

## Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

### Title: TAUNTON STRATEGIC FLOOD ALLEVIATION IMPROVEMENT SCHEME - Update

#### RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. The Board note the contents of the report and progress made on the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Scheme for Phase 2 and consider this as an appropriate basis for continued joint project working.

#### Purpose of the item:

To update the Board on the progress with Phase 2 (Design & Development) of the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Scheme.

#### Background and context

This is an essential scheme to enable future growth in Taunton and protect thousands of business and residential properties from the many impacts (economic, social and environmental) that flooding would bring.

The scheme seeks to carry out the project development and delivery phases of the Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements urgently needed for Taunton. It builds on phase 1 work undertaken in 2014 which considered the strategic options to manage flood risk and the associated adverse effects of climate change. Phases 2 will involve a detailed options appraisal leading to outline design of the preferred option(s), securing full planning permission and clarity on land assembly. Phase 3 will follow and will involve detailed design and construction of the strategic flood risk improvements scheme.

The Board received a verbal update on this scheme from Tim Burton in October 2016 where they were advised that Taunton Deane Borough Council was working closely with the Environment Agency and that tendering for main consultant had taken place and contract award for the preferred consultant would be issued shortly.

#### Latest status

Since the last report the following key accomplishments have been achieved:

- Capita/Aecom have completed the draft Single Options report and this has been submitted to TDBC and the EA for consideration. This provides updated information on the technical performance of the options but also revised construction costs (£36million).

- Legal discussions between TDBC and the EA have concluded that the EA's powers of entry under the Water Resources Act 1991 are the only powers available to progress the survey work at Bradford on Tone with non-supporting land owners.
- Network Rail submitted a Basic Service Agreement quote for EA approval.
- Topographic survey in Taunton town centre has been completed
- TDBC has appointed a land evaluation expert
- Comms Strategy finalised - Stakeholder Engagement Plan

The completion of the Single Options draft report is the most significant step forward with this project since the Phase 1 report. It has been agreed by the EA and TDBC that further analysis of the Flood Defence wall option is required before a decision can be made on the options available and moving to the next stage of the project. This work has been recently commissioned.

## **Funding**

Funding for Phase 2 of this scheme (Design & Development) - £580,000 has been committed by TDBC and is expected to take the project through to submission of the planning application for these works and land assembly strategy. The majority of the funding for the Phase 2 works has been provided by TDBC. The SRA's contribution towards the Phase 2 works for 2015/16 was 65K and was awarded from LEP monies administered by the SRA. An SRA contribution of 65K has also been received for 2016/17 and agreement for a further 65K has been made as part of the SRA enhanced maintenance programme for 2017/18.

Full funding for Phase 3 of this scheme (Tender & Construction) is currently unsecured, and will depend to a large extent on the fully costed, designed and consented scheme that will emerge from phase 2. Despite the current absence of sufficient funds for the entire scheme, Taunton Deane Borough Council has already committed up to £6m of 'New Homes Bonus' funding towards implementation. Substantial contributions from 'section 106' and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) are also envisaged, administered by TDBC. Partner contributions will be essential to scheme delivery and it is anticipated that the scheme will benefit from funding through the Environment Agency, due to the large number of existing properties that the scheme will protect from flooding. As Members of the Board may be aware, bids were made to the HoSW LEP in September 2015 under Growth Deal 3 and DEFRA's 'Additional Funding Opportunities' for Flood Risk Management in summer 2016. Unfortunately these bids were not successful. Initial costs of the scheme are regularly being reviewed and updated with new information from flood modelling conducted by the EA.

Regarding revised indicative construction costs for the project, the reason for the increase in the project costs is that we now are refining the design of the scheme from a high level

concept to an engineered solution. This is highlighting more risks and providing more certainty in both construction costs and whole life costs. Final costs will be more clearly established at the end of phase 2 of the project and may increase further as land assembly requirements in particular become clearer.

This is a nationally significant scheme providing long term protection for existing properties. As such, TDBC and EA will continue to identify and pursue all appropriate sources of national funding for the scheme, which is important to the delivery of Taunton's Garden Town proposals.

In conclusion, our partnership approach to funding is focused on reaching the end of phase 2 whilst continuing to work with Environment Agency on identifying and if appropriate bidding for funding opportunities. This will include a mix of sources (local and national). The SRA's continued support is vital as we move through phases 2 and 3 bearing in mind the identified flood risk that Taunton residents and businesses face now and into the future.

**Recommendation:**

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. The Board note the contents of the report and progress made on the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Scheme for Phase 2 and consider this as an appropriate basis for continued joint project working.

**Date: 31 May 2017**

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