

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

Title: Update on Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS)

Recommendation

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the contents of the report and progress made on Phase 2 of the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme.

Purpose of the item:

To update the Board on progress with Phase 2 of the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS).

Background and context

Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and the Environment Agency are working together to provide a long-term strategic solution to reducing flood risk to Taunton and where possible to the wider catchment. It is recognised that the risk to the town will get worse as climate change is predicted to increase maximum flood flows over time. The risk comes not just from the River Tone, but also from three other tributaries that flow into the town centre.

The strategic solution is required to protect existing property in the town and to allow the town to develop safely.

Previous studies, including Phase 1 of the TSFAIS, have pointed towards the need for a combination of: (i) improved flood defence walls in the town and (ii) an area for storing flood water upstream, to provide capacity for the long term (100 years). This work initially formed the basis of Phase 2 of the TSFAIS.

Latest status

Potential Technical Solutions

In August 2018, an update to the Board advised that work completed on Phase 2 included surveys, ground investigations, initial engagement with landowners, computer modelling, initial environmental surveys and concept designs to consider potential components of the strategy. To deliver these outcomes, the total cost to date on the

project has been £797k (Phase 1 and Phase 2) with TDBC contributing £522k and the SRA contributing £275k. This work has shown the major engineering work that would be required, both in the town and in the flood storage area upstream, to provide the desired level of protection for the next 100 years. If these two major components of flood defence were constructed at the same time the current capital cost would be in the order of £50M. A new flood storage area and its dam would also require a new ongoing maintenance commitment. It is recognised that the capital cost of this overall strategic scheme is unlikely to be found in the short term despite TDBC committing £6million of its own funding towards the TSFAIS and external funding bids being made.

The work already completed for Phase 2 identified a number of local intervention options that could provide a useful increase in flood capacity pending the longer-term delivery of the larger flood risk reductions flood water storage upstream and increasing flood defence walls in the town. In July 2018 TDBC and the Environment Agency agreed a revised scope with the supplier for taking forward a Project Delivery Plan to include these local intervention options.

The Project Delivery Plan scope lists the following options we are considering:

1. Bradford on Tone Storage Area
2. Raised or new flood defences in Taunton Town Centre
3. Vivary Park, Sherford Stream Improvements
4. Raising bridges on Mill Stream by Castle Street
5. Mill Stream flow diversions by French Weir
6. Optimisation of Long Run meadow storage, upstream of French Weir
7. Conveyance improvements on Galmington Stream (particularly consideration of culverts) near Parkfield Drive
8. Bathpool options:
 - a) Closing Canal Route at Firepool
 - b) Railway Culverts between Obridge and Bathpool
 - c) Flood Relief Channel at Bathpool parallel to Hyde Lane area
 - d) Over pumping at Old River Tone Outfall by Bathpool Bridge
 - e) Old River Tone Flap Valve Bund by Bathpool Bridge

The intention is that these local interventions will be complementary to the larger strategic scheme (upstream storage and flood walls) and are 'quick wins' which can be

delivered in the short term to buy the town additional years' protection whilst work continues on the longer-term strategy and funding is hopefully secured for its delivery.

These local intervention options are currently being investigated and results will be known in the next few months. A 2019-20 SRA grant funding request has been applied for to assist with the detailed design of the local interventions.

The Strategic Plan

This revised project scope will produce a plan that will describe a range of interventions and components that together will provide a long-term flood risk management solution for Taunton. The plan will include such things as:

- Likely order of delivery of the components
- Likely timing of delivery or “triggers” for delivery (short medium or long term)
- The benefits of the components, individually and together
- Estimated costs and possible funding sources
- Potential alignment with other programmes/development
- Authority best placed to deliver each component

We aim to have a Strategic Plan ready for targeted consultation with key stakeholders shortly to help us inform the optimum combination of the components, which will then be finalised.

A key part of the work will be to seek to produce solutions that manage any impact upon third-party land.

Recommendation

The SRA Board is asked to:

1. Consider and comment on the contents of the report and progress made on the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviation Scheme for Phase 2

Date: 13 February 2019

Author: Tim Burton, Assistant Director Planning and Environment, Taunton Deane Borough Council

Support: Graham Quarrier, Project Executive, Taunton Flood Project, Environment Agency