

ITEM 9a

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

Title: **UPPER TONE - 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:

- Phase 2 Contract signed by Capita/Aecom and the Environment Agency
- Phase 2 Collateral Warranty between Capita/Aecom, TDBC and the EA has been signed

- Communication & Stakeholder Engagement Plan V2 reissued
- TDBC has been progressing the appointment of a land evaluation expert
- TDBC has been progressing liaison with key landowners at Bradford on Tone
- Modelling is in progress: Do Minimum model runs are complete and Do Nothing model runs will shortly be completed. Simulations for do something scenarios are in progress.
- Topographic Surveyor selected

As Members of the Board may be aware, since the last meeting Taunton has gained Garden Town status – firmly rooting the county town’s position as a key centre in the South West. The success of the bid recognises the Council’s strategy to deliver major regeneration in the town centre, new sustainable communities, improved transport and supporting infrastructure, marrying development with access to green spaces. The strategic flood alleviation scheme underpins much of this ambitious growth programme and is essential for unlocking key development sites in the town centre and protecting many existing homes and businesses.

Funding

Funding for Phase 2 of this scheme (Design & Development) - £580,000 is now in place and will take the project through to submission of the planning application for these works and land assembly strategy. The SRA’s contribution towards the Phase 2 works for 2015/16 was £65K and was awarded from LEP monies administered by the SRA. Further contributions of £65K from SRA local partners funding were allocated by the SRA for 2016/17 and are sought for 2017/18.

Funding for Phase 3 of this scheme (Tender & Construction) is currently unsecured. However, Taunton Deane Borough Council has committed £3M of funding for these works. 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. Nevertheless, in order to unlock housing development in Taunton the Council has now bid for funding from the Government’s Housing Infrastructure Fund announced in the Autumn Statement 2016. In order to be eligible for funding projects need to be delivered by 2021. The strategic flood alleviation scheme is paramount to bringing forward the Council’s growth agenda and the Council has bid for £15M to deliver the Phase 3 works.

In conclusion, our partnership approach to funding is focused on getting to the end of phase 2 whilst continuing to work with Environment Agency on identifying and if appropriate bidding for funding opportunities. This is likely to include a mix of sources (e.g. FDGIA, CIL, SRA, LEP etc.). 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: 25 January 2017

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