

Flood Investigation Report

Flood Incident Report: **Bridge Close, Edinburgh Drive, Didcot**

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Revision Schedule

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01	22/12/16	Draft Report	Gordon Hunt (County Drainage Engineer)	Chris Brown (Flood Risk Management Officer)	David Bullock (Asset Manager)

FOREWORD

One of the roles of Oxfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) is to carry out investigations into flooding incidents, if they meet the set thresholds.

The LLFA will:

- Identify and explain the likely cause/s of flooding;
- Identify which authorities, communities and individuals have relevant flood risk management powers and responsibilities;
- Provide recommendations for each of those authorities, communities and individuals; and
- Outline whether those authorities, communities or individuals have or will exercise their powers or responsibilities in response to the flooding incident.

The LLFA cannot:

- Resolve the flooding issues or provide designed solutions; or
- Force Authorities to undertake any of the recommended actions.

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APPENDIX A Location Plan & Incident Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Flood Investigation Report (FIR) has been completed by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) under its duties as the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) in accordance with [Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 \(F&WMA\)](#).

Statutory Context

Section 19 of the F&WMA states that on becoming aware of a flood which meets certain predetermined criteria, the LLFA must undertake a formal flood investigation in order to determine the relevant flood risk management authorities involved and which flood risk management functions have been, or should be taken to mitigate future flood risk. Where an authority carries out an investigation it must publish the results.

Within the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy the approved thresholds for undertaking a FIR are:

Oxfordshire LLFA Adopted Flood Investigation Protocol:

The investigating officer will use the following guidance to determine whether an investigation should be carried out. This will be based on the assessment of the consequences of flooding that are considered to be sufficiently serious in terms of risk to loss of life, residential & commercial property, critical infrastructure, transport, cultural sites and environmental sites.

The Council's thresholds for formal investigation of residential and commercial properties are as follows. A formal flood investigation will be carried out if one or more of the following occurs:

Criteria for flood investigation:

- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) to five or more residential properties or businesses within an area of 1km²
- Internal flooding of a business premises employing more than 10 people within an area of 1km²
- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) of at least one property or business for one week or longer
- Flooding of one or more items of critical infrastructure, which could include hospitals, health centres, clinics, surgeries, colleges, schools, day nurseries, nursing homes, emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) stations, utilities and substations.

Caused a transport link to be impassable:

- Motorways, trunk roads, Class A and B highway closures shall all be investigated.
- Class C highways – 10 hours or more unless the route is the only means of access, or is primary route for critical infrastructure then reduce to 4 hours
- Class U highways – 24 hours or more unless the route is the only means of access, or is primary route for critical infrastructure then reduce to 4 hours
- All rail link closures shall be investigated.

Any flooding event that a risk management authority deems significant but does not meet the agreed thresholds should be put forward to the Strategic Flooding Group committee for consideration.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Lead Local Flood Authority Investigation

1.1.1 Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (F&WMA) states:

- 1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a Lead Local Flood Authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate:-
 - a. which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - b. whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.
- 2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must:-
 - a. publish the results of its investigation, and
 - b. notify any relevant risk management authorities.

1.1.2 Within the Oxfordshire Local Flood Risk Management Strategy the thresholds for undertaking a Formal Investigation Report in the County have been determined as:-

Criteria for flood investigation:

- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) to five or more residential properties or businesses within an area of 1km²
- Internal flooding of a business premises employing more than 10 people within an area of 1km²
- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) of at least one property or business for one week or longer

- Flooding of one or more items of critical infrastructure, which could include hospitals, health centres, clinics, surgeries, colleges, schools, day nurseries, nursing homes, emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) stations, utilities and substations.

Caused a transport link to be impassable:

- Motorways, trunk roads, Class A and B highway closures shall all be investigated.
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- All rail link closures shall be investigated.

1.2 Flooding Incident

1.2.1 It was deemed necessary to complete a formal investigation into the flood incident at Bridge Close, Edinburgh Drive, Didcot on Friday 16th September 2016. This meets the threshold for investigation as set out above.

1.2.2 Oxfordshire County Council undertook a Flood Incident Investigation on Wednesday 21st December 2016

1.3 Site Location

1.3.1 Bridge Close and Edinburgh Drive, Didcot, for properties that flooded see Appendix A.

1.3.2 The five properties that are marked experienced internal flooding to the buildings.

1.3.3 There are no adjacent watercourses or rivers and the roads serving the property are drained by highway gullies discharging to Surface Water Systems.

1.3.4 The properties are all residential properties adjacent to public highways.

1.3.5 With reference to mapping on Oxfordshire County Council's online [Flood Toolkit](#), there is a small localised area at high risk of surface water flooding on Bridge Close and Edinburgh Drive has a medium risk of flooding. Bridge Close and Edinburgh Drive are not shown to be located within an area at risk of fluvial flooding.

1.3.6 The British Geological Survey national hazard dataset for ground water flooding indicates that the flooding incident was in an area deemed to have limited potential for ground water flooding to occur.

1.4 Drainage Systems

1.4.1 Local Authority asset maps indicate that there is a system of Foul and Surface Water Public Sewers serving the whole of Didcot.

1.4.2 The asset maps indicate Highway Authority road gullies discharge to Thames Waters Surface Water Sewers systems in most parts of Didcot.

2 DRAINAGE HISTORY

2.1 Previous Flood Incidents

2.1.1 There have been some previous minor flooding incidents to Bridge Close and Edinburgh Drive.

2.2 Rainfall Analysis

2.2.1 Rainfall totals were above average across much of Didcot on 16th September 2016 which led to severe flooding across areas of Didcot.

2.2.2 From local data 70mm of rain fell in 12 hours.

3 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS AND FINDINGS

3.1 Areas of Flooding and Impacts

3.1.1 Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service attended both locations (Edinburgh Drive and Bridge Close) during the flooding events.

3.1.2 Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Water and the District Council have carried out investigations to see what actions were required. see 6.2

4 CONCLUSION

4.1.1 The flooding that occurred at Bridge Close and Edinburgh Drive was due to the following:-

- as a result of extreme rainfall event
- blockages in the ditches at both TWA outfalls
- detritus blocking the tops of the gullies
- these led to surface water entering into the properties.

5 RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 Communities and Residents

- 5.1.1 Communities may consist of the Town or Parish Council, Flood Forum, Community Group and affected residents, amongst others.
- 5.1.2 Communities and residents who are aware that they are at risk of flooding should take action to ensure that they and their properties are protected.
- 5.1.3 Community resilience is important in providing information and support to each other if flooding is anticipated. Actions taken can include [subscribing to MET Office email alerts](#) for weather warnings, nominating a Community Flood Warden, producing a community flood plan, implementing property level protection and moving valuable items to higher ground.
- 5.1.4 Oxfordshire County Council has produced a number of flood guides covering various subjects, some of which relate to this type of flood incident. The relevant guides have been identified and are available at: www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com

5.2 Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

- 5.2.1 As stated within the introduction section, Oxfordshire County Council as the LLFA has a responsibility to investigate flood incidents under Section 19 of the F&WMA.
- 5.2.2 The LLFA also has a responsibility to maintain a register of assets which have a significant effect on flooding from surface runoff, groundwater or ordinary watercourses (non-Main River) as detailed within Section 21 of the F&WMA. The register must contain a record about each structure or feature, including the ownership and state of repair. Oxfordshire County Council is also required to keep a record of flooding hotspots across the county.
- 5.2.3 Oxfordshire County Council's practices relating to third party assets is to notify third party owners of their asset forming part of a flood risk system, and assist by advising those third party owners on the condition of their assets and their maintenance responsibilities.
- 5.2.4 As Lead Local Flood Authority, Oxfordshire County Council will be looking for support from other risk management authorities, communities and individual home owners to ensure flood incidents are reported, and any assets which have a significant effect on flood risk are recorded on the asset register.
- 5.2.5 While Oxfordshire County Council can suggest possible causes of flooding in Didcot, and make recommendations to ensure flood risk is mitigated as far as possible, the F&WMA does not provide Oxfordshire County Council with the mandate or funding to act on identified causes of flooding or force risk management authorities to undertake any recommended actions.

5.3 Highway Authority (Oxfordshire Highways)

- 5.3.1 Oxfordshire Highways have a duty to maintain the highway under Section 41 of the Highway Act 1980 but subject to the special defence in Section 58.
- 5.3.2 New highway drainage systems are designed to Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (Volume 4, Section 2). They are only required to be constructed to drain surface water runoff from within the highway catchment rather than from the wider catchment.
- 5.3.3 There are historic drainage systems in historic highways which can become the responsibility of the Highway Authority due to dedication, as opposed to adoption. These drainage systems may not have been designed to any standard.

5.4 Water Authority - Thames Water Utilities (TW)

- 5.4.1 Water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from surface water, foul water or combined sewer systems. Public sewers are designed to protect properties from the risk of flooding in normal wet weather conditions. However, in extreme weather conditions there is a risk that sewer systems can become overwhelmed and result in sewer flooding.
- 5.4.2 Since October 2011, under the 'Private Sewer Transfer', AWS adopted piped systems on private land that serve more than one curtilage and were connected to a public sewer on 1st July 2011. Sewerage Undertakers have a duty, under Section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991, to provide sewers for the drainage of buildings and associated paved areas within property boundaries.
- 5.4.3 Sewerage Undertakers are responsible for public sewers and lateral drains. A public sewer is a conduit, normally a pipe that is vested in a Water and Sewerage Company or predecessor, that drains two or more properties and conveys foul, surface water or combined sewage from one point to another, and discharges via a positive outfall.
- 5.4.4 There is no automatic right of connection for other sources of drainage to the public sewer network. Connection is therefore discretionary following an application to connect.

5.5 South and Vale of White Horse District Councils

- 5.5.1 District Councils has powers under Section 14 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (LDA) to undertake flood risk management works on ordinary watercourses (non-Main River) where deemed necessary.

- 5.5.2 Under Section 20 of the LDA, District Councils have the powers to (by agreement of any person and at that person's expense) carry out any drainage work which that person is entitled to carry out. Agreement may not be required in certain emergency or legally upheld situations.
- 5.5.3 District Council's also has powers to serve notice on persons requiring them to carry out necessary works to maintain the flow of ordinary watercourses under Section 25 of the LDA.
- 5.5.4 The above powers are subject to consent from Oxfordshire County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority.
- 5.5.5 District Councils are the Planning Authorities and have a role in Building Control and the Building Regulations.

5.6 Environment Agency (EA)

- 5.6.1 The EA has a strategic overview responsibility of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion under the F&WMA.
- 5.6.2 The responsibility for maintenance and repair of Main Rivers lies with the riparian owner, but the EA have permissive powers to carry out maintenance work on Main Rivers under Section 165 of the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA).
- 5.6.3 Main River means all watercourses shown as such on the statutory Main River maps held by the Environment Agency and the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and can include any structure or appliance for controlling or regulating the flow of water into, in or out of the channel.
- 5.6.4 The EA will encourage third party asset owners to maintain their property in appropriate condition and take enforcement action where it is appropriate. They may consider undertaking maintenance or repair of third party assets only where it can be justified in order to safeguard the public interest and where other options are not appropriate.
- 5.6.5 The nearest main river is approximately one kilometre away to the east of the affected school premises and is not considered to be a factor in the flood incident.
- 5.6.6 Other work carried out by the EA includes:

Working in partnership with the Met Office to provide flood forecasts and warnings. Developing long-term approaches to Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM). This includes working with others to prepare and carry out sustainable Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs). FRMPs address flood risk in each river catchment. The Environment Agency also

collates and reviews assessments, maps and plans for local flood risk management (normally undertaken by Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs)). Providing evidence and advice to support others. This includes national flood and coastal erosion risk information, data and tools to help other risk management authorities and inform Government policy, and advice on planning and development issues. The EA are statutory consultees of the Local Planning Authorities. Working with others to share knowledge and the best ways of working. This includes work to develop FCERM skills and resources.

- 5.6.7 Monitoring and reporting on FCERM. This includes reporting on how the national FCERM strategy is having an impact across the country.

5.7 Land Owners and Developers

- 5.7.1 Land owners are responsible for the drainage of their land and controlling any movement of sediment from their land. Legally, owners of lower-level ground have to accept natural land drainage from adjacent land at a higher level. The exception to this is where the owner of the higher level land has carried out “improvements” such that the runoff from the land cannot be considered “natural”.
- 5.7.2 Agricultural practices by land owners can be considered as “improvements” to the land, so that cultivation of crops or other land uses can take place. Mitigation works are required on improved land to account for the change in natural land drainage and changes to surface water runoff this can create.
- 5.7.3 Land owners and developers are responsible for working with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that their development is completed in accordance with the planning permission and all conditions that have been imposed.
- 5.7.4 Advice for developers is available on the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit. www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/planning/developers/

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 General

- 6.1.1 Listed below are the recommended course of actions emanating from this formal Flood Investigation Report.
- 6.1.2 It is important to note that it is for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess each recommendation in terms of the legal obligation, resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of undertaking such action.

6.1.3 The recommendations may be included within the Action Plan linked to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or in the relevant risk management authority's future work programmes, as appropriate.

6.2 Actions

6.2.1

- The Highway Authority is to put the highway gullies on a one year cleansing program and construct some additional drainage infrastructure.
- TWA to check that their surface water outfalls to ditches / watercourses are clear and un-obstructed and notify the relevant Land Drainage Authority or LLFA if not.
- The South and Vale District Council as the Land Drainage Authority are to contact and arrange the local ditch owners to cleanse the ditch outfall from Bridge Close.

6.3 Communities and Residents

(e.g. Town/Parish Council, Flood Forum, Community Group, land owners and affected residents)

6.3.1 Nominate a Community Flood Warden to help coordinate the following: Preparing Household Emergency Plans for vulnerable properties in this area. Regularly inspecting ditches and pipework in the area of flood risk. Report blockages or other issues to the land owner and the LLFA. Explore options for property level protection and implement any recommendations. This could include additional drainage at the rear of properties, self-sealing air bricks and flood barriers. Information on Flood Prevention measures for Home Owners, Communities and Businesses can be found on the Flood Toolkit: www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/prevention

Permanent measures such as installing floodgates, raising electrical sockets and fitting non-return valves on pipes can also be considered. Oxfordshire County Council and the EA can provide advice on these matters and more information can be found at:

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation

Explore community wide solutions (e.g. attenuation areas, overflow routes, tree planting). Use the Flood Toolkit Funding Tool to find sponsors who may be willing to help fund improvement projects:

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/funding

Continue to report flood incidents to the Lead Local Flood Authority at: www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood. Endeavour to obtain as much evidence of flood events as possible, such as photographic and video evidence.

6.4 Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

- 6.4.1 Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team and the Environment Agency to support the community based Flood Wardens.
- 6.4.2 Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team, the Environment Agency and other flood management authorities to support the community in the production of a Community Flood Plan and provide advice to residents on how to explore options for property level protection.
- 6.4.3 Inform owners of the drainage systems and watercourses within the overall surface water catchment area of their legal responsibilities.

6.5 Highway Authority (Oxfordshire Highways)

- 6.5.1 Undertake regular highway drainage cleansing throughout Didcot on a three year cycle, including the carriageway channel. Identify and develop a detailed plan of their assets.
- 6.5.2 If flooding occurs Oxfordshire County Council will assess the capacity of the highway assets and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for draining runoff from the highway. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement works should be considered.
- 6.5.3 Assess the suitability of third party drainage systems accepting discharge from Highway Drainage systems and report any unsatisfactory areas to the relevant Risk Management Authorities.
- 6.5.4 Work with the community and LLFA to clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities for watercourses, particularly where these are located within or near to the highway.

6.6 Water Authority Thames Water Utilities (TW)

- 6.6.1 Assess the sources of water entering the public sewerage system.
- 6.6.2 Assess the capacity of their assets and identify any areas of insufficient capacity. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement work should be considered.

6.7 District Councils

- 6.7.1 Continue to consult with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority (Drainage Team) as required in respect of planning applications for new developments to reduce flood risk. Aim to ensure that all works are carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

- 6.7.2 Review the planning policies relating to developments in the vicinity of the flooding incident, together with any flood risk assessments and drainage designs. Consider contacting the developers to take action in the event that any items relating to surface water drainage and flood risk are not evident or ineffective in the final developments or in the construction period.
- 6.7.3 Utilise their enforcement powers under Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 where it is considered that riparian owners are failing to maintain ordinary watercourses in their ownership.
- 6.7.4 Endeavour to assist other flood risk management authorities and land owners in the preparation of a detailed plan of assets relating to drainage and flood risk, to share with the LLFA and the community.

6.8 Environment Agency (EA)

- 6.8.1 Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team and the LLFA to support the community in the instatement of a community based Flood Wardens.

6.9 Land Owners and Developers

- 6.9.1 Developers should work with local authorities to ensure all development is completed in accordance with approved plans and documents, and planning policy.
- 6.9.2 Land owners should undertake regular inspection and maintenance of their drainage systems in accordance with a defined maintenance regime. Further, they should identify and develop a detailed plan of their assets to share with the LLFA, other flood risk management authorities and the community.
- 6.9.3 Land owners should assess the capacity of their drainage systems and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for the collection, conveyance, storage and disposal of surface water. Where this could lead to runoff to the public highway or nuisance to third party private property, improvement works should be considered.
- 6.9.4 Review the library of flood guides on the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.
- 6.9.5 Agricultural land owners should carry out works to their land to reduce surface water runoff. These include following principles of good soil husbandry and providing land drainage systems such as ditches. [The Single Payment Scheme, Cross Compliance Guidance for Soil Management, 2010 edition, should be referenced.](#)

These works help to retain the natural land drainage regime and provide the best soil conditions for the continued agricultural use of the land. Farmers in receipt of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments are required to carry

out a Soil Protection Review which should identify any problems with soil erosion and runoff and help identify solutions to the problem.

Examples of good practice for reducing surface water runoff from agricultural land are:

Ploughing fields in a perpendicular direction to the slope of the land, reducing the effect of channelling of water over the land when it rains; Using techniques and machinery to limit compaction of soils; Growing crops that match the capability of the land, particularly in relation to the timings of activities and not overworking soils through the year; Providing new ditches, sub-soil drainage and outfalls, and re-instating and regularly maintaining existing ditches. Old existing ditches may be completely filled and difficult to see. The type of soil make-up, type of flora and overall lie of the land can help to determine the routes of filled in historic ditches;

Preventing changes to the levels of the land that would cause channelling of surface water to a single point where this would not naturally occur. It should be noted that following good practice for managing surface water runoff cannot completely remove the risks of natural land drainage and the associated quantities and flow routes of runoff that can cause flooding.

7 DISCLAIMER

This report has been prepared as part of Oxfordshire County Council's responsibilities under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. It is intended to provide context and information to support the delivery of the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy and should not be used for any other purpose.

The findings of the report are based on a subjective assessment of the information available by those undertaking the investigation and therefore may not include all relevant information. As such it should not be considered as a definitive assessment of all factors that may have triggered or contributed to the flood event.

Any recommended actions outlined in this FIR will be for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess in terms of resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of the proposal. Moving forward, these may be included in the Action Plan linked to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or in the relevant risk management authority's future work programme as appropriate.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on assumptions made by Oxfordshire County Council when preparing this report, including, but not limited to those key assumptions noted in the Report, including reliance on information provided by others.

Oxfordshire County Council expressly disclaims responsibility for any error in, or omission from, this report arising from or in connection with any of the assumptions being incorrect.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation and Oxfordshire County Council expressly disclaims responsibility for any error in, or omission from, this report arising from or in connection with those opinions, conclusions and any recommendations.

The implications for producing Flood Investigation Reports and any consequences of blight have been considered. The process of gaining insurance for a property and/or purchasing/selling a property and any flooding issues identified are considered a separate and legally binding process placed upon property owners and this is independent of and does not relate to the County Council highlighting flooding to properties at a street level.

Oxfordshire County Council does not accept any liability for the use of this report or its contents by any third party.

ACRONYMS

EA Environment Agency
TWA Thames Water Authority
FIR Flood Investigation Report
F&WMA Flood and Water Management Act 2010
LDA Land Drainage Act 1991
LLFA Lead Local Flood Authority
WRA Water Resources Act 1991

USEFUL LINKS

Highways Act 1980:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/contents

Water Resources Act 1991:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/57/contents

Land Drainage Act 1991:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/contents

EA - 'Living on the Edge' a guide to the rights and responsibilities of riverside occupation:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities

EA - Prepare your Property for Flooding:

How to reduce flood damage Flood protection products and services

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepare-your-property-for-flooding

Oxfordshire County Council Flood and Water Management Web Pages:

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Oxfordshire County Council Highways:

Tel: 0345 310 1111

Website: www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Environment Agency:

General Tel: 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8-6) Call charges apply.

Incident Hotline: 0800 807060 (24 hrs)

Floodline: 0345 988 1188

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Thames Water

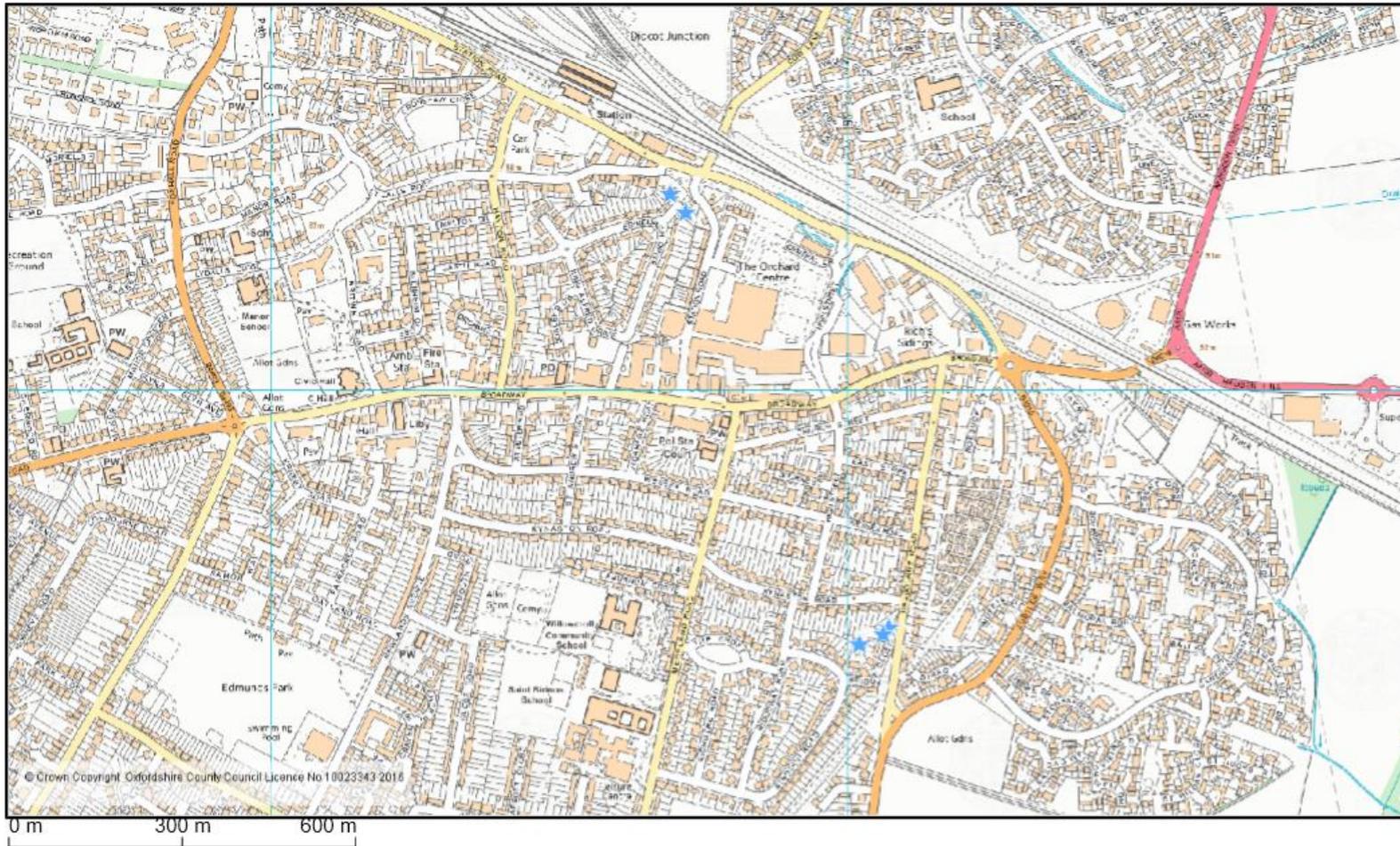
Emergency Tel: 0800 316 9800 (select option 1)

Website: www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/bursts-and-leaks/report-a-leak-or-burst-pipe

Appendix A - Location Plan

02 January 2017

Bridge Close, Edinburgh Drive Flooding



Scale 1: 8755

Oxfordshire County Council, Spectrum Software