

**ITEM 14a**

**Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper (for information)**

**Quarterly Key Project Update - Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme**

**Purpose of the item**

The Environment Agency submitted a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application to the Secretary of State at the Department of Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on 19 December 2019. This paper summarises the current status of the application and what happens next.

**Background and context**

TWAO Application

The SRA Board agreed on 10 January 2020 to send a letter to Defra supporting the scheme as a formal representation to the TWAO application. This letter has been received by Defra.

Objections and Representations

The formal representation period ended on 13 February. Objections and representations received by Defra are summarised below:

	Statutory*	Non-statutory
Objections	10	8
Representations - General	16	9
Representations - Support	2	10

\*Classed as Statutory under the Transport & Works Act

**Next Steps**

Now the representation period is over, the project team is seeking to resolve objections (starting with the statutory ones) and is liaising with Defra.

February to April	Seek to resolve objections and liaise with Defra
May / June	Secretary of State to determine whether TWAO will be determined by Public Inquiry or Written Representations

If there are relatively few remaining objections, and no statutory objector wishes to use their right to be heard, the Secretary of State may deal with the application on the basis of Written Representations, instead of a Public Inquiry. The earliest we expect the Defra Minister to decide on which process will be followed is May.

The Written Representations process means the Environment Agency and objectors are each invited in turn to comment, in writing, on the other’s arguments. This route is likely to cost less than a public inquiry but the timetable for a decision is less certain.

The decision on determination of the TWAO by Public Inquiry or Written Representation rests with the Secretary of State.

Ground Investigations (GI)

Phase 2 GI were completed as planned before the end of the 2019. Land and in-river investigations confirmed higher rock levels than identified during Phase 1 GI. We will investigate how higher rock levels can be used to improve the barrier foundation outline design This has the potential to reduce construction time and cost.

Outline programme

Assumed date for TWAO decision	Late 2020
Complete Tender and FBC approval	Late 2021
Main contracts	2022-2025
Barrier should be operational	Late 2024

Note that any delay in the TWAO decision will impact on the other target dates.

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