

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

Title: Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme – Progress update

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to: Note the progress made in the technical appraisal of the preferred option for the scheme and the plans to further consult stakeholders and the public on the appearance of the scheme in summer / autumn 2017

Purpose of the item:

- To update the Board on progress and plans with the technical appraisal and consultation of the preferred option for 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 have developed proposals for the defences downstream of the barrier and are consulting landowners on these
- We are developing the outline design for the scheme and will further consult on this in the summer to allow the development of the business case and Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) to secure the funding and powers to build the scheme

Latest status

Outline and landscape design

- We are progressing the outline design of the barrier including its operational requirements at the site
- We are working with our Operations team and have visited the Hull Tidal Barrier to ensure lessons and experience from its operation and recent refurbishment are included in the design for the gates
- We are assessing the visual impact at the site and developing the landscape design
- We have developed proposals for defences downstream from the barrier which include maintaining the existing on-line defences and building a new secondary line of defences to better protect communities and infrastructure in extreme events. (refer to Appendix A - Flood Defences Downstream of the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier)
- We are undertaking baseline environmental surveys and scoping the Environmental Impact Assessment for the scheme and will issue the Preliminary Environmental Information Report in autumn 2017
- We are undertaking Water Framework Directive and Habitat Regulations Assessments

Consultation

- We have presented our proposals for the scheme to businesses in Express Park
- We have held a public drop-in in Chilton Trinity to obtain views and feedback to help us develop the landscape design for the barrier and site
- We continue to work with our Opportunities and Enhancement sub-group to identify how we get the most from the project overall
- We are consulting landowners on our proposals for the downstream defences to obtain their views and feedback
- We will hold a further stakeholder and public consultation event on the outline design and appearance of the scheme on 10 July 2017 at Bridgwater Town Hall

Cost, funding and business case

- The scheme cost is estimated at £66M including 30% risk and contingency
- Initial forecasts of FDGiA and external contribution funding are sufficient to progress the development of the scheme
- We continue to assess 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 have met with the Environment Agency's Large Project Review Group (LPRG) and presented our scheme assessment and proposal to them
- We will update our business case with benefits, cost and funding for the scheme prior to its submission to LPRG

Legal powers

- We have appointed Bircham Dyson Bell as Parliamentary Agent who bring experience from the delivery of both Boston and Ipswich tidal barriers
- We have consulted with SDC Harbour Authority on the navigation clearances for the gates and impact on the current harbour legislation and SDC/EA will seek further specialist advice
- We are investigating options to secure approvals to deliver the scheme which include a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) and Environment Agency powers under the Water Resources Act and planning application
- We will shortly meet with the Boston tidal barrier project team to learn lessons and experience from their recent public enquiry.

Next steps

- We will hold further consultation on the preferred option and appearance of the scheme in the summer and autumn before submitting our business case to secure approval to prepare the TWAO
 - Preferred option consultation – summer / autumn 2017
 - Submission of the outline business case to LPRG – winter 2017

Recommendation:

- The SRA Board is asked to: Note the progress made in the technical appraisal of the preferred option for the scheme and the plans to further consult stakeholders and the public on the appearance of the scheme in summer / autumn 2017

Date: June 2017

Author: Andy Hohl – Environment Agency Project Manager