

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

March 2018

We are working with local partners on a scheme to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses in Oxford, as well as to services and major transport routes into the city.

We will be lowering parts of the floodplain and working on some of the existing rivers and streams that run through it, to make more space for water and reduce flood risk to the city. In some areas we will be building new flood walls and embankments.



The route of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme to the west of Oxford from just above Botley Road.

open during future flooding. The scheme will also create additional benefits such as a long term green legacy and helping the city's economy thrive.

Planning application

We have now submitted the Planning Application for the scheme to Oxfordshire County Council. It will be available to view online in the next few weeks. The submission includes detailed design drawings, Planning Statement and the Environmental Statement. Any enquiries about this should be directed to Oxfordshire County Council.

Funding success

We are pleased to announce that the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme partnership has secured the funding needed to move to the next stage. Thanks to increases in contributions from the scheme partners, the £121million target has been met.

The final pieces of the funding jigsaw brought the total partnership contributions up to a record £56million. Investment has been secured from partners including Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council and Thames Water Utilities. The remaining £65million of the funding had already been committed by Government.

Reaching the full funding target is a major milestone for the scheme. It allows us to move a step closer to deliver our aim of reducing flood risk to homes and businesses in the city and to the railway line and main roads, keeping Oxford

Analysing the archaeology

Our archaeologists have now completed the final analysis of the finds from our excavations last year. The results include the exciting fact that the settlement of South Hinksey dates back over 2000 years. We have used dating techniques to confirm that the roundhouses we uncovered close to the village date from the Iron Age.

Being innovative

We used a new approach to our archaeological investigations which uses information from boreholes and geophysical techniques (such as ground penetrating radar to examine the physical properties of the earth) to identify areas of high, moderate, and low archaeological interest. This has helped us to be more targeted and efficient in where we dig.

We reduced the number of trenches by 200 by using this innovative approach. This caused less harm to existing habitat, reduced inconvenience

to landowners and the public, and made a saving of approximately £200,000. We have also reduced the likelihood of delay due to new discoveries during construction. Historic England have highlighted that this as an exemplary case study on the use of this technique.



Archaeology investigation trenches being excavated in the scheme area in autumn 2017.

Reducing environmental impacts

We know that during construction there will be disruption and some unavoidable environmental impacts. We are working hard to minimise these. We have conducted surveys of animals and plants over several years to enable us to make sympathetic design changes wherever possible.

We recognise the importance of Hinksey Meadows and have listened to environmental stakeholders about this valuable wildflower-rich habitat. We will route the channel as far as we can around the edge of the meadow.

Approximately 2 hectares of floodplain meadow will need to be dug up and replanted. We will create nearly 18 hectares of new meadow using seeds taken from existing local sites. We are working with the Floodplain Meadows Partnership to ensure we do this as sensitively as possible.

We continue to work closely with local wildlife groups to maximise environmental benefits. Once the temporary disruption of the construction

phase is over, the scheme will deliver a true green legacy. It will create new priority habitat and establish a wildlife corridor to the west of Oxford that links existing wildlife sites and improves biodiversity.

Marking out the channel

Our project team has worked closely with landowners on the design of the scheme to understand their thoughts and listen to their feedback. Recently Oxford Preservation Trust requested that we mark out the extent of the scheme on their Hinksey Meadow land. We used coloured pegs to show the extent of the proposed channel and locations of the two bridges in this area. We hope this will be useful to visualise the scheme in this area and help in our ongoing discussions.



Marking out the edge of the two-stage channel.

Forward look

We will be continuing our negotiations with landowners to obtain permission to use their land. If we cannot reach an agreement, we will seek to use Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers to allow the flood scheme to go ahead.

If our planning and CPO are approved, we plan to submit the full business case for the scheme to Government later this year. Construction should start early 2019 and is expected to take 3 years.

Keep updated on the scheme



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