

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

Title: 2016-17 SRA Enhanced Programme re-allocation of funds for De-silting

RECOMMENDATION

The SRA Board is asked to:

- Agree to top up an existing Environment Agency funded project – Wessex De-silting – to enable additional Somerset reaches to be de-silted
- Remove the Andersea Pump Platform, Brue Banks Improvement and Treework projects from the 2016-17 Programme
- Agree the re-allocation of 2016-17 funds as proposed
- Allocate £61k of 2016-17 contingency funds to fund the net shortfall

Purpose of the Proposal

This paper has been prepared to outline the proposed re-allocation of Somerset River Authority funds in 2016-17 to enable additional de-silting work to be done and an automated pump solution at Huntworth to be delivered. The re-allocation involves halting work no longer deemed necessary, or justifiable as originally envisaged, at some locations and introducing new work activities that can be delivered as part of the existing Environment Agency contract for Wessex De-silting.

Background and context

The 2016-17 SRA Enhanced Programme includes a number of activities to be delivered by the Environment Agency and the IDB. In developing these actions it has become clear that some of these are no longer required (Andersea Pump Platform, Treework) or justifiable as originally envisaged (Brue Banks improvements). This, together with the underspends on other EA and IDB led 2016-17 SRA activities, provides an opportunity to enlarge the existing EA Wessex desilting programme to include additional reaches in Somerset. It also enables the delivery of an automated pump solution at Huntworth within the existing SRA Asset Improvements project.

The net effect of the proposed changes is a requirement of an additional £61k which can be met from the 2016-17 contingency of £108k. The table below lists the affected SRA projects and how it is proposed the funding allocation changes and the reason why a change is recommended.

Original Delivery partner	Task Title	Original Allocation (£k)	Spend to Date (£k)	Proposed New Allocation (£k)	Recommendation and Comment
EA	Andersea Pump Platform*	£30	£3	£3	Recommendation to withdraw funds releasing £27k – Andersea Pump Platform involved work to facilitate a temporary

					<p>pump. The pump platform at this location would not have the desired benefit in removing flood water from pastureland. The pumping capacity at this location is limited by undersized ditch network and culverts. Increasing this capacity is not economically sustainable. As a result the Environment Agency has now re-configured a water control structure at Lakewall which will enable flood water to be conveyed away from the area the pump platform was proposed to be built.</p>
EA	Brue Banks Improvements*	£50	£10	£10	<p>Recommendation to withdraw funds releasing £40k – The pre-construction tasks including floodbank design and an Environmental Impact Assessment are now estimated to cost in the region of £170k. Given that the flood risk benefit to property is limited and the subsequent construction cost is now considered to be multiple millions of pounds, it is not considered economically sustainable to allocate funds to support scheme pre-construction tasks without some realistic chance that future construction funding is provided. However we will be bringing a proposal to the SRA to investigate alternative machinery to carry out routine maintenance to tackle the operator safety challenges which currently exist.</p>
EA	Asset Improvements**	£150	£13	£254	<p>Recommendation to provide additional funds – Within this generic task title there are 11 separate projects. One of these projects provides reduction in flood risk in the Huntworth area on the outskirts of Bridgwater. The cost of delivering an automated pump solution at Huntworth and undertaking improvements to the main river and an IDB rhyne network is forecast to be £110k. This work is being delivered by the Environment Agency: it is forecast to be delivered in 2017. The additional cost is in relation to automation and bringing a main power supply to the site. This offers the most sustainable solution in terms of carbon reduction, enables use of an existing sump chamber on the structure and allows pumping to be done immediately, remotely and offers control on a rapid response system to avoid flooding to roads and businesses. In the long term, pump automation will reduce the need for temporary pumps to be deployed. The IDB</p>

					rhyme network is known to respond quickly to rainfall events and flood local roads. Pump automation will reduce the frequency this occurs.
EA	Pumping Station Improvements*	£300	£10	£260	Recommendation to move forecast underspend from Pumping Station Improvements (EA06) to Asset Improvements (EA05) – The cost to undertake improvements work to some of the eight separate locations has not been as high as originally forecast. Cost saving can be handed back to the Somerset Rivers Authority for re-allocation.
IBD	IDB De-silting*	£30	£1	£1	Recommendation to withdraw funding – The Internal Drainage Board are supportive of these funds being used to deliver de-silting activities as part of the Wessex De-silting Package (NEW TASK)
EA	Wessex De-silting Package (NEW TASK)**	£0	£0	£250	<p>Recommend that provision is made to re-allocate funds accumulated from withdrawals and underspend alongside topping up of funds from the SRA to deliver a Somerset de-silting task currently unfunded. De-silting activities help to improve the conveyance of in-channel flows and can help to reduce the frequency of flooding. The De-silt package is made up of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Dredging of the Westport Canal in Hambridge 2) Hamp Brook de-silt in Bridgwater 3) Silt Clearance at Long Load Pumping Station 4) De-silting on Isle Brewers Millstream 5) Stockmoor Rhyne de-silting in Bridgwater. <p>There are three key benefits in funding de-silting activities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Improves the local storage available in-channel and improves the performance of pumping stations 2) Channel de-silting also adds an amenity and ecology value in so far as it reduces the risk of de-oxygenation in the channel and fish kills in small, heavily silted channels 3) De-silting potentially reduces the frequency with which main rivers are weed-cut as part of routine work carried out by the Environment Agency
EA	Isle Brewers Flood Alleviation Scheme	£30	£15	£15	Recommendation to divert underspend (£15k) – The repair work has been

	– badgers*				completed by Environment Agency operation staff. The underspend was in part achieved by using material claimed from excavated material from Cannington Flood Relief Channel.
SRA	IDB Computer Hydraulic Modelling*	£50	£0	£0	The 2016-17 modelling requirements are in relation to pioneer dredging and can therefore be met from LEP funds. Recommendation to withdraw funds (£50k)
IDB	IDB Treework (various)*	£54	£2	£0	2015-16 Treework is still to be delivered and is capacity-constrained. It will now be delivered as part of other river maintenance activities on a case by case basis. As a result the recommendation is to withdraw the 2016-17 Treework funds (£52k)
IDB	IDB Parrett Maintenance dredge (underspend)*	£30	£0	£0	The maintenance dredge cost less than forecast. It is proposed to hand back this underspend less provision for outstanding compensation payments. Recommendation to withdraw funds (£30k)
IDB	Ecology assistance to the IDB*	£20	£0	£0	The requirement for ecology assistance during 2016-17 is less than forecast. Recommendation to withdraw funds (£10k)
<p>*Note: The sum total of recommended withdrawal or underspend is £293k</p> <p>**Note: Additional funding is requested for Asset improvements (EA05) and the Wessex De-silting package (NEW TASK). This totals £104k + £250k = £354k</p> <p>Therefore, additional funding of £354k – £295k = £61k is required. This can be met from the 2016-17 contingency budget of £108k</p>					

Latest status

The Environment Agency has used suppliers from its Minor Works Framework to select a potential contractor to deliver the Wessex De-silt package. Work is currently underway to ensure material can be deposited in a safe, sustainable way.

However an urgent decision is required from the Board to ensure that the full programme can be delivered, taking into account the environmental constraints associated with de-silting (risk to fish in the spring, nesting birds at risk in April). An early decision is needed to allow sufficient time to give notice to landowners.

The Environment Agency has halted delivery of work in relation to Brue Banks and Andersea Pump Platform. Internal Drainage Board officers are in full support of this proposal.

Recommendation

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