ITEM 7

Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) Board Paper

£50million Flood Resilience Programme Update

RECOMMENDATION

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

1. Note and comment upon the approach taken so far.

Purpose of the item

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

Background and context

Since the last SRA board meeting, the programme has made excellent progress, developing a project evaluation process and inviting communities to submit their ideas via Somerset Council's website, producing a standard grant agreement and getting into contract with delivery partners, agreeing a process in principle with regulators for efficiently screening and assessing environmental permissions, carrying out extensive engagement across the county and gaining agreement in principle from the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) to extend the timeline of projects beyond the initial two years, to ensure maximum value is delivered.

The Council's £10m My Community programme - fully funded by the Flood Resilience Programme - also began working with the first communities in Mudford and Ruishton to agree measures to reduce flood risk.

Significant progress has been made in feasibility studies for projects in Taunton and Chard and assessment of the effectiveness of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS).

The first two projects to begin construction works in earnest will be the Taunton Town Centre scheme on the left bank of the Tone and Water Injection Dredging at the confluence of the Tone and Parrett, early in the New Year.

Following approval to recruit the programme team, intensive recruitment has taken place and the Data and Intelligence and Community Engagement Managers have been appointed, along with two programme management graduates.

The Council's key delivery partners, the Internal Drainage Boards and the Environment Agency, have been busy scoping works to improve pumping and increase river maintenance.

The next period will include assessing all project submissions and prioritising and finalising the programme, completing recruitment of the programme team, setting up the environmental permissions screening and assessment process, getting into contract with more delivery partners, and getting more projects up and running.

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1. Note and comment upon the approach taken so far.

Date: 23 November 2026

Author: Piers Hooper, Flood Resilience Programme Strategic Manager, Somerset Council