

**A MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT BOARD
WAS HELD ON 21 JUNE 2023**

The Mayor
Councillor Chegwyn

Councillors Westerby, Mrs Morgan, Burgess (Substituting for Mrs Huggins), Marshall, Philpott, Cox (Substituting for Maynard) and Earle (Substituting for Johnston)

Part II

1. CONSTRUCTION OF FLOOD DEFENCE STRUCTURES AT FORTON

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Executive updating members on the progress with the Forton coastal defence scheme since the update in March 2023 and seeking approval for the project delivery.

Members were reminded of the funding received to date and advised that a decision on the inflation claim should be known by the end of the week, which if successful, would close the funding gap.

Officers advised that the design work was on target, with remaining work to finalise the drawings, including revisions to mitigate the badger issue. The planning application would be submitted once the designs were completed, with a target of the Autumn Regulatory Board. The tender process is anticipated to start in July 2023.

Members were advised that the April 2024 start date was the earliest possible start date due to over wintering of birds. The window available for work in the badger area was July to November, making the period of April to November the optimal timeframe for the project.

In answer to a Member's question, Officers agreed to provide more details and assessment of the effect of flooding beyond the number of properties mentioned in the report. Flood modelling and the number of properties affected, underpins the eligibility and amount of potential Environment Agency funding, but there would also be impact on highways, vehicles, infrastructure, and risk to life.

Officers advised that their engineering experience and information in previous tenders showed that the project was deliverable in the time frame available. They agreed that there are always unknown issues that might arise once on site, but the team have been managing the risks getting the project to site, and have carried out full due diligence and trial pits for below ground risks.

In answer to a Member's question, Officers advised that the badgers had not been picked up on the initial environmental surveys as they were later found to be located beneath a building with no obvious signs of a sett. Sett re-location had been considered but ruled out as high risk option when compared to the chosen option of relocating the defence away from the sett.

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Officers advised that the Environment Agency had indicated a high confidence that the inflation claim will be approved, and that the time needed for the assessment was due to the necessary due diligence applied to what is a relatively new funding mechanism.

Members were advised that the funding achieved to date is ring fenced and cannot be moved to another project.

RESOLVED: That the Board approved that:

- Authority is given to the Chief Executive:
 - a) To undertake the procurement of the works and the evaluation of bids received, and
 - b) In consultation with the section 151 officer, to award a contract for the works to the preferred bidder, subject to sufficient funding being in place.
- The project team report back to Board with a project update in Autumn 2023 to confirm the expected start date of April 2024.

2. ANY OTHER ITEMS

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 6.27 pm