

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

December 2016

We are working with local partners on a scheme to reduce flood risk to over 1000 homes and businesses in Oxford, as well as to major transport routes into the city.

We will be lowering parts of the flood plain and widening some of the rivers and streams that run through it, to make more space for water and reduce flood risk to the city.

We are currently working on the detailed design for the scheme. This newsletter provides an update on what we have been doing since our last newsletter in September 2016.

Design update

We are currently working on our detailed design for the scheme. This includes finalising the exact route, looking at structures that need to be included to control water flow, confirming any bridges or access needed across the scheme, and looking at how we will construct it. It also involves looking at the environmental features that the scheme could include.

There are various phases of the detailed design. Firstly, the project team work on the design, using their expertise and the knowledge gained so far from the various surveys and investigations carried out. They then take this to a number of internal teams, such as environmental specialists, operations teams, and planners, to ensure that they are happy with the design.

The next stage of this is working with landowners, who need to input to various aspects of the design to ensure that they can continue to use their land when the scheme is in place. We are currently working with them to do this.



Working with the public, June 2016

The final stage will be a public consultation on specific aspects of the design where we would like further local input, for example, construction management and additional features such as benches and signage. We will be holding the consultation from May-June 2017. It will be online and we will also hold public events to give communities the chance to speak to members of the team directly. We will publish exact details about this closer to the time.

We will submit a pre-planning application for consultation with the local planning authorities at the same time as the public consultation. The feedback from both of these consultations will allow us to finalise our design ready to submit an application for planning permission in late 2017.

To request this newsletter in a different format, including large print, braille or in another language, please call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506.

Surveys and investigations

We have completed several environmental surveys and have found out about the species that live in the scheme area, including various fish, great crested newts, otters and badgers. We are designing the scheme to enhance the environment for these species as well as to introduce habitat which might encourage other species to survive here.

The archaeological work on the Old Abingdon Road is complete, and has given us lots of information about the history of this area. We are now trying to determine the age of an old culvert beneath the road which will help us plan for how we construct the scheme. We will publish details of this on our Facebook page shortly.

Preparing for winter

In the winter, we are likely to have an increased risk of flooding. Make sure you are prepared by visiting www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk and doing the following:

- Check your flood risk
- Sign up for flood warnings
- Make a flood plan

The Environment Agency is carrying out work to try to reduce this risk, including clearing waterways and structures of debris that might increase this risk. We also have temporary defences on standby in case of a flood. This year we have identified 2 new areas these defences could be used, Abingdon and South Hinksey, and completed work to prepare them to receive these defences if they are needed.

What else is happening on the scheme?

- At the same time as finalising our design we are working towards submitting our Outline Business Case in February. This is the second stage in government approvals the scheme needs to obtain.
- We continue to work on securing the remaining funding needed for the scheme. We are targeting businesses, both local, national and international, who are set to benefit from the reduction in flood risk the scheme will provide.
- We are currently finalising our flood modelling for the Thames downstream of Oxford, and are planning a number of public events in early 2017 in order to share the findings with those interested.
- In preparation for the public consultation in May, we are now planning a series of market stall events in Oxford to raise awareness of the scheme.

Next steps

In the new year we will be publishing dates and times of future events, as well as consultation dates and event locations. Use the links below to keep updated on the scheme and look out for news and events.

In the meantime, have a very merry Christmas and a happy new year!

Keep updated on the scheme

Find further information including videos of the scheme route on our Facebook page at: www.facebook.com/oxfordscheme

You can also visit our website www.gov.uk/government/collections/reducing-flood-risk-in-oxford-and-abingdon

Follow @OxfordFAS on Twitter

Or contact us at oxfordscheme@environment-agency.gov.uk to be added to our mailing list.