

ITEM 11d

Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper (for information)

River Brue dredging

Purpose of the item

This paper summarises the current status of proposals for dredging work on the River Brue.

Background and context

As previously reported, in 2015 the SRA allocated £500,000 of its Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal (LEP) funding towards delivering dredging on the River Brue. LEP funding must be spent by 31 March 2021. The project was being led by the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board (IDB). Progress was difficult, in part due to the environmentally sensitive nature of the area of works. In March 2019 it was proposed that SRA Local Partner funding should instead be used to progress this project, to remove the risk associated with not spending LEP funding. This approach was confirmed at the June 2019 Board meeting. £225k of SRA funding is now allocated for project development.

Current Status

The June 2019 change in funding enabled the Axe Brue IDB to continue to manage the project supported by a Senior Officer Group from SRA partners to develop a proposal for dredging in the River Brue. A project scope has been developed but this needs to be updated to reflect the emerging Brue Catchment Plan 2020 to 2025 that is being developed by the Environment Agency.

Additional demands on Senior Officer Group members' time, brought about by Covid-19 restrictions, have delayed the convening of a meeting to finalise the project scope and promote incorporation into the Brue Catchment Plan. The meeting scheduled for 20 July could not take place and has yet to be rescheduled.

Next Steps

- Reconvene meeting of Senior Officer Group to develop project scope
- Appoint a project manager to develop the detail and deliver the work

The SRA Board will be kept informed of progress through quarterly updates and by consultation with key stakeholders as the project progresses.

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