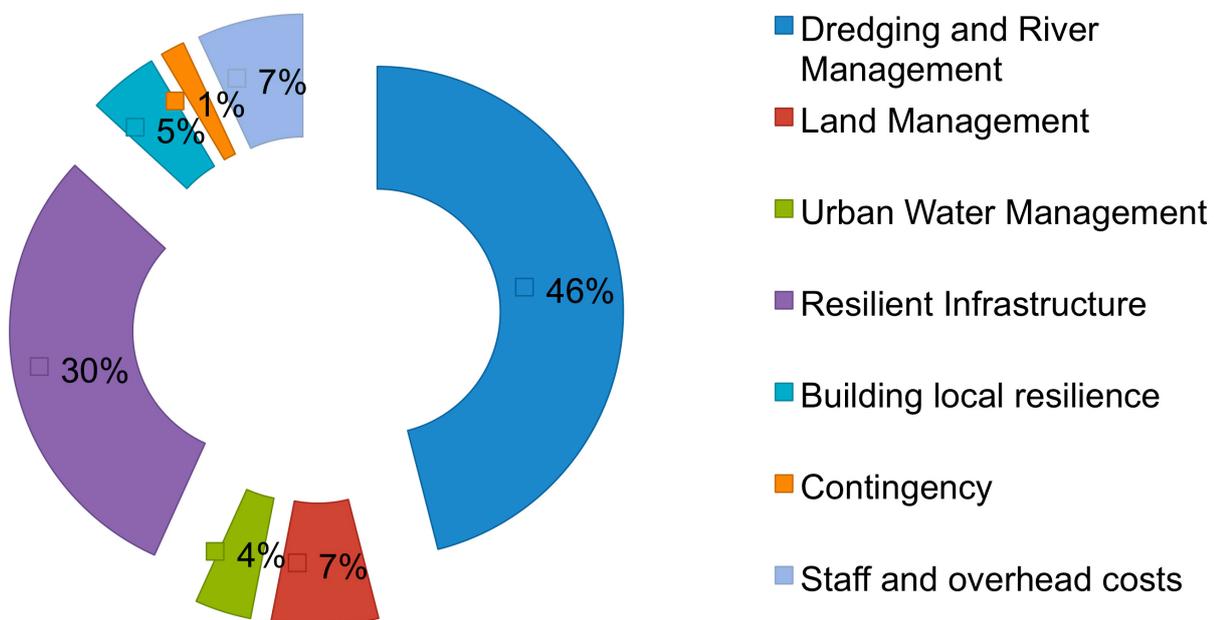


What will Somerset Rivers Authority do in 2018-19 with its £2.87m from Council Tax?



Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) gives Somerset extra flood protection and resilience. As in previous years, the SRA's 2018-19 programme focuses heavily on providing additional maintenance for rivers, watercourses and many locally significant structures, because bodies such as Somerset County Council, the five district councils, the two Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) and the Environment Agency's Wessex division do not have enough money to meet the vast and vital need for maintenance. The SRA's programme proposes: £2.23m for 22 projects across Somerset, at dozens of sites and with numerous different elements to reduce the severity and impact of all types of flooding. In some cases, work will stretch out beyond 2018-19. Also, £450k is being set aside towards the major Sowy-King's Sedgemoor Drain project and/or pioneer dredging, while £200k is allocated for four SRA staff and overheads, to support all works funded through council tax and the delivery of Growth Deal-funded SRA projects.

Chart: Spend By Type Of Work (going anti-clockwise down from Dredging & River Management).



What actions will be taken where?

The SRA will provide maintenance dredging of the rivers Parrett and Tone and monitoring of silt build-up, extra desilting of smaller river channels and rhyes (ditches) in the Axe-Brue catchment and extra de-silting of bridges and culverts (from Dunster in the west to Shepton Montague near Bruton in the east, and from Horton Cross near Ilminster up to Ford near Chewton Mendip and Ham near Holcombe). West Sedgemoor and Aller Moor rhyes will continue to benefit from annual as opposed to bi-annual maintenance. Numerous culverts across the Somerset Levels & Moors will be unblocked and repaired to help prevent the flooding of nearby properties and roads.

In West Somerset, improvements will be made to the Bratton Stream to help protect roads, homes and businesses in Minehead. Dunster's flood relief channel will be repaired, to protect the village and the A39. Nearby in Carhampton, two schemes (silt traps, improved drainage) will also help to prevent the A39 flooding and safeguard properties. Between Stogursey and Shurton, funding has been approved to reduce the risk of these communities being cut off by flooding and to improve the emergency evacuation route from Hinkley Point. This scheme is subject to further detailed work being completed to identify a suitable solution.

To reduce flooding of roads countywide, the SRA will fund a combination of extra cleansing activities targeted at high-risk areas. Hundreds of places susceptible to very local flooding will benefit from SRA funding for an extra round of gully-emptying: this means the 21,263 very highest-risk gullies will be emptied twice a year, not just the usual once by Somerset County Council. Selected drains will be jetted to prevent problems before they occur, not (as is normal practice) only afterwards. Around 1,000 extra tons of debris will be cleared from more than 60 miles of road edgeways, to stop structures such as drains and gullies getting clogged. New highway flood alert systems at Bradford on Tone, Wrantage (A378) and Mudford (A359) will be maintained.

Detailed studies will help to enable future works. In Beckington (near Frome) wide-ranging investigations will be carried out to establish how best to protect the village and A36, so that grant applications for improvements can be made. Studies in Yeovil (along the Dodham Brook down to the Yeo) and at Tootle Bridge & Catsam (on the South Somerset / Mendip border) will also lead to schemes being designed to reduce flood risks. One aim in Yeovil is to demonstrate how natural flood management techniques can be used in an urban catchment. On a larger scale, the SRA will continue to provide development funding for a major multi-million pound scheme to store water above Taunton and improve Taunton town centre flood defences.

Across Somerset, the SRA will fund three main strands of natural flood management (NFM). Firstly, through grants for small-scale 'Hills to Levels' works which Slow the Flow of water from upper catchments. Secondly, through encouraging increased uptake of soil management techniques and cropping changes which improve the infiltration of water and thereby reduce run-off from 75 farms. Thirdly, investigations at 50 highway flooding hotspots will see whether better land management could help to solve problems. A key target NFM area is the River Frome in Somerset upstream of Frome.

To reduce run-off in urban areas, and encourage the use of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS), which often adapt NFM ideas, the SRA will part-fund a demonstration project to retrofit SuDS into retail car parks and industrial estates in Taunton. Comprehensive guidance for developers will be produced specifically for Somerset to show how SuDS can manage water, benefit local people and enhance the environment.

The SRA will continue to help communities, households, businesses and landowners become more resilient to flooding and its impacts. New activities will encourage greater participation in groups and networks, and identify and support vulnerable people. A partnership project with Wessex Water will tackle groundwater and sewage problems.

What other work will Somerset Rivers Authority fund?

In addition to funding provided directly by Somerset householders, the SRA receives funding from Somerset's IDBs and the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership Growth Deal Fund.



In 2018-19, these funds will be used to keep developing major projects to enhance the capacity of 20km of the River Sowey/King's Sedgemoor Drain river system and work on pinch-points at the Dunball end, develop the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier project (which will protect more than 12,000 homes and businesses), and develop a dredging strategy and specific plans for more pioneer dredging of the River Parrett.



HM Government

For more information about Somerset Rivers Authority visit www.somersetiversauthority.org.uk, email sra@somerset.gov.uk or call 01823-355111.