

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board Paper

Update on £50million Somerset Flood Resilience Programme

Recommendation

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

1. Note and endorse the approach taken so far.

Purpose of the item

To update the Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board on progress and direction of travel of the £50 million Somerset Flood Resilience Programme.

Background and context

Following the allocation of £50 million from the Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to Somerset Council, the council has set up a Programme Advisory Group including representation from SRA members and other stakeholders to support development and approval of the programme of works. The approach and draft programme is currently being considered by the council's Executive Committee and we hope to have approval for programme governance and the approach for prioritising works shortly after 23 September.

The council has agreed with Defra that the start date for the two-year period will be reset to 1 October 2026, allowing more time for planning and delivery.

The programme is over programmed to circa £80 million to ensure the allocation can be spent within the two-year timescale. Delivery partners for projects include the council, the Environment Agency, Somerset Drainage Boards Consortium, Somerset Wildlife Trust and the National Trust.

Activities proposed are diverse, including major capital construction works, natural flood management, desilting, maintenance, flood warning and preparedness and more.

Projects are spread across Somerset and will build upon work done in the first Somerset Flood Action Plan (drawn up in 2014) and since.

A major element of the programme will be the council's My Community programme. My Community will provide fast, bespoke solutions to villages and towns across the county, regardless of which authority is responsible. The programme aims to empower local communities to cut through bureaucracy and get the support that matters to them.

Challenges and constraints include lack of staff resource, the two-year window to deliver, and complex regulatory requirements to be met. The risk of bad weather and unforeseen events is also significant for many projects.

The council is in the process of setting up a Flood Resilience Team to work on detailed planning and delivery of the programme.

The programme represents a unique opportunity to reduce flood risk and increase resilience and adaptation while delivering environmental benefits, against the backdrop of a changing climate and reduced public delivery sector capacity. The council and its partners are also seeing this as an opportunity to demonstrate Somerset's ability to innovate and effectively collaborate across risk management authorities and non-governmental organisations to deliver the best possible value for money at local level.

The recent paper to Somerset Council's Scrutiny Committee for Climate, Environment and Place requesting a steer about the programme's the approach and governance can be found here: [\(Public Pack\)Somerset Flood Resilience Programme Report Agenda Supplement for Scrutiny Committee - Climate, Environment and Place, 03/09/2026 10:00](#)

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Date: 2 September 2026

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