

ITEM 14b

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper (for information)

Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviations Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS)

Purpose of the item

This paper summarises the current status of Phase 2 of the Taunton Strategic Flood Alleviations Improvements Scheme (TSFAIS).

Background and context

To protect existing property in Taunton and to allow the town to develop safely, a holistic and strategic solution is required. Somerset West and Taunton Council (SWTC) 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.

Previous studies, including Phase 1 of TSFAIS, 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 required major engineering work to provide the desired level of protection for the next 100 years. The capital cost and ongoing maintenance of this was upwards of £50mill. In July 2018, Taunton Deane Borough Council and the Environment Agency agreed a revised scope with the supplier for taking forward a Project Delivery Plan to include local intervention solutions that could provide a useful increase in flood capacity pending the longer-term delivery of the larger flood risk reductions flood water storage upstream.

The Phase 2 deliverables have been received. They set out a suite of measures, a combination of flood defences and storage for 1% Annual Exceedance Probability (AEP), 1% AEP + Medium Term Climate Change, and 1% AEP + Long Term Climate Change, and also include:

- Measures which have no significant impact to third parties, including Levels and Moors
- Recommended order of delivery
- Recommended timing of delivery or “triggers” for delivery (short, medium or long term)
- The benefits of the components, individually and together
- Estimated costs (capital and full life) and possible funding sources
- Potential alignment with other programmes/development

Phase 2 deliverables were shared and discussed with the SRA Technical Group on 15 August 2019. In January 2020 the SRA Board endorsed TSFAIS's recommended strategic and long-term approach to the management of flood risk in Taunton and confirmed their ongoing support of the project and its wider objectives. SWTC Executive on 22 January 2020 recommended to Full Council:

- the strategic and long term approach set out in the Phase 2 works
- continued partnership working with the Environment Agency to detail and deliver the TSFAIS short term measures
- £6million capital funding and dedicated project management capacity to support next steps
- development of a future funding strategy

SWT Full Council endorsed this on 26 February 2020.

The TSFAIS Phase 2 local interventions are:

- Optimise Longrun Meadow
- Raised or new Defences River Tone (left bank) from Frieze Hill to Town Bridge
- Raising Fire Pool Lock Gate and increased defences (left bank) Obridge to Firepool
- Raised or new Defences River Tone (left bank) from Frieze Hill to Town Bridge
- Raised or new defences on the River Tone and its Tributaries
- Pumping station at Bathpool
- Preventing backflow from railway culverts
- River Restoration and flood storage at Vivary Park
- Raising Castle Street Bridge & Bus Station footbridge
- Mill Stream flow diversion
- Upstream storage at Bradford on Tone

Due to the change in remit of the Phase 2 works the original timetable was extended. The risks were managed at project level. SWTC and the Environment Agency are discussing management approaches for Phase 3 interventions detailed design and delivery. The programme will sit within the SWTC Carbon Neutrality and Climate Resilience workstream.

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