

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

May 2021

We are working with 9 partners on a major new flood scheme for Oxford, which will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses and major transport routes into the city. Our scheme will provide a long term solution to flooding in Oxford, helping protect the city in coming decades as flood risk increases with climate change.

The scheme will run through the existing floodplain west of Oxford. It will be formed of a new stream surrounded by a sloping floodplain of new wetland habitat and grazing meadow to create more space for water away from built-up areas.



What's new?

We will be submitting our planning application for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme later this year. Today, 17 May, we are publishing a new dedicated website to inform the public about the scheme. This includes new videos, maps and pictures to show where the scheme will be located, what it will look like and how it will work.

consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/thames/oxfordscheme

We explain why we withdrew our previous planning application when it was found a major road bridge in the scheme area needed replacing, and how we have used this opportunity to improve the flood scheme in this area.

You will have the opportunity to ask about the scheme on the website. Our survey taking your questions will be open from 17-31 May. Each day

during this period we will be publishing questions from the public and our responses. Following the 2 week period we will produce a summary video with members of our Project Team answering your key questions.

Key changes to the scheme

The scheme remains fundamentally the same, with the same overall design. Our updates are summarised below – please click on any heading to be taken to our new website for more details.

A423 Kennington Bridge

We will no longer need to install concrete culverts here. Oxfordshire County Council are replacing the bridge and we've worked together to ensure the new bridge is designed for its role in the flood scheme. Open channels underneath the new bridge will carry floodwater from the scheme.

Route of new stream through Kendall Copse

The replacement of the A423 bridge has changed where the new stream will pass

underneath the road here. We have realigned the route of the new stream through Kendall Copse to improve river flows during floods.

Temporary road in the Kennington area

We will be excavating the new stream underneath Old Abingdon Road and Kennington Road. In order to avoid closing both roads and keep 2-way traffic flowing, we will be building a temporary road through Kendall Copse. The road will be removed and trees replanted in Kendall Copse once construction is complete.

Construction compounds near Kennington

Our construction work in the south of the scheme area will now be managed from a temporary compound located in the western part of Kendall Copse. We will also need a small area of Redbridge Park & Ride for some specific tasks, but have reduced the size and time we'll use it for now we're no longer installing culverts under the bridge here. Our main construction compound remains in fields just north of South Hinksey.

Transport of spoil by rail

We are pursuing our preferred option of moving some excavated material from site by rail. We cannot currently confirm that the rail sidings will be available for use. We are therefore submitting a separate planning application alongside our main scheme application, for the movement of excavated material to the rail sidings, for transport by rail.

Updated biodiversity calculations

One of our key environmental objectives is for the scheme to deliver a net gain in biodiversity. This means leaving more good quality natural habitats and ecological features after the scheme is built than beforehand. Natural England has updated the way that biodiversity net gain should be calculated, so we'll be providing the most up to date information on our biodiversity improvements in our new planning application.

Progress with reducing our carbon budget

Over its lifetime the scheme will avoid significant future carbon emissions by reducing flood damage and disruption. We are working with our designers and contractors to look at ways of reducing carbon emissions as much as possible through design, construction and ongoing maintenance of the scheme.

New collaboration with Earth Trust

The Environment Agency has formed a new collaboration with the environmental charity Earth Trust. This partnership will help us plan the long term maintenance of the new landscape and habitats, ensuring the scheme provides a green legacy for the local area: earthtrust.org.uk/what-we-do/water-wetlands/oxford-flood-alleviation-scheme

Environmental surveys

We have updated our environmental surveys to ensure we are assessing the likely impacts of the scheme using current data. These include surveys of wildlife such as water voles, bats and trees.



A larger pond

We are planning to create a series of new ponds in the southern half of the scheme area. These will be connected to the river system only during larger floods. Following consultation with the Freshwater Habitats Trust, the size of one of these ponds has now been increased.

Follow us to keep updated on the scheme – and please share this newsletter.



facebook.com/oxfordscheme



twitter.com/oxfordfas



OxfordScheme@environment-agency.gov.uk



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

