



Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Scheme

Thank you for attending the stakeholder meeting / public exhibition on the Bridgwater Tidal Barrier Project held on 15 September in the Bridgwater Arts Centre and / or the Business Consultation Event held on 27 October. Both the meetings and the exhibition were well attended and a variety of thoughts were shared both on the day and in feedback since the events.

The consultation period ran until 31 October and below is a summary of the collated feedback received during and since the event.

Sustainable development of Bridgwater relies on flood risk infrastructure and the Tidal Barrier Scheme is a key component of the 20 year flood plan for Somerset that aims to reduce the frequency, duration and severity of flooding. Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) and the Environment Agency are working in partnership to promote and deliver a Tidal Barrier Scheme to protect Bridgwater and the surrounding area from tidal flooding in 2024. The Somerset Rivers Authority (SRA) are supporting the project as a key contributor using funding from the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

As the scheme progresses we will continue to provide as many opportunities as possible to keep the local community and stakeholders informed of progress. We anticipate that our next stakeholder meeting and public event will be held in the spring of 2017. We really value your feedback and if you would like to contact us in the meantime, please email your comments to the following address:
bridgwater.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk

Consultation

Following the stakeholder and public consultation events held in March 2016, five sites (2, 4, 5, 6 and 7) were taken forward for a more detailed assessment.

In September 2016, we presented the findings from the detailed assessment at consultation events. The advantages and disadvantages of each of the five sites were highlighted and the preferred locations (sites 4 and 5) were identified.

Site 4 - a large barrier could minimise overall flood risk to north Bridgwater, maximising opportunities for future growth. There are no space constraints to construction and there is a large storage volume in the channel upstream. The main disadvantage of this location is that the river channel bed moves around at this site so there is a risk of problems at the barrier due to erosion and silt deposition and potential impact on downstream navigation.

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The estimated total project costs are £65 – 80 million.

Site 5 - It would work effectively for flood risk management and environmental impacts could be mitigated. Its proximity to commercial development at Express Park and residential development at Chilton Trinity was seen as a disadvantage by some stakeholders.

The estimated total project costs are £45 – 60 million.

The material from the event was uploaded to the SDC and SRA websites and open for comment for a 6 week period, which closed on 31 October 2016. Information on the scheme was also posted widely on social media and the Facebook and Twitter posts were 'seen' over 3700 times and the video viewed 1700 times.

All responses have now been considered and an analysis of the responses is shown below.

Analysis

The stakeholder meeting was attended by 26 people and 111 attended the public exhibition held at the Bridgwater Arts Centre. An event was also held in October to offer an opportunity for local businesses to meet with the project team, discuss the scheme and raise any concerns.

Feedback was provided via forms completed on the day or submitted later through SDC's website, letters and emails sent to the project email address: bridgwater.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk. A total of 78 responses to the consultation were received.

The consultation sought an indication of support for the two preferred barrier locations as well as comments on other issues that might impact the scheme. The responses were analysed and where support for a particular site was indicated, the preferences were as follows:

| Barrier location | Site 4 | Site 5 | Unsure / no preference | Other site |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| Number supporting | 44 | 13 | 19 | 2 |

The feedback received is available to view on request, with personal details, if present, redacted.

The key messages from the consultation were that the scheme continues to have general support and that site 4 was preferred over site 5.

In addition to the public stakeholder event, a supplementary event was held with the business community. This was targeted at key business within the immediate vicinity of the broad barrier locations prioritised. Feedback was broadly positive and constructive, raising points over site specific issues around drainage, waste and the function of Dunball Port. These have similarly been noted and fed into developing thinking.

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Main comments and concerns:

In support of site 4

- Would bring additional economic benefits to the town
- Would provide more opportunities for development along Bristol Road and to the west of the river
- Provides a better opportunity for a future road crossing
- Provides the most storage capacity to avoid flooding upstream
- Better for traffic flows in Bridgwater
- More room for future ideas, visitor centre, lock, sports facilities
- Least amount of disruption

In support of site 5

- More affordable than site 4
- Less risk of silt build up at Dunball Wharf than for site 4
- Least impact on navigation
- Less environmental impact, easier access routes for construction and less cost

What happens next?

We are currently undertaking more detailed assessments of sites 4 and 5 and also of the type of gate. The cost of the preferred option and how it might be funded is also an important consideration in the choice. Taking the assessments into account and the feedback from the consultation, we hope to make a decision about which site to take forward in early 2017. We will then develop the detail of the barrier at the preferred site along with the associated defences and will hold a further consultation in the spring of 2017.

In the meantime, if you have comments or questions about the project please email them to Bridgwater.barrier@environment-agency.gov.uk