

# Reducing flood risk in Abingdon

Newsletter

July 2018

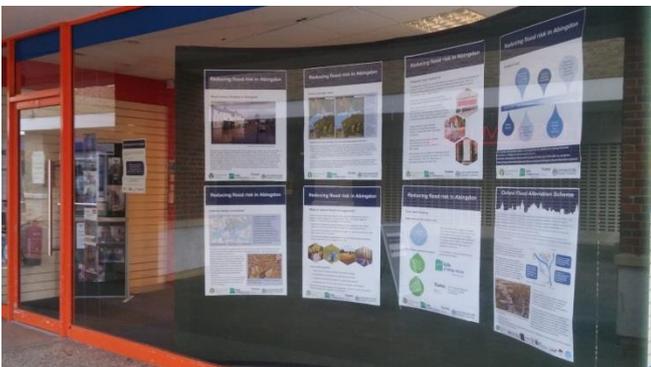
The Environment Agency are working together with the Vale of White Horse District Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee to find ways to reduce flooding in Abingdon.

We are in the early stages of investigating an option to put a flood storage area at Abingdon Common.

We are continuing work progressing a number of design options including a flood storage area, property level products and natural flood management measures.

## Public Drop-in

On 28 March we invited residents to attend our public drop-in at Abingdon Free Space. 62 people attended and fed back their thoughts and ideas on our potential options to reduce flooding in Abingdon. This included collecting views about a potential flood storage area at Abingdon common. We are using the feedback we received to shape what we need to take into consideration in the design of the scheme.



We displayed a range of material, including maps and graphics, at Abingdon Free space for one week following the event. If you were unable to attend the drop-in or would like to view the information we shared again you can find everything at <https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/contacts/abingdon-flood-alleviation-scheme/>

## Scheme options

We are looking into a number of options all of which include a potential flood storage area at Abingdon Common with possible complementary measures such as natural flood management and property level resilience to further reduce flood risk.

We have been looking into the detail for the flood storage area. As we progress the design we gain more accurate estimations of the likely cost to build and maintain the flood storage area. We are also completing more detailed modelling work to determine how the flood storage area could operate here, focusing on how it would work during a flood and where the water would go.

## Surveys

Our ecologists are hard at work carrying out surveys in and around Abingdon Common, This includes surveying for badgers, bats, otters, great crested newts, water voles, pea mussels and reptiles. This allows us to identify any potential improvement which can feed into the design works, such as creating new habitat or improving existing habitat. It will also enable us to design the work to avoid or mitigate for any potential impacts on these species.

## Nearby Communities

We will not develop any option that would increase flood risk to properties outside the area we are working in.

We work to reduce flooding, not to transfer it from one community to another.

## Natural Flood management

We have been examining the most effective options to reduce flooding in Abingdon, and have found that the most effective approach would be to combine traditional engineered flood defences with Natural Flood Management measures. Natural Flood Management works by using natural techniques to hold back or slow down water and reduce flooding downstream. Examples include woody dams, replanting hedges to slow river flow and managing woodland to maintain soil porosity.

In order to develop the potential Natural Flood Management measures we have employed a project officer to look at the opportunities which could benefit Abingdon. This is still in the very early stages and we do not know whether we will be able to progress this until we have done further investigations. We will be meeting landowners in potential areas to see what may be possible.

## Forward Look

### Summer 2018 to 2019

- Continue to develop engineering and Natural Flood Management options
- Review the costs and funding available for the flood storage area
- Meet landowners to investigate opportunities for natural flood management.

### Spring 2019

- Aim to submit a planning application for submission.

To contact the project team, or to request to be added to the mailing list email enquiries\_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk

View updates online at <https://www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/contacts/abingdon-flood-alleviation-scheme/>