

## Somerset Rivers Authority Board Paper

### 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board is asked to:

1. Approve the 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget
2. Agree that should the River Sowey- King's Sedgemoor Drain project not be confirmed as proceeding in 2024-25 by 30 April 2024, then some of the funds allocated to this project will be re-allocated to fund the reserve projects listed in Table D.

#### Purpose of the item

To review and approve the 2024-25 Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Enhanced Programme and Budget.

#### Background and context

2024-25 will be the tenth year that the SRA funds an 'Enhanced Programme' of actions to provide an extra level of flood protection and resilience for Somerset residents and businesses. This extra level of protection is funded by a shadow precept raised through council tax. The Parrett and Axe Brue Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) also contribute £10,000 each per annum. The shadow precept and IDBs' contribution for the financial year 2024-25 will total approximately £3.079m. 2024-25 SRA funding was confirmed at Somerset Council's budget setting meeting on 20th February.

#### Latest status

Sixteen grant proposals with a total value of £3.687m were submitted by SRA partners in August 2023. It will not be possible to fund all actions as there are insufficient funds.

All grant proposals were scored against criteria reflecting Somerset's 20 Year Flood Action Plan (FAP) aims and objectives. They were then reviewed by Workstream Leads and SRA Technical Group members at a meeting on 9 November 2023.

Development of the 2024-25 Enhanced Programme has been complicated by needing to allow for the possibility that further works – up to 1.8km of bank raising - on the River Sowey – King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD) Enhancements Scheme (Phase 1) may or may not take

place during the 2024-25 financial year. This uncertainty is a result of there currently being no confirmed delivery partner to take forward the work. Somerset Drainage Board Consortium staff are investigating the feasibility of doing further work during 2024-25.

It is proposed that the 2024-25 Enhanced Programme includes an allowance for River Sowy - King's Sedgemoor Drain works as the SRA Board has stated that it wishes to see Phase 1 of this project completed. A list of reserve actions is also proposed so that if the River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain project cannot proceed during 2024-25 other proposals can go ahead. A deadline of 30 April 2024 has been set for a decision on whether to proceed with the River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain (KSD). This deadline offers the correct balance between allowing time to investigate the feasibility of proceeding this year, and time to allow reserve actions to progress if the Sowy-KSD project does not.

## 2024-25 Budget Summary

Table A below presents the 2024-25 budget for approval. The estimated income of the shadow precept and IDB contributions for 2024-25 is £3.079m. The available contingency amount has been forecasted from the current Q3 2023-24 Finance Paper. (See ITEM 6)

**Table A**

<b>Forecast Income and Contingency</b>		
2024-25 shadow precept and IDBs' contribution		£3,078,886
Available contingency (subject to recommendation in Q2 2023-24 Finance Summary)		£580,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,658,886</b>
<b>Proposed Expenditure, Starting Contingency</b>		
SRA core staffing (4.2FTE) and overheads, legal, finance, governance, audit, etc.		£310,000
2024-25 proposed Enhanced Programme ( <i>Table B</i> )		£2,746,595
Starting Contingency		£602,291
	<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,655,886</b>

## Actions recommended to the Board for approval

**Table B** below lists the Actions that are recommended for approval. The 'location' column simply refers to the location an activity takes place, in many instances benefits of projects are realised across a wide area and in more than one area.

SRA Reference	Title of Action	Workstream	Location
IDB19-25	River Parrett maintenance: Water Injection Dredging and silt monitoring	W1	Somerset North

IDB19a-25	River Parrett maintenance: Enhanced Water Injection Dredging	W1	Somerset North
LP GD2-b - 25	Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements Scheme (KSD Bank Raising)	W1	Levels and Moors
EA17-25	Bridgwater Tidal Barrier (contribution)	W1	Bridgwater
FWLM01-24	Hills to Levels – Land Management and Natural Flood Management (NFM)	W2	Across Somerset
SCSouth01	Chard Reservoir Improvements	W3	Chard
SCWW01	Local flood risk management measures across Somerset	W3	Across Somerset
LHA03-25	Enhanced Maintenance: Gully Cleansing	W4	Across Somerset
LHA04-25	Enhanced Maintenance: Proactive Drain Jetting	W4	Across Somerset
SWT01	Adapting Somerset	W5	Across Somerset
WS5-3-25	Community flood warning systems	W5	Somerset East
SRALP16-25	Equipment and training grants for Somerset community groups	W5	Across Somerset

Appendix 1 provides detailed descriptions for each grant proposal listed above.

### Table C: Workstream summary

SRA actions are sorted into five workstreams as set out in the Flood Action Plan, though in practice different elements sometimes overlap.

Workstream	Title	Value	% of Total
W1	Dredging and River Management	£1,350,000	49%
W2	Land Management including NFM	£300,000	11%
W3	Urban Water Management	£526,595	19%
W4	Resilient Infrastructure	£425,000	16%
W5	Building Local Resilience	£145,000	5%
		<b>£2,746,595</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Reserve Actions

Actions listed in Table D will be held in reserve until a final decision is taken on whether to proceed with River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain works.

**Table D**

<b>SRA Reference</b>	<b>Title of Action</b>	<b>Workstream</b>	<b>Location</b>
LHA01-24	De-silting structures	W1	Somerset West and East
IDB19a-25	River Parrett Maintenance- Enhanced Water Injection Dredging (Top up)	W1	Somerset North
IDBEA01	Siphons Appraisal	W1	Somerset North and East
IDB33	Cobbs Leaze Clyce	W1	Somerset North
FWLM03-25	Somerset Trees For Water Action Fund	W2	Across Somerset

The estimated cost of reserve actions in table D totals £340,000. If the River Sowy-KSD project does not progress, some of the funds set aside for this will be used to fund the reserve projects instead. Funds not required for the reserve projects will be retained as a contribution to completion of River Sowy - King's Sedgemoor Drain works in future years, reducing the demand on any individual future year's precept.

### **Summary**

The 12 actions in Table B are recommended for approval as part of the 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme. It may not be possible to proceed with the River Sowy-KSD enhancements scheme during 2024-25.

The five actions in Table D are recommended as reserve projects should the River Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements Scheme not be able to progress during 2024-25.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board is asked to:

1. Approve the 2024-25 SRA Enhanced Programme and Budget
2. Agree that should the River Sowy- King's Sedgemoor Drain project not be confirmed as proceeding in 2024-25 by 30 April 2024, then some of the funds allocated to this project will be re-allocated to fund the reserve projects listed in Table D.

**Date:** 28 February 2024

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**Appendix 1:** 2024-25 SRA proposed Enhanced Programme action summaries

**Appendix 2:** Confidential: 2024-25 SRA proposed Enhanced Programme action summaries and costs