

## ITEM 6d

### Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

**Title:** Sowy KSD Enhancement Scheme Progress Report

#### RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Note the continuing progress towards delivery of the scheme.
2. Acknowledge the differing views of SRA partners that add complexity.
3. Accept the challenges likely to arise during engagement with landowners.
4. Acknowledge there remain risks that could prevent the project from being delivered.
5. Note further delay to the programme means construction is unlikely to be possible before summer 2019.

#### Purpose of the item:

To update the Board on the progress of the Sowy KSD enhancement scheme and to highlight current challenges and risks.

#### Background and context

As reported at the July Board meeting, there have been continual challenges in progressing the Sowy/KSD scheme. There are a number of work streams ongoing to resolve technical issues (pricing, risk management, HRA compliance); however there is also a continuing challenge resulting from a lack of consistent advocacy from SRA partners. The scheme will be difficult to deliver if it doesn't have the full support of all partners, in particular when engaging with landowners.

#### Latest status

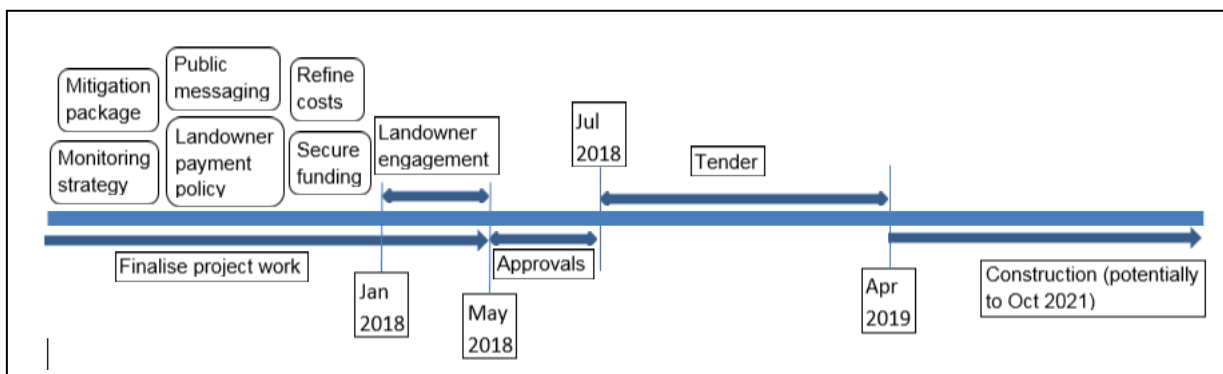
1. A Contractor is preparing to carry out the de-silt works at Parchey and Dunball bridges. Preliminary work is currently ongoing to satisfy environmental requirements and obtain external consents. A programme of physical works will be delivered once all preparatory requirements have been met; this is likely to be autumn 2018.
2. An Early Supplier Engagement exercise is underway, and will allow us to refine the construction cost estimate for the Sowy/KSD scheme, and to explore options

for managing construction related risks. This will conclude by the end of the calendar year.

3. The environmental mitigation strategy has been finalised in draft form, and is currently being reviewed by stakeholders. The proposed works are being scoped and priced by the supplier for inclusion in the main contract.
4. The plan for monitoring impacts after construction has been drafted and will be shared with stakeholders over the coming weeks.
5. There appears to be consensus amongst SRA partners as to the message to landowners regarding how scheme impacts will be managed. However, SRA partners have differing views on the extent of impacts, and it remains unclear how this aspect will be communicated. Unless all partners are able to fully advocate for the scheme, it will be difficult to progress with landowner engagement.

## Timeline

Due to these ongoing delays there is very little possibility of construction in the summer of 2018. Therefore construction is currently programmed to start in April 2019.



This allows the next six months to resolve all outstanding issues, in particular defining the messaging to landowners and how this is delivered.

## Risks

1. Funding issues:
  - a. Projected costs may escalate beyond the amount of funding available as a result of Early Supplier Engagement work or tender prices submitted.
  - b. Delays to the programme may make it impossible to spend the LEP finance within the available time frame. It may not be possible to secure alternative funding.

2. SRA partners may not be able to agree the impacts of the scheme and their importance, and may be unable to advocate for the scheme as a result.
3. Landowners may not be supportive of the scheme (for example, due to a lack of advocacy from SRA partners). This could result in landowners mounting a legal challenge, resulting in significant delay and cost that effectively derails delivery.
4. There is still the potential for legal challenge around the interpretation of the scheme's compliance with Habitats Regulations.

**Recommendation:**

SRA Board is asked to:

1. Note the continuing progress towards delivery of the scheme.
2. Acknowledge the complexities relating to differing SRA partner views.
3. Accept the challenges likely to arise during engagement with landowners.
4. Acknowledge there remain risks that could prevent the project from being delivered.
5. Note further delay to the programme means construction is unlikely to be possible before summer 2019.

**Date: 25 Sept 2017**

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