ITEM 5

SRA 2016/17 Enhanced Programme
Mechanics of prioritisation

Well over 100 activities covering the Flood Action Plan Work streams were submitted by members of the Technical Group, representing the professional bodies working in Flood Risk management (FRM) within Somerset, for inclusion into the 5-year programme of work to be undertaken by the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA). During September and October 2015/16 it was believed that a priority short list needed to be submitted as a matter of urgency on behalf of the SRA to the Secretaries of State (Defra and DCLG) in order to secure funding for 2016/17.

Mechanics of Prioritisation

Appreciating the urgency, full appraisal of each activity to gain a clearer understanding of priorities using Green Book principles, would have been too protracted a process. Even a simpler scheme ranking based on relative flood risk scores allocated to receptors (people, property and the environment) benefiting from these mitigation activities would be difficult to achieve given the short time scale for a decision.

It was felt appropriate that as a surrogate for either cost benefit analysis or flood risk scoring (of receptor impacts and flood likelihood), a form of Multi Criteria Analysis (MCA) would be applied during a workshop attended by the Technical Group, who either submitted activities of work or are involved in flood risk management in Somerset.

Prior to the workshop each submitted work activity had been given a score (1 to 5) by its sponsor against 6 key priorities within the Flood Action Plan. These key priorities considered are;

1. Reduce the frequency, depth and duration of flooding
2. Maintain access for communities and business
3. Increase resilience to flooding for families, agriculture, business communities and wild life
4. Make the most of the special characteristics of The Somerset Moors and Levels
5. Ensure strategic transport connectivity in Somerset and to the SW peninsular
6. Promote business confidence and growth

Thus a score of 5 against any of these key priorities meant that the submitter of the work activity deemed that this key priority was the most important outcome of introducing this work activity. A score of 1 meant the key priority was the least important outcome.

At the workshop the delegates were asked to fill in any missing scores and revise any misunderstanding in the scoring process.

The delegates were split into 4 groups, each group containing a mix of delegates with differing FRM responsibilities and the groups were invited to weight the key priorities from 1 to 6, where a weight of 6 meant that ***between*** the 6 key priorities this was the most important priority to promote effective and sustainable flood risk management within the County.

Multiplying the scores of each work activity by the weight given to each key priority gave a weighted score for each work activity. Adding these 6 weighted scores gave an overall

weighted score for each work activity. The table below shows an illustrative example of how this would work (NB it is not a real example)

Key Priority	KP 1	KP2	KP3	KP4	KP5	KP6	**Total weighted work activity score**
Weight allocated by delegate groups to key priority	2	3	4	5	1	6	
Work activity score allocated	5	5	4	3	1	1	
Weighted work activity score	10	15	16	15	1	6	63

Repeat for each work activity

The total weighted work activity scores for each work activity were ranked from highest to lowest for each of the 4 delegate groups.

Similarities were compared (matched) for each groups' work activities in their top 20 ranked activities. 18 of the top ranked activities were represented in at least 3 out of the 4 groups.

These 'matched' work activities ranked in the top 20 were then discussed in forum to determine whether they were highest priority for 2016/17 spending from a technical and sustainability point of view using knowledge and engineering judgement. Those dismissed on these criteria were replaced by work activities that were not in any groups' top 20 but were deserving of inclusion according to collective experience. Type of work stream and geographical spread through the county were a part of the considered revision to the MCA ranked list.

The prioritised list was then reviewed and sense checked at two subsequent meetings of the Technical Group during November and December 2015. The total programme for the 5 years amounted to c £36m, with the first year accounting for £6.1m. The group felt that it would be useful to look at the capital schemes and revenue/maintenance items separately, particularly given the historic, current and future pressure on all the FRMA's revenue budgets, the spend to date and planned, using Growth Deal capital funding, and the difficulty of comparing the value for money of relatively lower cost revenue/maintenance activities, with the much higher cost of capital schemes.

The total amount of revenue funded activities across the 5 years amounted to £9.7m, i.e. just under £2m/year. With the need to put forward a programme to gain interim funding for 2016/17, and the widely held view, both within the FRMAs and the public of the need for additional maintenance, the group decided that the proposed 2016/17 programme should prioritise revenue activities. As a result each of the revenue funded activities was then subjected to further detailed scrutiny and challenge against a number of criteria (need, impact, sustainability, opportunities for savings gained through joint delivery etc.) and a revised prioritised revenue list was identified. The list of capital items was then sense checked, and given the likely limit of interim funding obtainable, only the top 10 priorities in the revised list were reviewed in detail and reprioritised. It was also agreed that the

Highways capital schemes would be looked at separately, particularly as it was felt that further work needed to be done to identify whether there were opportunities to tackle the road flooding problems more cost effectively via either Land Management or River Management activities.

Funding and Proposal for 2016/17

The total amount available to the SRA in 2016/17 (in addition to the Growth Deal funding) is £2.78m. and the resultant proposal for 2016/17 based on this prioritisation process was put forward to the SRA Management Group for consideration prior to discussion at the SRA Board meeting on 23rd March 2015, at which it was formally agreed.