

ITEM 15d

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board Paper for information

River Brue schemes

Purpose of the item

To update the Somerset Rivers Authority Board about progress with developing plans to reduce flood risk in the lower reaches of the River Brue catchment.

Background and context

At the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board meeting on 23 July 2021, the Board received a report advising that the Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board (IDB) was no longer in a position to lead on developing any dredging proposals for the River Brue. IDB members requested that the £279,000 of funds currently allocated to the Axe Brue IDB should be released back to the SRA and that those funds should be ringfenced for work on the River Brue once a suitable project and delivery partner was identified.

A list of potential actions that may help advance discussions on dredging on the River Brue was presented to the Board on 10 September 2021. It was agreed that updating of the existing River Brue model is a key action that is required.

The model can be used to inform discussions on resilience and adaptation as well as on conveyance and maintenance. At its December 2021 meeting, the SRA Board approved proceeding with updating the River Brue model.

Update

A Wallis Engineering Ltd has been commissioned to manage the model update and provide the technical assurance that it is fit for purpose. WSP, framework consultancy firm for Somerset County Council, have been engaged to deliver the modelling work itself. Key milestones include the following:

- Start date - 31 May 2022
- Face-to-face workshop with key stakeholders - 9 June 2022
- Draft outputs delivery date - 31 October 2022
- Final outputs delivery date - 28 November 2022
- Project closure - 16 December 2022

The face-to-face workshop took place at the Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium offices in Highbridge. In attendance were representatives from the Environment Agency, Axe Brue Internal Drainage Board, Natural England, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Somerset Wildlife Trust and the Somerset Catchment Partnership. It

was an opportunity to gain knowledge about the catchment as well as providing assurances that the work will have benefit to multiple users. It will deliver an improved baseline model which could be used for future investigations and provide an enhanced evidence base to inform any future interventions or actions.

The core team of SRA Project Manager, Technical Project Manager and Consultant will have regular progress calls to ensure that the milestones are met.

The SRA Board also approved funding for resource to work with stakeholders to identify the desired outcomes for the River Brue catchment and compile an agreed list of any issues and barriers that must be tackled to enable delivery of those outcomes. The Somerset Catchment Partnership will be approached to undertake this work as its members have already undertaken a lot of work investigating issues across the Brue catchment.

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