

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	Planning, Housing & Economic Development Policy Development & Scrutiny Panel	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	7th March 2017	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		n/a
TITLE:	Update Report: WaterSpace Study and Strategic Flood Project (Twerton & Pulteney Flood Gates project).	
WARD:	All [in particular Bath Wards and Wards in close proximity to the River Avon including Saltford and Keynsham]	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix A: Emerging Pre-Consultation Draft WaterSpace Study (Feb 2017)		
Appendix B: Managing Flood Risk in Bath Information Note Feb 2017		
Appendix C: Q & A: Response to queries from the Abbey Ward Flood Group and the Federation of Bath Residents Association and local residents (February 2017)		

## **1 THE ISSUE**

- 1.1 This report covers two issues, the first is the draft WaterSpace Study which is currently being finalised for public consultation (this is a joint study undertaken by B&NES Council, Wessex Water, the Environment Agency and the Canal & River Trust) which the Panel are asked to comment on. This follows an introductory paper on this study presented to the Scrutiny Panel in May 2016. The second is an update on Strategic Flood Management project in Bath, specifically the proposal to focus efforts to secure investment to replace/refurbish Bath's city water level control gates at Twerton & Pulteney - comments are sought on this joint Environment Agency and B&NES Council project.

## **2 RECOMMENDATION**

The Panel is asked to;

- 2.1 Proposal 1 – Provide comments on the Draft WaterSpace Study prior to public consultation.

- 2.2 Proposal 2 – Provide comments on the Council's joint project to prioritise funding bids and develop a detailed Business Case to replace/refurbish Bath's water level control gates at Twerton and Pulteney.

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 The WaterSpace Study is a partnership project, jointly funded by B&NES Council, the Canal and Rivers Trust, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water. Resources have been secured to deliver the study, for completion in Spring 2017 and this work is within these budget allocations.
- 3.2 The Strategic Flood Project has secured £50,000 B&NES Council Capital funding to produce a joint Business Case with the Environment Agency (see Single Member Decision report in background papers). The Environment Agency has allocated £100,000 to the project. It is proposed that the joint project would lead to a funding bid for approx. £5million from DEFRA funding to undertake the works. An additional local contribution of up to £1million will also need to be secured, subject to the detailed scope of works.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 No decision is requested on either item. While the Council does not have a legal duty to prepare a WaterSpace study, it is envisaged that the study will provide a vital evidence base for future decision making in various service areas including Planning and Regeneration. Similarly it will enable the study partners to identify potential collaborative projects and funding.
- 4.2 In relation to the Strategic Flood project, it is hoped that this item will provide an opportunity for scrutiny of the approach being pursued by the Environment Agency and B&NES Council.

### **5 THE REPORT**

#### **WATERSPACE STUDY**

- 5.1 The WaterSpace Study was officially launched by the partners on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The key aim of the study is to identify projects which can transform and revitalise the use of Bath's waterways.
- 5.2 Bath & North East Somerset Council, the Canal and River Trust, the Environment Agency and Wessex Water are working together in partnership, with the ongoing support of the Strategic River Group and key partners such as the River Regeneration Trust.
- 5.3 The WaterSpace Study has gathered existing and new evidence to better understand how the waterways are currently being used. There is increasing pressure on the waterways for sports, leisure and recreation, while the River corridor within the Bath Enterprise Zone is also a major area of development and change.
- 5.4 Engaging with local communities and key stakeholders, the Study will look at the diverse range of opportunities along the River and Canal between Bath and Keynsham, and along the Canal between Deep Lock and Dundas.

5.5 Strategic flood risk proposals are outside the scope of the WaterSpace Study. The Study will be informed by the continuing work of the Council and the Environment Agency. The WaterSpace Study itself includes:

- A Review of the key strategies and evidence as it relates to the waterways;
- A comprehensive Character Assessment for the River and Canal corridors, which can be used to inform new development;
- An overview of the baseline position for the 5 Study themes: assets and management; mooring and navigation; development & regeneration; environmental enhancement and recreation and leisure.
- A summary of the public consultation undertaken to support the study including the results of the Boater Survey, 1:1 interviews and a focus group;
- A set of maps which outlines all of the partners land holdings and assets relating to the waterways;
- An outline of the available funding to support waterways related projects; and
- A range of 36 themes and projects ideas, including initial design work for the new River Avon Park. Delivery of these projects will of course be subject to approval by B&NES and partners including detailed feasibility work, the ability to secure funding, and the level of support from Members, stakeholders and the community.

5.6 Further work is currently ongoing in relation to re-opening Pulteney Moorings on a sustainable basis, this work is due to report later this year.

***Appendix A includes the emerging draft WaterSpace study for comment.***

## **STRATEGIC FLOOD PROJECT**

5.7 To quantify the flood risk benefits and costs of various options and therefore identify where further work is best directed, hydraulic modelling and high level cost estimates were undertaken between 2013 and 2015. The work was jointly funded between the EA and B&NES.

5.8 The current estimated cost of implementing all of the potential improvements would be approximately £50 million, with the possibility of attracting around £10 million from central government funding. Progression of all improvements would therefore only be possible with additional funding of around £40 million.

5.9 At the present time, neither the Environment Agency or Bath and North East Somerset Council have the funding available to progress all potential schemes; nor are there other sources of funding currently able to cover this large amount. We will therefore focus work on securing funding to refurbish or replace the gates as the priority.

5.11 A detailed condition assessment of Pulteney and Twerton gates has been completed and we are expecting the results from testing by the end of March

2017. This will enable us to get an estimate of the remaining life of the gates, and a more detailed understanding of the state of the materials and component parts. We then plan to develop a business case to deliver the works to Twerton and Pulteney gates. This investment will maintain the current standard of protection (not allowing for climate change) and manage the risk of gate failure.

5.12 Draft brief key outcomes:

- a) Maintain (or improve) current level of service of flood protection through Bath
- b) Improve fish passage
- c) Improve reliability of gate operation (reduce risk of failure)
- d) Maintain or improve safety of gates
- e) Maintain or improve flow capacity of gates

5.13 The consultant shall carry out the following tasks:

- a) Detailed feasibility of shortlisted options or any other options found to be suitable. Further refine the cost estimates, hydraulic modelling if necessary, environmental assessment and benefits analysis for all shortlisted gate options to be agreed with EA and B&NES (from Options Appraisal reports).
- b) Identify the preferred option to maintain the current standard of flood protection and maintain river levels, by refurbishing or replacing gates.
- c) Consider how the preferred option impacts on future improvements.
- d) Work up the outline business case for the preferred option including detailed cost benefit analysis.

5.14 **Appendix B** includes a Managing Flood Risk in Bath Information Note (Feb 2017) and **Appendix C** includes Q&A responses to queries from the Abbey Ward Flood Group and the Federation of Bath Residents Association and Local Residents (Feb 2017).

## 6 RATIONALE

6.1 The Scrutiny Panel was previously involved in the *Boat Dwellers and River Travellers: Task and Finish Group Review by the Housing and Major Projects Scrutiny Panel (July 2013)*. The Water Space Study has updated some of this evidence, through the Boater Survey 2016 and related focus groups and interviews. This report offers the opportunity for the Scrutiny Panel to comment on the draft study prior to public consultation.

6.2 The Scrutiny Panel has not received a recent update item in relation to Strategic Flood Risk projects in Bath, however, this report together with the updates from the LLFA will address this. In relation to this report, it is hoped that the Panel can scrutinise and comment on the approach to the Twerton and Pulteney gates before the next stage of work is commenced. The comments of the Panel will influence the development of the joint Business Case and funding bids which will follow.

## **7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 For the WaterSpace Study no alternative options were considered, the coverage and scope of the study has been determined by the Study partners.
- 7.2 For the Strategic Flood Risk Project to replace/refurbish the water level control gates at Twerton and Pulteney and to pursue a funding bid, alternative options were considered and assessed – see the River Avon Options Appraisal Report (in background papers), the option for further flood walls (including upstream of Pulteney) was appraised and scoped, however, a £40million funding shortfall was identified which led to this option not being pursued at the current time. Instead efforts are focused on the required gate refurbishment/replacement option (to maintain the current standard of flood risk management, which does not allow for the impacts of climate change). The current project still requires a Business Case and associated funding bids.

## **8 CONSULTATION**

- 8.1 Public consultation and stakeholder engagement is a key element of the WaterSpace Study – a public consultation on the draft study will follow in March 2017 for six weeks. The focus for public engagement on the study took part during Bristol to Bath Festival of Nature 2016, between 10<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> June where 20 events were held attracting approx. 3000 people. In addition a Boater Survey, focus groups and 1:1 interviews were held. A call for ideas was held in September 2016 to ask groups and individuals to put forward ideas to include within the study. A full consultation report will be published alongside the draft study in March 2017.
- 8.2 A commitment to the Strategic Flood Risk project to seek funding to replace or refurbish Pulteney and Twerton gates was made via a Single Member Decision in September 2016, alongside this the technical papers which scoped the options for possible flood risk interventions were published on the Council's website and made publicly available. Press releases and newsletter items were undertaken and 1:1 meetings have been held with key stakeholders including FoBRA and the Abbey Ward Flood Group. The stakeholder meetings have been attended by the Cabinet Members for Planning and Housing, Community Services and Economic Development
- 8.3 Prior to this, addressing flood risk is a key action within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which is adopted by the Council as part of the Draft Placemaking Plan. An introductory workshop with stakeholders was held on 15 October 2014 to seek initial views and merits of each option which then contributed to a report identifying preferred options. A follow up drop in surgery was held on 11 June 2015 to update local organisations and interest groups on progress so far and to invite comments on these more detailed preferred options. The project team also briefed the Planning, Housing & Development Scrutiny panel on 20 July 2015. The feedback from these events informed the final Options Appraisal.
- 8.4 The s151 officer has been consulted and had opportunity to input into this report.

## **9 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Tim Hewitt, Group Manager Regeneration and Cleo Newcombe-Jones, River Avon Project Coordinator.</i>
<b>Background papers</b>	<p><i>May 2016 Water Space Study Scrutiny Panel Report</i>  <a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=553&amp;MeetingId=4590">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=553&amp;MeetingId=4590</a></p> <p><i>Single Member Decision – River Corridor Fund 2016 which included £50k funding to support the joint EA and B&amp;NES Twerton and Pulteney gate replacement or refurbishment</i></p> <p><a href="https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s43778/E2892%20River%20Corridor%20Fund%20Capital%20Budget%202016-17%20Funding%20Allocation.pdf">https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/s43778/E2892%20River%20Corridor%20Fund%20Capital%20Budget%202016-17%20Funding%20Allocation.pdf</a></p> <p><i>River Avon Options Appraisal Report (Sept 2016)</i>  <a href="http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/environment/river-and-canal/river-corridor-capital-funding">http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/environment/river-and-canal/river-corridor-capital-funding</a></p> <p><a href="#"><i>Boat Dwellers and River Travellers: Task and Finish Group Review by the Housing and Major Projects Scrutiny Panel (July 2013) – available online.</i></a></p>
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