

Agenda item: 

**Title of meeting:** Cabinet

**Subject:** Southsea Flood Defences

**Date of meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2015

**Report by:** Director of Transport, Environment and Business Support

**Wards affected:** St Thomas, St Jude, Eastney and Craneswater

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of progress, and seek approval for governance arrangements, on the Southsea Flood Defence Project

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1.1 To approve the appointment of the Director of Transport, Environment and Business Support as the Senior Responsible Owner for the project.
- 2.1.2 To note that the scheme of delegations accommodates the Project by delegating, to the Director of Transport, Environment and Business Support, the responsibility for the delivery of the scheme with the control and oversight of the Deputy Chief Executive (and City Solicitor) and the Head of Finance & s151 officer.
- 2.1.3 To note that the Cabinet Member for Environment and Community Safety will be consulted throughout the project.

## **3. Background Information**

- 3.1 Latest discussions with the Environment Agency indicate that, due to the capital value of this scheme associated with different phases (£117 million whole life cost), project approval is required from DEFRA and HM Treasury.

This process requires the appointment of a Senior Responsible Owner for the project who takes ownership and accountability for delivery of the scheme on behalf of Portsmouth City Council as the operating authority. The position of SRO gives accountability for the scheme to DEFRA and the Treasury as well as any relevant Parliamentary Select Committees.

The Environment Agency has requested that ownership of the Project is delegated to the Council at Director level. In this case, the scheme of delegations makes this the Director for Transport, Environment and Business Support. Given the sums involved the activity will be under the supervision of the Deputy Chief Executive (and City Solicitor), and Director of Finance & Information Services.

- 3.2 Due to the scale and nature of the scheme, the EA, as the technical approvers of the project, requires the business case to be considered and scrutinised by their Large Project Review Group (LPRG). Our early engagement with this forum has already commenced.

Although there may be additional levels of scrutiny, officers anticipate this approach will mean that any future delays, in the form of approvals from DEFRA or Treasury, can be kept to a minimum.

Cabinet should be aware that usual PCC internal Governance arrangements will be followed with appropriate representation from services on a Board chaired by the Director of TEBS

- 3.3 An Environmental Scoping Report has been submitted to the city council's City Development service as part of the consultation process and a formal response to this document will be expected in the near future.
- 3.4 A public consultation exercise has guided outline design for the scheme. In general, reaction to the necessary works has been positive and has allowed consultees to express views and preferences on various proposals. A report outlining the results of the public consultation can be made available to Members if they would wish to understand more of the public reaction to the scheme.
- 3.5 Members will note that discussions are ongoing within the Council regarding the heritage and multi-user aspects of the scheme and how further detailed design of the basic core scheme can recognise the aspirations from the Sea Front Master Plan and turn them into reality. The Project Team fully understand the complexities of the work over the forthcoming years and will ensure this vital project either incorporates or enables the Council's published vision for Southsea Seafront. Outline drawings which have been produced as part of this process are very much a starting point for the project, and will no doubt change as it proceeds to detailed design stage.

#### **4. Funding considerations**

- 4.1 A bid for preliminary capital funding from the Council was approved last year and has provided the opportunity to look at further enhancement for the flood defences at key locations over and above monies provided by central Government.
- 4.2 It is important for Cabinet to acknowledge there are two additional funding elements which need to be considered to ensure the success of this scheme.

4.3 In the first instance, DEFRA has indicated that a 'contribution' is required from the city council to guarantee central government money for construction.

Secondly, in order to get the wider enhanced esplanade that drives inward investment and regeneration, further funding in addition to the contribution expected by DEFRA will need to be found to achieve these enhancements.

4.4 Whilst no firm commitment has been given by project officers to anyone regarding additional funding, it is important for Cabinet to give early and serious consideration as to how this additional investment should be achieved over the lifetime of the project.

**5.0 Equality Impact Assessment**

5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment already exists for this project. There are no changes arising from this report that would alter the impact of the service on any equalities groups.

**6.0 Legal Implications**

There are no legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report

**7.0 Finance comments**

8.1 Portsmouth City Council is the Accountable body for these funds and as such will provide financial oversight and assurance at all times. Any grant claims will be verified by PCC finance and will be approved by the Director of Finance and IT and S151 Officer.

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Signed by Alan Cufley, Director of Transport, Environment and Business Support

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
none	

The recommendation set out above were approved/approved as amended / deferred / rejected by ..... on.....

Signed by.....

Councillor Donna Jones, Leader of the Council