities, to do extra work on local priorities.

So that more can be done, annual funding is raised through council tax solely for the use of the SRA. We get around £3million a year through council tax. The IDBs give another £20,000.

We've written this new Strategy to shape how we spend this money across Somerset. It includes lessons learned from the SRA's own history, from Somerset flooding and the intensifying impacts of climate change. We have studied partners' own plans and strategies, held extensive talks with partners, and listened to the desires and frustrations expressed by residents, businesses and stakeholders across Somerset.

Accordingly, themes flowing through the SRA's Strategy are:

- **Working with communities**
- **Strengthening operations, boosting maintenance**
- **Building resilience, encouraging adaptation**
- **Protecting the economy from flooding**
- **Conserving and enhancing the special environments of Somerset**

What gives SRA works their own distinctive fingerprint is the combination of these themes.

Our core purpose, principles and themes are encapsulated in the following objectives. Between 2024 and 2034, we will develop and fund selected schemes and activities that advance these objectives:

1. Reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset.
2. Maintain access and connections during times of flood for communities and businesses across Somerset.
3. Increase the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, while adapting to climate change.
4. Protect Somerset's economy from the impacts of flooding, promote business confidence and encourage new opportunities.
5. Conserve and enhance Somerset's special environments (natural, built, social, cultural) for all who live and work in Somerset and visit.

The SRA will take a catchment-based approach towards fulfilling these objectives. A catchment is an area of land from which water - especially rainwater - drains and flows down into streams, rivers, lakes and often the sea.

We will analyse catchments to understand problems with excessive amounts of flood water and we will select issues about which the SRA can do most in line with our objectives.

Approaches will be taken which balance investment between upper, mid and lower catchment areas, and combine different measures.

We will fund proposals which reduce the risks and impacts of flooding, and benefit Somerset people and places in as many ways as possible.



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# 1

## Why an SRA Strategy and Flood Action Plan are needed



**Wettest winter for 250 years**



**150km<sup>2</sup> of Somerset Levels submerged**



**165 homes flooded**



**81 roads closed**



**estimated cost**

Somerset has suffered many significant floods over the centuries. The wettest winter for 250 years was the winter of 2013-14. Around 150km<sup>2</sup> of the Somerset Levels were submerged for weeks: 165 homes were flooded, 7,000 businesses affected, 81 roads closed. The cost to Somerset was estimated as being up to £147.5 million.

During this flood, Somerset partners pulled together a 20 Year Flood Action Plan. One of its main recommendations was that a partnership should be set up to improve local water management. Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) grew out of this Plan and we now oversee it.

Much has been achieved. Between the SRA's official launch in January 2015 and March 2024, we allocated an extra £29million of SRA funding – and £13million of Growth Deal funding from the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership for works to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding. Hundreds of schemes and activities have been completed.

A lot has also changed since 2014. More works of different kinds now need to be done, with people and places joining together to tackle varying problems with flooding across Somerset and to look to the future. With climate change expected to bring more intense floods to towns, villages and landscapes across the county, worse than those already being experienced now, people and places need to be prepared.

Ten years on, the time has come for a Strategy and updated Plan crafted specifically for the SRA, that both draw upon the experiences of the last decade and continue to benefit the people of Somerset well.

**£29m**

extra SRA funding

**£13m**

Growth Deal funding



2

## SRA partners

*Pictured above, works on the River Frome in Frome town centre*

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) is a partnership, launched in January 2015 after the devastating floods of 2013-14. Our partners are Somerset Council, the Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs), the Environment Agency, Natural England, the Wessex Regional Flood & Coastal Committee (WRFCC), and Wessex Water. Representatives of all these Flood Risk Management bodies sit on the SRA Board. The Board directs the SRA and approves budgets and programmes of work.

Our partners work together as the SRA to achieve more than it would be possible for them to achieve individually. Partners' own flood risk and water management responsibilities are not lessened in any way by involvement in the SRA (nor indeed are those of landowners who have watercourses adjoining, running through or under their land). SRA membership enables our partners to go above and beyond what they usually do, to carry out additional schemes and activities.

We have also worked with many other organisations and groups, most notably the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest (FWAG SW) on the award-winning Hills to Levels project, which helps to slow the flow of water down to vulnerable areas.

In the years to come, as part of the implementation of this Strategy, we expect and want to work with many more different organisations, communities, businesses and individuals.

### **What the SRA does not do**

We do not generally get involved in coastal flood risk activities, although the SRA Board may consider cases where a coastal flood risk project supports our objectives further inland. We are not involved in emergency responses to flooding or in flood recovery efforts. We do not comment on planning applications, because our partner organisations do this as part of their day-to-day business and we do not duplicate what they do.

# 3

## SRA funding



So that Somerset Rivers Authority partners have money to achieve more, annual funding is raised through council tax solely for the use of the SRA.

In December 2015, the government gave Somerset County Council and the five district councils that then existed the power to raise for the SRA an additional amount of money equating to 1.25% of these councils' 2016-17 total council tax charges. In 2016-17, the amount raised in this way for us was £2.757 million.

The power to raise funds for the SRA has since passed to the single new Somerset Council launched in April 2023. The charge is still at the same level as it was - 1.25% of the 2016-17 total - although the actual amount raised has increased, just because Somerset now has more households paying council tax. By 2024-25 the SRA's income from council tax had risen to £3.058 million.

The Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards also give the SRA a total of £20,000 each year.

Somerset is currently the only place in the UK that has this specific financial arrangement.

We use our funding to pay for extra works across Somerset, works to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding that otherwise would not be done.

# 4

## SRA History

### 2014-24



## The Somerset Levels & Moors Flood Action Plan

During the floods of 2013-14, organisations from across Somerset drew up a 20 Year Somerset Levels & Moors Flood Action Plan.

While recognising that nobody could ever stop flooding completely, that Plan recommended that different bodies should work together firstly to make flooding less likely, and secondly to help people get better at coping with flooding, when it did happen.

The Plan therefore proposed formally instituting a new joined-up approach to complex problems of water management, with strong local leadership and an integrated mix of whole catchment actions.

When the SRA was officially launched in January 2015 to embody this new joined-up approach, the Plan's scope was expanded to cover the whole of Somerset, and we began to oversee it.

#### Progress with the 2014 Flood Action Plan by March 2024



recommendations  
for actions in  
original Plan



actions  
completed



actions  
in progress



actions  
not progressed



*Dredging in 2014*

The original Plan made 61 recommendations for actions by a range of different organisations. Some were done very swiftly. For example, in summer 2014, the Environment Agency dredged eight kilometres (five miles) of the River Parrett and River Tone at a cost of £6million. A few months later, Somerset County Council’s Highways Department raised a road at Muchelney, so that people could still get in and out of the village during times of flood. This £2.6million scheme – paid for by the Department of Transport – won a national award. In total, 40 of the Plan’s original recommendations have been completed; 12 are still in progress; nine have not progressed for various reasons (chiefly to do with costs, intrinsic difficulties, problems being addressed in other ways, and better ideas being conceived).



additional  
SRA funding



actions  
approved for  
SRA funding

In furtherance of the Plan’s overall objectives, between 2015 and March 2024 the SRA approved funding for around 250 schemes and activities, quite often with many individual elements. Detailed descriptions can be found in the Flood Risk Work part of our website.

In total, between 2015 and March 2024, we allocated an extra £42million for works to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset: £1.9million given to us by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) for 2015-16, £27.1million from council tax and Internal Drainage Board contributions, and £13million of Growth Deal funding from the Heart of the South West Local





## Cheddar

Different parts of the county have different needs, so there is no single answer to Somerset's many flooding problems. That is why we were set up as a partnership, so that people could work together more powerfully on combinations of different approaches. The SRA has funded an impressive depth and breadth of actions, grouped into five workstreams:

1. Dredging and River Management
2. Land Management including Natural Flood Management
3. Urban Water Management
4. Resilient Infrastructure
5. Building Local Resilience

These workstreams reflect the local priorities of the original Flood Action Plan and of Somerset people, and the need to approach different challenges in different ways.

In practice, our activities have included:

- extra maintenance, repairs and improvements
- innovations
- collaborations
- enabling major projects to go ahead
- studies, reviews, and investigations
- long-term initiatives
- moves that respond to Somerset's special characteristics
- combinations of the above

This new SRA Strategy and a new Flood Action Plan will be seen to include elements of the original Plan that are still relevant and in progress, but they are otherwise now about what we want to achieve in future.

A changed context requires us to evolve our own ambitions for Somerset.



5

Taunton,  
1960

## The context now: Somerset flooding and climate change

### Somerset flooding

Somerset has flooded for centuries, in many places and in many ways. The worst incident ever known was in January 1607, when around 200 square miles of Somerset were submerged, plus other areas adjoining the Bristol Channel. Around 2,000 people died.

**More than 4000 events are recorded in the Somerset Historical Flooding Database.** Hardly anywhere in Somerset is more than a few miles from somewhere that has flooded and places that have not been directly affected by flooding have still been affected indirectly. The result is a county whose folk memory is riddled with anxieties about flooding.

**Across Somerset floods continue to occur.** Take January 2023 to January 2024. In January 2023, a Major Incident was declared on the Somerset Levels and Moors, following a period of very wet weather - the eighth wettest since 1891. Extensive flooding was averted by rain suddenly giving way to a period of unusually dry weather (less than 2cm in six weeks), and by a massive programme of Environment Agency pumping.

Hook Bridge,  
January  
2023





In May 2023, in the east of Somerset, another Major Incident was declared. In the area worst hit, North Cadbury, Galhampton, Yarlinton and Woolston, 10 centimetres of rain fell in 90 minutes one afternoon, an estimated 1-in-1,600 year event. Water levels in the River Cam rose over two metres in five hours and the river gauge at Weston Bampfylde recorded its highest ever level. In 16 villages and hamlets, around 180 properties were flooded inside. Outside, the force and volume of water moved cars and outbuildings. Parts of Wincanton, Bruton and Castle Cary also flooded.

In September 2023, around Taunton and in the west of Somerset, huge volumes of rain fell again during one storm. Over 10 centimetres was recorded at Roadwater; eight centimetres near Porlock, at Maundown near Wiveliscombe and at Kingston St Mary; just under 7 at Washford (the highest 24-hour total recorded there for at least 30 years). Around 50 properties and businesses were affected.

The period between July and November was the fourth wettest since 1871. After Storm Ciaran caused flooding in Bathpool near Taunton, in November the Environment Agency began deploying temporary pumps on the Somerset Levels and Moors. In December, extra pumps followed as the Levels and Moors filled. A Major Incident was declared in Marston Magna as surface water flooding cut off access to the village, and there was flooding in Bathpool, Wookey, a holiday business near Ilminster, South Petherton, Langport and a caravan park near Martock. In January 2024, Storm Henk caused significant flooding in places including Shepton Mallet, Croscombe and Frome with some watercourses reaching their highest ever recorded levels.

During this one year, more than twice as many properties were flooded as there were in 2013-14. And all of the cases of flash flooding referred to above followed earlier incidents in the 2020s in places such as Croscombe, Chard, Ilminster and Milverton.

This unpredictable, intense and changing pattern reinforces the need for a new Strategy.



## Climate change

When we are talking to people about their recent experiences of flash floods across Somerset, one subject that persistently comes up is climate change. People are taken aback by the ferocity, the heaviness, the 'incredible intensity' of downpours causing flooding.

The original 2014 Somerset Flood Action Plan was a document specifically written to reflect and assuage public concerns arising from the flooding that was then submerging large parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors. It referred to climate change just once, in relation to national planning policy and drainage systems on new developments, whereas now climate change is an all-encompassing threat. Major surveys by organisations such as the Office for National Statistics show that around three quarters of the UK's population feel concerned about climate change, and more than half are very concerned.

Just as people's feelings are rooted in their own observations and experiences, so SRA partners are seeing through their work that floods now occurring across Somerset are intensifying because of climate change.

SRA partner Somerset Council's Climate Emergency Strategy lists the following water-related impacts of climate change:

1. Increased risk of coastal, pluvial and fluvial flooding
2. Increased flash flood risk from extreme weather events
3. Further stress on already under pressure water resources
4. Increased competition for water between agriculture, industry, households and the needs of the natural environment
5. Drought impacts on water quality and supply

Increased risk is predicted to include more rain in winter months and heavier and more intense rain on the very wettest days of all seasons, particularly summer. Peak river flows are expected to increase: different possibilities for Somerset can be explored at a very local level by using the Environment Agency's interactive Climate Change Impacts tool. This draws upon fresh evidence to estimate the impacts of climate change on river flood peaks for every 1km square of catchments.

We will take account of the water-related impacts of climate change when deciding which schemes and activities to support with SRA funding. We will continue to learn from previous SRA-funded and climate-related projects like Adapting the Levels. Our central purpose will always be to reduce flood risks for Somerset.

In practice, we know that actual future impacts will always depend upon local conditions and how different factors combine. We know the most damaging and disruptive impacts often occur when different kinds of flooding overlap.

What we cannot know is what exactly is going to happen where and when. We will therefore need to plan and prepare more in ways which explicitly seek to take into account increased uncertainties and unpredictabilities. A more flexible kind of readiness will be required. Programmes of work should ideally be agile enough to allow for different actions to be taken at times when evidence from a changing world and changing climate suggests they will be most effective. Not too early, not too late, but as carefully judged as possible to reduce flood risks, to help people cope with flooding if flooding does occur, and to adapt successfully when need be.

*West Somerset  
Railway line,  
September  
2023*



# 6

## Lessons learned from SRA works so far

Some of these points may appear, in theory, to be obvious. But we list them here because years of experience have shown them to be of particular relevance, in practice, to SRA activities across Somerset and to the shaping of this SRA Strategy and a new Flood Action Plan.

### 6.1 Our joined-up approach works

A “renewed, co-ordinated and joined-up approach” to addressing flooding issues - as called for in the 2014 Flood Action Plan then ever since enshrined in the SRA’s Constitution - does bring benefits of various kinds for projects big and small. Particularly in highly protected environments, where works are legally bound to comply with numerous regulations, we have found that partners working together means more can be achieved more quickly and more easily. A joined-up approach is also very useful when partners want to go beyond their usual boundaries to get at the root causes of problems. For example, teaming up with the Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group SouthWest has enabled council highways officers to look beyond carriageways and roadside verges and ditches to places where water and mud and debris are actually coming from in problematic quantities, and to slow their flow and lessen flooding through working with farmers and landowners. Over the years many different measures have been agreed, including some changes in the overall use of fields.

### 6.2 New ideas and different approaches

Our special funding arrangements, layered partnership structure, non-bureaucratic flexibility and focus on going above and beyond, all make it easier for people to experiment with new approaches and different combinations of approaches. Local innovations funded or part-funded by us have consequently included the development of water injection dredging techniques on a tidal river, the use of ‘Stage 0’-inspired methods of river restoration and floodplain re-connection, the trial of payments for water storage to associations of farmers and landowners, the running of online auctions to engage farmers and landowners with natural flood management, and the detailed review and inspection of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) countywide. Such activities have put Somerset at the forefront nationally for addressing new challenges and opportunities in flood risk management.



*River Aller works, courtesy of National Trust and View It 360*



## **6.3 NFM as part of a series of moves**

Flood risk management can be successfully combined with environmental improvements, particularly through working with natural processes, but there are limits with regard to how much can be achieved and where. The ongoing 'Stage 0' scheme on the River Aller on the National Trust's Holnicote estate in West Somerset, part-funded by the SRA, shows that river restoration and floodplain reconnection can recreate more space for water, allow for more dynamism in a system, and quickly bring impressive environmental benefits, but this approach needs careful planning and monitoring and (ideally) lots of space away from infrastructure. It is not suitable for everywhere.

Our experience across Somerset has also been that the installation of NFM schemes can rarely be planned in the abstract. At some places that might be identified on a map as very suitable, landowners may not agree to works being done, or may not want to be obliged to maintain them. The best strategic results often emerge from situations where there has been good community involvement and communication, and offers to landowners can be couched attractively.

More generally, as a means of flood risk reduction, natural flood management (NFM) on its own is not enough to cope with more severe events. Our experience across Somerset has been that NFM works best in smaller sub-catchments (such as Wellhams Brook near Yeovil, the Marcombe Valley near Ashbrittle and the Horner and Aller near Porlock) where numerous schemes have been put in place which have a cumulative effect in holding back water. This can then allow for more control and flexibility in other parts of a catchment's system.



*Water injection dredging, courtesy of Van Oord and Colin Turner Photography*



## **6.4 Better knowledge, understanding, ambition and imagination**

We have found that it has become increasingly difficult for organisations to carry out or to fund non-statutory studies and investigations. Part of the problem is that water management in Somerset is an exceedingly complex subject, with multiple variables and uncertainties. The SRA is well-placed to help but ultimately we need studies and investigations, tests and trials to lead to actions that support SRA objectives.

A model case has been the ongoing development of water injection dredging as a technique, through experiments with different vessels and equipment, through detailed academic analysis, and through regular sophisticated silt-monitoring which has served to build up a mass of useful evidence about how the River Parrett works and what should be done in response.

## 6.5 Tighter focus on catchments and sub-catchments

SRA policies and grant guidelines call for the development of programmes of work that are balanced geographically and by type of activity, with judgement used to assess that balance.

Between 2015 and 2023, the geographic requisite was taken to mean that there should be a reasonable division of spending between the different district council areas that then existed.

Flooding problems exist across Somerset and people living in different parts of the county naturally like to know that they are getting useful and important works done in return for their funding of the SRA.



*Rode Bridge*

Generally speaking, this previous approach to SRA programme development worked well. It produced many worthwhile projects across the county from Rode and Beckington in the east to Dulverton in the west. But one drawback was that when district councils proposed schemes and activities as partners in the SRA, they were bound to focus on works that fell within their council boundaries. However,

council boundaries are rarely an exact match with river catchment boundaries, and this lack of congruence could be a limitation.

One benefit for us of the shift in April 2023 to a new single Somerset Council was the removal of the old district boundaries within Somerset. This helped to open up a space for us where we can instead more explicitly foreground catchments and sub-catchments. We want in future to be able to better understand flooding problems across catchments and to understand what issues will benefit most from SRA support. We want to set out distinctive SRA local priorities so that people proposing projects to the SRA will need to respond to those issues, not just their own.

Hence the creation of this SRA Strategy and a new Flood Action Plan, to get the best results with the money we have.

# 7

## SRA core purpose and core principles

Our **core purpose** as a partnership is to **reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset**. Everything we do has to include this aim.

Our **principles** as a partnership are:



### ● Acting on local priorities

By acting on local priorities and working together, we can do extra. We concentrate on what we identify as being important for Somerset, we call upon technical expertise and detailed knowledge, we agree on the issues about which we can do most.

We can do this because as the SRA we have been given freedom and money to do things differently. The Flood Risk Management Authorities (FRMAs) who are SRA partners have daily statutory duties to carry out, bound by national stipulations and calculations. We provide a more flexible local space, a space where people working together can be more wide-ranging, proactive and creative in the approaches they take to Somerset's flood risk management needs. Things can be more joined-up between organisations, **Page 74** local government and across Somerset.



When people look at things in a more joined-up way, more possibilities arise. It becomes easier for us to spot opportunities for bringing schemes and activities together. It also becomes easier to identify areas where there are gaps. Through a process of assessing which of these areas should be our local priorities, and by working together with communities to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding, we can then set about doing extra works.

## Working together

We connect different people, different places, different sources of funding, different approaches and ideas across Somerset. Working together, making concerted efforts means that more gets done than would otherwise be possible, in ways that provide good value for local people. Somerset benefits from the collective experience and knowledge of everybody involved with the SRA.

With so many people coming at things from different angles, the SRA expects occasional tensions to arise. People involved with the SRA are encouraged to work through such tensions constructively as a means of getting better results. Setting an example, at Board level, SRA partners may challenge and hold each other to account about different schemes and approaches for the overall good of the partnership and Somerset council tax payers, but they also cooperate, support each other, and take on collective responsibility for SRA Board decisions.

Bringing people together in the ways it does, the SRA serves as a public forum and co-ordinating force for informing and inspiring communities. The more people understand local flood risks, the more people get involved, the more can be done to act on local priorities.

## Doing extra

Our partners work together as the SRA to achieve more than it would be possible for them to achieve individually. Thus while partners continue to take care of their own flood risk and water management responsibilities, SRA membership enables them to go above and beyond what they usually do, to carry out additional schemes and activities, to do extra work on local priorities.

The SRA funds additional schemes and activities that otherwise would not happen. The SRA:

- raises extra money
- funds extra work
- provides more information
- gives people more opportunities to work together



# 8

A303 near  
Martock,  
2023

## SRA themes

Rippling out from its core principles, the SRA has five themes flowing throughout its work. These express in broad terms what it is important for the SRA to be doing. They are practical propositions for action.

The themes incorporate lessons learned from Somerset flooding, climate change and the SRA's own history. They also flow from study of SRA partners' own plans and strategies, from workshops with partners about this new Strategy, and from desires and frustrations expressed by residents, businesses and stakeholders across Somerset.

- **Working with communities**
- **Strengthening operations, boosting maintenance**
- **Building resilience, encouraging adaptation**
- **Conserving and enhancing the special environments of Somerset**
- **Protecting the economy from flooding**

What gives SRA works their own distinctive fingerprint is the combination of these themes.

The following sections flesh out what each theme means:

### 8.1 Working with communities

The aim of working with communities is to get more done than would otherwise be possible, and done in better ways. We are open to working with all sorts of people, groups, and places. The only rule we insist upon is that to get SRA funding, schemes and activities must benefit communities. The next most important thing is seeking to build a culture of mutual understanding and support, with people contributing and learning from each other in different ways. Then there are endless possibilities. Something that sets the SRA apart is its practical enthusiasm for and encouragement of ideas that bubble up from communities for dealing with flooding problems. We like to help people with good ideas but a lack of technical expertise and confidence turn them into action.

We also want to help more Somerset people learn about flood risks, so that even more may be motivated to get involved in suitable schemes and activities, through which they may help themselves and their neighbours to protect and strengthen the places where they live.

We will therefore continue to help create and reinforce groups and networks, through a range of practical measures. We will strengthen the SRA's position as a source of useful extra collated information, so that more people understand who is responsible for what as regards flood and water management, and people better understand flood risks.



## **8.2 Strengthening operations, boosting maintenance**

In a changing world, some basic needs persist.

Flooding is disruptive and at times damaging. Summer deluges – as seen in 1997 and 2012 when some parts of the Somerset Levels and Moors were inundated for weeks – are especially damaging for farmland and protected wildlife sites, when crops are growing, and birds and animals are breeding. Flood risks are predicted to get worse, and the SRA and its partners cannot control the weather or promise to prevent flooding. But carefully-targeted efforts must still be made to protect people and places.

In many places across Somerset, effective management of water levels will continue to be crucial for residents, businesses including farmers, road users and wildlife. This is particularly true of the low-lying landscape of the Somerset Levels and Moors, criss-crossed with artificially-created drainage channels, and studded with a panoply of thousands of water level control structures. Effective management includes having capacity to convey water away from troublesome areas.

Through the SRA, more funding can be given for maintenance and improvement works enabling greater operational flexibility, control and safety in the management of water systems. Types of work done may include dredging, riverbank-raising, repairs, replacements and upgrades, jetting, emptying, clearing and cleaning, and installations of new equipment.

More will need to be done to slow the flow of water down to vulnerable locations and to store water in suitable places, and people will need to adapt to a changing world. Such moves will be gradual and operational management, conveyance and maintenance will continue to be important.

## 8.3 Building resilience, encouraging adaptation

'Resilience' and 'adaptation' mean different things to different people, and frequently feature in glossaries with varying definitions. What is meant by them here?

Put very simply, in the context of flooding, 'resilience' is best taken to refer to a state of mind or a way of behaving that is one stage on from 'resistance'.

'Resistance' would like to see flooding prevented by big, expensive, imposing measures - like a tidal barrier - which mean that life can still go on pretty much as it does now.

'Resilience' would prefer to keep things as they are, but it accepts that flooding cannot be prevented. So, it is important to prepare for flooding in ways that mean people and places suffer as little damage as possible, and afterwards recover as quickly as possible. As part of recovering, 'resilience' learns some useful lessons for next time, then things largely go back to their previous state.

'Adaptation' accepts that keeping things as they are is no longer possible. Measures can still be taken to resist, and people and places can still become more resilient, but fundamentally different measures - perhaps even different ways of life and doing things - have to be seriously considered, and gradually and thoughtfully acted upon.

'Adaptation' is about people and places changing in ways that are going to mean their future is more successful than it would be if they did not change.

Why are these ideas relevant to Somerset and the SRA? Because across our county levels of flood risk vary from place to place, and some places are more vulnerable than others, because of factors such as their geography and geology. Therefore mixes of different measures will be needed for different places at different times.

People and places cannot be ordered or forced to adapt. We will help communities better understand their flood risks, because better understanding will be essential for people wanting to make their own decisions about the future. As people make their own decisions, we will offer support, advice, information and practical help.



## 8.4 Protecting the economy from flooding

An Economic Impact Assessment produced following the floods of 2013-14 found the economic cost to Somerset was up to £147.5 million, with the South West region also suffering. Among the main findings were that half of all Somerset businesses were badly affected by the floods, and that the closure of 80 roads cost the local economy up to £15 million. The impact on residential property was up to £20 million, and the impact on public mental health was “devastating”. Response costs for the Environment Agency, emergency services and local government were up to £19.3 million.

The flash floods that hit towns and villages across Somerset in 2020-23 and the Major Incident declared in January 2023 on the Somerset Levels and Moors reminded us of the impacts, disruptions and economic costs of flooding.

Through our actions and our ways of working together in the SRA, we will help to reassure businesses that Somerset is somewhere they can invest and expand. Our track record includes contributions towards the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier, which will help to protect more than 1,500 businesses; support for the development of the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme; and funding for drainage upgrades and extra maintenance activities which have helped to reduce costly delays and disruption on hundreds of roads including the A38 between Taunton and Wellington, the A358 near Combe Florey and the A39 at Carhampton.

We will help to generate confidence in the exploration of new opportunities. We are particularly interested in possibilities for growth that may arise from climate change and moves towards Net Zero, from national policy ambitions for farming and the natural environment, and from the inter-relationships of house-building and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS).

Furthermore, flooding should not necessarily always be treated only as a threat. Every flood presents new facts which could spur innovation and growth, in many areas including architecture, water-related technology and storage. Somerset could augment its burgeoning reputation as Britain’s green powerhouse by leading the way with transformative possibilities.

## 8.5 Conserving and enhancing Somerset's special environments

'Special environments' refers to habitats such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Ramsar sites, which are wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention and protected by law. Especially when working in sensitive areas of the Somerset Levels and Moors, SRA partners aim to get the right balance between land being too wet and land being too dry. The ideal sought is right amounts of water in right places at right times. That could mean large volumes of water being conveyed out to sea; it could mean the 'splashy conditions' favoured by over-wintering birds; it could mean peaty ground not drying out and releasing carbon into the atmosphere; it could mean farmers and landowners being paid to store water to help avoid flooding; and a myriad of other localised possibilities, relating to SRA themes and principles and to helping nature to recover and flourish.

'Special environments' also includes Protected Landscapes, such as Exmoor National Park and the Quantock Hills, Mendip Hills and Blackdown Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). It includes archaeology, ancient monuments, listed buildings, cultural history, and other distinctive elements of places (like the drangs of Porlock, the goyles of Crowcombe, the Somerset Levels' rhynes and the Mendip Hills' swallets) which infuse their character and give people pride and pleasure.

We respect the emotional connections that people across Somerset feel for their natural, built, social and historic environments. As part of SRA-funded works, local environments will be conserved and where possible enhanced, and different approaches will be taken at different times in different places to reflect different circumstances, including working with natural processes where possible.

*King's  
Sedgemoor  
Drain*



# 9

## SRA objectives

Our core purpose, principles and themes are encapsulated in the following aspirations. We will develop and fund selected schemes and activities that advance these objectives:

1. Reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset.
2. Maintain access and connections during times of flood for communities and businesses across Somerset.
3. Increase the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, while adapting to climate change.
4. Protect Somerset's economy from the impacts of flooding, promote business confidence and encourage new opportunities.
5. Conserve and enhance Somerset's special environments (natural, built, social, cultural) for all who live and work in Somerset and visit.

# 10

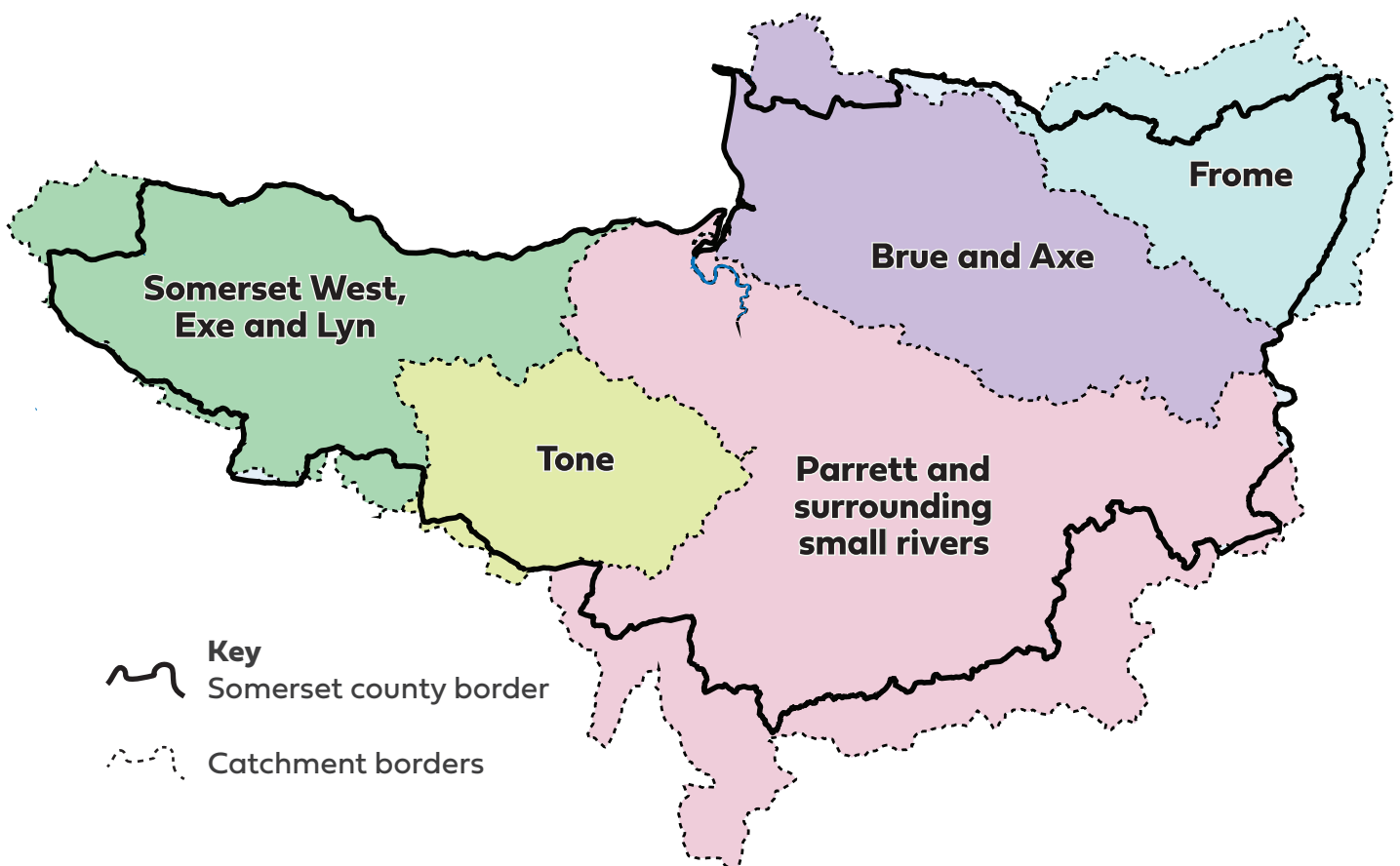
## How will this SRA Strategy and Flood Action Plan be delivered?

The SRA takes a catchment-based approach. A catchment is an area of land from which water - especially rainwater - drains and flows down into streams, rivers, lakes and often the sea.

Somerset's five main river catchments are the Tone, Parrett, Axe and Brue, the Somerset Frome (also known as the upper part of the Bristol Frome), and West Somerset Streams.

Parts of the River Exe headwaters, the Dorset Stour and East Devon catchments also flow out of Somerset.

We analyse catchments to understand problems with excessive amounts of flood water, we select issues about which the SRA can do most in line with our objectives, and we fund proposals which duly benefit Somerset people and places.





Approaches are taken which balance investment between upper, mid and lower catchment areas, and combine different measures. For instance, in general terms, SRA partners may seek to slow the flow of water down through upper catchments, store it in mid-catchments, and through lower catchments convey it safely out to sea or - when and where conditions are right - let it spread over floodplains.

We draw on a wide range of insights won through years of carrying out and assessing many different techniques of land, watercourse and infrastructure management, and of working with communities, businesses and special environments.

The ideal sought is to have right amounts of water in right places at right times, while recognising that definitions of 'right' will always be subject to negotiation, compromise and what in practice it is possible to achieve.

To support our catchment approach and inform future funding proposals to the SRA, we analyse the five main catchments in Somerset.

Our catchment analyses include:

- Catchment descriptions
- Summaries of specific local flood issues
- Maps showing areas at risk of flooding
- Indications of key infrastructure
- Details of SRA-funded schemes and activities in the catchment
- Notes on SRA-funded studies that could lead to SRA-funded works
- Areas of opportunity for the SRA

These catchment overviews are key documents shaping SRA-funded activities. Proposals to the SRA for funding have to show how they tackle issues of interest to the SRA and support SRA objectives.

The SRA wants to fund projects that are integrated with other relevant actions across catchments and tackle flood risk from many angles. We want more working together across organisations, leading to the cost-effective delivery of schemes and activities that have multiple benefits.

Each year as we develop a programme of works, we will bring together our partners and key stakeholders. We will understand what is already being done and identify where – with SRA help – more can be done. The expertise and knowledge of SRA partners and stakeholders will be crucial to the success of this approach.

## How is it assessed?

This approach should be judged by whether it does or does not “result in real action and changes on the ground”. That was the original criterion proposed in Somerset’s 20 Year Flood Action Plan in 2014: it still applies. SRA Board members, SRA stakeholders and the people of Somerset should primarily judge the SRA as a partnership by what is achieved through SRA-funded programmes of works.

The SRA is a unique partnership geared towards action. Our structure, policies, systems for scoring and proposals and assembling programmes of works are intended to be bespoke, flexible and unbureaucratic so that as much money as possible can be spent by SRA partners working together to make more locally useful things happen.

Specific results are measured scheme by scheme, activity by activity. Grant proposals are assessed using locally-set criteria directly linked to our objectives. Monitoring and reporting are proportionate to the scale and value of works undertaken.

Proposers set out in their grant proposals how they will monitor outputs and outcomes. Once a scheme is completed, a completion report is required with an assessment of whether the anticipated results have been achieved.

It is not possible to quantify exactly how each individual SRA-funded scheme or activity reduces flood risks overall across Somerset. To attempt to do so would be disproportionate and expensive. We want SRA funding to be focused on action on the ground.

The SRA Board oversees our progress towards meeting our objectives and ensuring effective use of SRA funding.

Annually, the SRA Board receives:

- Total number of SRA schemes and activities funded year on year
- Total number of funded schemes and activities that are new
- Number of partnership projects – projects involving two or more organisations
- A summary of schemes and activities completed in the last financial year with a statement on outputs and outcomes
- Analysis of the programme assessing how schemes and activities are contributing to achieving our objectives

Quarterly, the SRA Board receives:

- Amount of spend per quarter on scheme delivery as a percentage of total funds available
- Summary of total programme spend assessed against funds available and forecast future spend
- Summary of progress on delivery of the programme assessed against originally agreed timescales.
- A report on completed schemes and activities with a statement about outputs and outcomes

Nobody has all the answers to Somerset's flooding problems.

The SRA does not aim to replicate the roles and expertise of its partners. We need to draw on experience, expertise and innovations from around Somerset, the UK and the world.

The end point of this Strategy is to create a framework for extra projects and activities that blended together will help to reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset.

Our efforts are focused on action.

The SRA Flood Action Plan sets out what will be done and ideas for the future. As will be seen, it takes all the main elements of this Strategy and incorporates them into a dynamic plan that evolves year by year, catchment by catchment, action by action.



## **SRA Objectives 2024-34**

Reduce the risks and impacts of flooding across Somerset.

Maintain access and connections during times of flood for communities and businesses across Somerset.

Increase the resilience of people, places and the environment to flooding, while adapting to climate change.

Protect Somerset's economy from the impacts of flooding, promote business confidence and encourage new opportunities.

Conserve and enhance Somerset's special environments (natural, built, social, cultural) for all who live and work in Somerset and visit.