

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

December 2018

We are working with local partners to deliver a new flood scheme for Oxford, which will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and major transport routes into the city. The scheme is designed to provide a long term solution to manage flooding in Oxford for the next 100 years, taking climate change projections into account.

The scheme is not a concrete channel, but rather will enhance the existing floodplain to the west of Oxford, most of which is farmland and flood meadow. We will dig out material to create a natural looking stream which will always carry water, and a wider shallower area to the side of this, which will be planted with vegetation and only carry water in times of higher flows. This creates more space for water away from built-up areas, reducing flood risk in the city whilst fitting with the existing landscape. The design will create over 22 hectares of new habitat for wildlife.

Scheme update

Our planning application for the scheme is currently being considered by Oxfordshire County Council and we are hoping for a final planning decision in early 2019. In November we submitted some additional information. The council will shortly open a public consultation on this and all the information will then be available for viewing on Oxfordshire County Council's website (search for planning application: MW.0028/18).

What would be your #JustOneThing?

What would be the one thing you would save in a flood? Your laptop? Photos? Pet? The Environment Agency are currently running a winter ready campaign to remind people of the importance of being prepared for floods. Everyone should have a personal flood plan, knowing what to do in a flood. You can find information here on how you can Prepare, Act and Survive. <https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/what-to-do-in-a-flood>



We've been sharing video clips on social media, including of Oxford residents that have suffered from flooding #JustOneThing #PrepareActSurvive.



Flooding in Earl Street, Oxford, 2007

Nick Hills, of the Oxford Flood Alliance, knows only too well how devastating flooding in Oxford can be. "Having suffered the effects of 3 floods in Earl Street in 2000, 2003 and 2007, each one worse than the one before, it became apparent that something had to be done. Having half a metre of water occupying the entire ground floor of your house, followed by over 6 months of drying out and reinstatement is an experience I wouldn't wish on anybody. Despite a raft - pun intended - of local protection measures, we've still come perilously close to repeated inundation, most recently in 2014/2015. The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme can't come soon enough!"

Working in partnership

With climate change it is likely flooding will become more frequent and more severe. The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme is designed to reduce risk from a major size flood, a scale not seen in Oxford since 1947. A project of such large scale is only possible through effective partnership working. Owen Jenkins, Director for Infrastructure Operations at Oxfordshire County Council explains why the scheme is so important.

“Flooding directly affects people whether it is residents whose houses are flooded, commuters who can’t get to work, or businesses that can’t operate. A flood also draws in vast resources. In Oxfordshire in the last flood event the County Council had to close roads and deal with the after effects on the surface and in the drains. During the flood our fire and rescue service worked incredibly hard to keep major routes open by pumping round the clock. There is a better long term solution that does not divert valuable day to day resources. As a ‘Lead Flood Authority’ we believe the only way to solve the problem of flooding is through working in partnership.”



Flooding in the Botley Road area, Oxford, 2013/14

Councillor Roger Cox, leader of the Vale of White Horse District Council explains why they are a

partner of the scheme: “The scheme will help avoid a repeat of the disruption and damage to the city’s homes and businesses caused by the floods of recent years. It will also minimise the flood risk to services and major transport routes into Oxford, particularly around Botley and Kennington.”

Latest news

We have listened to local concerns about the impact the scheme will have on trees and recently conducted some additional tree surveys. Although trees will unfortunately have to be felled during the construction stage, we can confirm that our tree-planting proposals will ensure there will be more woodland within the scheme area after completion, than there currently is at present.

By surveying individual trees by eye, we estimate that 2,000 trees will need to be felled. To mitigate for this we will be planting around 4,325 trees. In addition, 15,000 smaller trees, such as hawthorn, hazel and elder, will also be planted, along with many more native shrubs such as dogwood, goat willow, dog rose and wild privet. Throughout the design process, our contractors, engineers and ecologists have worked together to minimise tree loss wherever possible. Once a contractor has been appointed we will work with them to further minimise losses of trees wherever possible.

Our aim is for the scheme to bring a true green legacy to the area. We are currently exploring options for the long term maintenance of the scheme to ensure it is not only maintained as a flood scheme, but continues to provide lasting environmental improvements well into the future.

Forward look

We plan to submit the full business case for the scheme to Government next year. If all the approvals are in place, construction will start in 2019 and is expected to take around 3 to 4 years.

Keep updated on the scheme – and please share this newsletter



www.facebook.com/oxfordscheme/



<https://twitter.com/OxfordFAS>



OxfordScheme@environment-agency.gov.uk



www.gov.uk/government/publications/oxford-flood-scheme/oxford-flood-scheme

