

## Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

**Title:** Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme – Progress update

### **RECOMMENDATION**

The SRA Board is asked to: Note the progress made on the technical appraisal, outline design and consultation for the scheme and plans to seek assurance in winter 2017 to begin preparation of the Transport Works Act Order (TWAO). Initial estimates based on the outline design show an increase in costs. This is being investigated together with options to reduce costs and will be reported at the next SRA Board.

### **Purpose of the item:**

- To update the Board on progress with the technical appraisal and consultation of the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier scheme.

### **Background and context**

- The Environment Agency and Sedgemoor District Council continue to work in Partnership to deliver the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme in 2024 subject to funding and statutory approvals
- Our appraisal and consultation of options concluded that the best solution for Bridgwater is to locate the barrier between Express Park and Chilton Trinity village. It also concluded that the gate will be a double vertical lift gate which has proven reliability in similar silty environments to that in the Parrett. We announced the preferred option in March 2017
- We consulted on the outline design for the scheme proposals in the summer
- We continue to consult with Parish Councils and landowners on the scheme and the downstream defences
- We will update the business case and seek assurance in winter 2017 to start the preparation of the TWAO

### **Latest status**

#### Consultation

- We consulted on the preferred option for the barrier and downstream defences in the summer
- Chilton Trinity Parish Council have raised objection to the barrier location on the grounds that the assessment did not fully consider the developing downstream defence proposals. We continue to consult their Council to explain our assessment and proposals in more detail in order to address their concerns
- Some landowners have raised concerns over the potential impact the scheme may have on their land and we continue to consult with them to understand their concerns
- We presented to NFU members in July and held a landowner drop-in session in Chilton Trinity in August
- We continue to consult the IDB on proposals for the scheme and we are keen to collaborate on proposals for silt monitoring for mutual benefit.

#### Outline and landscape design and environmental work

- Following consultation we are developing the landscape design for the barrier and its operational site
- We have completed baseline environmental surveys and have issued for consultation the Preliminary Environmental Information Report which sets out the scope for Environmental Impact Assessment for the scheme

#### Cost, funding and business case

- The preferred option estimate for the scheme was £60m to £70m
- Initial estimates based on the outline design show an increase in cost which is being investigated together with options to reduce cost
- We are assessing the economic case to establish the current flood risk and benefits and confirm the level of FDGiA and external funding required to deliver the scheme
- We will update our business case with benefits, cost and funding for the scheme prior to submission to the EA's Large Project Review Group

#### Legal powers

- It is proposed to deliver the barrier through a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO)
- It is proposed to deliver the downstream defences through Environment Agency powers under the Water Resources Act and planning application
- SDC/EA are seeking legal advice as to whether the proposals for the barrier impact on the current harbour legislation
- SDC have agreed pre-examination changes on safeguarding to include the preferred location for the barrier

#### **Next steps**

- Continued consultation with Parish Council's and landowners
- Completion of the landscape design, economic and cost assessments
- Submission of the outline business case to LPRG – winter 2017

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**Date:** September 2017

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