

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

- Reducing flood risk
- Enabling a thriving economy
- Connecting people and the environment

Newsletter

August 2015

We are working in partnership to develop proposals to reduce flood risk in Oxford.

Our investigations have confirmed that a flood relief channel will bring significant flood risk benefits to Oxford.

We are looking at options to construct new channels or enlarge existing channels in the western floodplain.

If the scheme is approved we plan to start construction in 2018.



We will be contacting those who shared their ideas for environmental, recreational and funding opportunities. We are considering whether your ideas are possible to achieve as part of the scheme.

We have started using the information you gave us to help us assess the options available for a channel route. We are still developing these options and will share these with you at the next round of public events, which are planned for later this year.

Summer 2015 public events

Thank you to everyone who attended one of our public events. We held 5 events across the Oxford area with nearly 300 visitors. 150 of those signed up to receive this newsletter.

We have been collating the information you gave us at the events. We gained really useful local knowledge both from the post-its you left on the maps and from the 135 questionnaires you completed.

Your feedback from these events shows that you are passionate about Oxford's rich history, culture, environment and wildlife. Many of you are pleased that the scheme is being developed to reduce flood risk. Where possible, you would like us to improve the environment and recreational use of the flood plain.

You have asked us to be mindful of the delicate plant species and archaeology, so that we maintain Oxford's unique identity.

You have been asking us:

“What will the channel look like?”

We aim to create a channel which is as natural as possible. While not yet designed, it is likely that the majority of the channel will be dug into the soil. It would have a stream at the bottom, with a wide gradual slope, to take flood waters. The flood plain will continue to flood but not so deeply. In places the natural slopes could be grazed. Where possible we will create new wildlife areas and improve water quality.

We may need small sections of stronger materials, such as concrete, to make sure the channel can pass safely under bridges and through narrow sections of land.

Downstream communities

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

While we are designing the scheme we will be using the latest river modelling to assess how our work will affect the flow of water passing through Oxford.

We will design the scheme to ensure that we do not increase flood risk to communities downstream of Oxford. This will be supported by our modelling, which is independently verified.

We will need to prove that we do not increase flood risk to downstream communities as part of our planning application for the scheme.

Before the final scheme is approved we will share our modelling information with communities in Oxford and in downstream areas.

We will be carrying out ground investigation work this summer.

This involves digging a number of boreholes and test pits in different locations within the study area. The results of this work will help the team to understand the geology of underlying layers of rock and soil and confirm groundwater levels.

You may see our colleagues working in the area. The Investigation is due to begin in September; it will take 4 weeks, and will help us decide on the best route for a channel.

What's next?

Looking at green infrastructure

We are looking at where the existing green spaces are in Oxford and what local plans and initiatives are in place to improve these. We will then look at how the scheme can support and enhance these, potentially through connecting up existing areas, improving access for both people and wildlife.

Short listing routing and design options

From now until November, we are using information from our own investigations and information provided by the public to develop the route options for the scheme.

Winter 2015 public events

Once we have completed the route and design options we will be running a second series of public events later this year. We will be sharing the options available and will be asking for your thoughts on them. As soon as we know dates we will let you know.

Gaining approval for the scheme

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme is a large project and needs government approval. This requires us to provide detailed information as the scheme progresses. The approval process is important and can take some time. We are aiming for final approval in 2018 and for construction to begin later that year.

For more information visit our webpage

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

Or contact us at

oxfordscheme@environment-agency.gov.uk

If you missed our public events you can view all the display material here

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/sites/default/files/folders/documents/environmentandplanning/flooding/Oxford%20FAS%20Public%20Consultation%20boards%20-%20Final.pdf>