

Appendix G Natural flood management projects on the Somerset Levels and Moors 2014 to 2020

Investigating alternative flood storage / natural flood management options research

List of Projects

Project	Hills to Levels	Adapting the Levels	Wetland Biomass	RSPB Farmer Engagement (for the Sowy/KSD Enhancements Scheme)	Wetland Biomass feasibility study	Co-Adapt	Land management water storage auction
Organisations	FWAG, HoTSW, SRA, HM Gov, Natural England, EA, Triple C, Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF - a partnership between Defra, the EA and NE)	Somerset County Council, Somerset Wildlife Trust and Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) South West	Funding contributions from SRA and RSPB	RSPB (Commissioned by SRA & Hills to Levels Project)	SRA	Somerset County Council, Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA), Somerset Wildlife Trust, the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West, the National Trust and Blackdown Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) as well as EU partners. SRA contributed via match funding in 19/20	SRA led: funded by DEFRA with SRA paying for highest bids
Objectives	Hills to Levels is a holistic catchment management approach across catchments in Somerset, aiming to 'slow the flow' to reduce flood risk,	Adapting The Levels is a partnership project dedicated to empowering those who live and work on the Somerset Levels to take action on	Investigating opportunities for alternative new income streams to farmers enabling different land	Seek the views of land managers and owners regarding the proposed improvements to the Sowy / King's Sedgemoor Drain system. The engagement work with farmers and landowners is based on a series of semi-	A feasibility study into the use of wetland biomass from the Levels and Moors using Somerset County Council's highway	2500 hectares on the Somerset Levels being better adapted for flooding and drought, with improved accessibility to five moors and three structures adapted to deliver more naturally functioning water management	A pioneering Somerset trial will discover how much appetite there is among farmers and landowners for performing this service, what it might cost and what difference it might make. A reverse auction approach will be taken, following on from the success of two recent SRA-funded auctions

River Sowy and King's Sedgemoor Drain Enhancements Scheme

	reduce erosion, improve water quality, deliver wider environmental benefits and increase resilience on the floodplain.	Climate Adaptation	management options	structured, one-to-one meetings with c. 40 farmers and landowners with land affected by the management of the Sowy / King's Sedgemoor system.	depots as a case study. Feasibility study could demonstrate an income stream from wettest and hardest to farm areas through generation of biomass fuel. Provides end use for wetland products arising from wettest areas of high environmental value in the Brue Valley and beyond.	with less reliance on traditional engineering techniques. An adapted water management regime on 1500 hectares to manage flooding using natural processes rather than pump drainage, saving €200,000+ in a major flood event. This will significantly reduce the current total costs of flood and drought management in the pilot area. Monitoring equipment will be placed on adapted water management structures to measure their effectiveness in delivering water management.	in Somerset for Natural Flood Management measures. In a reverse auction, the winners are those who make the lowest – not the highest – bids. All bids are checked for feasibility and cost-effectiveness. The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) will fund the organisation of this auction as part of its Environmental Land Management (ELM) Tests and Trials programme. The SRA will fund the best bids The SRA Board agreed in June 2018 that the SRA should help to develop new Environmental Land Management approaches in the Somerset Levels, so the area could try to shape its own distinctive future.
Time	2015 - ongoing	2019 - ongoing	2014 - 2016	2015 - 2016	2018 - ongoing	2019 - Ongoing	This year
Relevance	Regarded as a successful flood prevention project in the 'Whole river approach catchment' category. Some outcomes including achieving 7 floodplain schemes in place, 11ha of	SRA have assigned a dedicated project arising from the specific requirement from climate change. As climate change has been scoped out of Sowy/KSD Enhancements	Exploring alternative land management options for increased resilience for businesses and farmers in the Somerset Levels and Moors	Directly supports looking for alternative natural flood storage solutions and whole floodplain approach feasibility. RSPB report summarising findings including that many farmers would not change their farming practices as a result of the Sowy/KSD scheme, "Most farmers can see little, if any, value of	Exploring the increased use of wetland biomass was a specific action identified early on in the development of the Flood Action Plan. The action feeds into the aim of the SRA to support business confidence	A collaborative approach to seeking alternative natural flood management methods directly in the levels and moors. Increasing monitoring and structure improvements increasing resilience	Directly supports looking for alternative natural flood storage solutions and whole floodplain approach feasibility.

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	woodland planted for strategic habitat creation and visiting 400 farms	Scheme PEIR & Environmental Statement, this project supports the overarching climate change consideration for the Sowy/KSD scheme under the SRA umbrella		spreading, or temporarily storing, floodwater on the floodplains when it could be taken out to sea" and "Currently, there is little appetite amongst farmers for incentive payments to facilitate the temporary storage of floodwater on the floodplains. Most farmers felt this payment would be the "thin end of the wedge" and would give a reason for the drainage authorities to invest less in the maintenance of the rivers systems"	and economic growth.		
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Projects Timeline

