

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

February 2023

We are working with 9 partners on a major new flood scheme for Oxford, which will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses and vital transport routes into the city. The 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.

Scheme update

We submitted our planning application for the scheme to Oxfordshire County Council in 2022 and a consultation on our proposals was held. The council subsequently asked us to provide some further information, which is quite normal for a project of this size and complexity. We have now submitted our response to the request for further information and the council will organise a public consultation on our response. You will be able to find more details on the [Oxfordshire County Council ePlanning system](#). The planning reference is [MW.0027/22](#).

Our Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the scheme has been finalised. We will issue notices to landowners shortly and the documents will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. A CPO will ensure that all the land necessary to construct the scheme is available. The Secretary of State will determine the process for deciding the CPO and will set out the timetable for this in due course. We have engaged with landowners and will continue to do so throughout the planning and CPO process.

We will also be submitting a separate planning application to construct a temporary access track to the Hinksey Rail Sidings. We expect to submit this by May 2023. If this application is approved, the temporary access track will allow us to remove some of the material excavated during construction by rail. Use of the railway will depend on us gaining permission to access the sidings, their availability, and agreements with the operator of the sidings.

Protecting the City's infrastructure

Significant floods in past decades have not only caused property damage to homes and businesses in Oxford, they have also closed the railway and major roads, bringing the city to a standstill. This level of disruption will be specifically memorable for people who experienced the floods of 2003, 2007 or 2013/2014. Floodwater cut off Botley and Abingdon Roads, closed the railway line and caused devastation to many homes and businesses.



Flooding and road closure on Abingdon Road in November 2012

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme will help keep the main railway line, Abingdon Road, Botley Road and local roads open in floods. There will also be fewer flood related interruptions to utility services, including water, electricity, phone and internet, and less likelihood of schools and essential community services needing to close.



Flooded railway tracks in Oxford in 2007

Oxford relies on functioning and resilient infrastructure in order to stay open for business and to support its vibrant tourist economy. Oxford is known as a thriving centre of commerce. It is home to around 4,700 businesses and provides 135,000 jobs. Road closures, diversions and longer journey times due to flooding would impact the tens of thousands of people who commute into or travel through Oxford by bus or car every day. The scheme will significantly reduce the chance of this disruption due to flooding.

The scheme will also bring wellbeing benefits to

communities in and around Oxford. Thousands of residents who are currently affected when the city floods will be able to enjoy improved peace of mind without the worry of flooding and the green spaces of the scheme will enhance the enjoyment of recreation in the local area for generations to come.

Keep safe from flooding

Polls as part of the Environment Agency Public Flood Survey in March 2021 suggest nearly 2 in 3 households at risk from flooding do not believe their homes could flood. But just because flooding hasn't happened to you in the past, it doesn't mean it won't happen in the future.

In England there are over 5 million properties at risk of flooding. With climate change already causing more frequent, intense flooding and rising sea levels, we all need to know what to do should the worst happen.

Taking steps to prepare for flooding and knowing what to do in a flood can significantly reduce the risks to individuals and damages to homes and possessions. Here are some simple things you can do to prepare.

Would you know what to do in a flood?



**FLOOD
ALERT**

PREPARE

- Prepare a bag that includes medicines and insurance documents



**FLOOD
WARNING**

ACT

- Turn off gas, water and electricity
- Move things upstairs or to safety
- Move family, pets and car to safety



**SEVERE
FLOOD
WARNING**

SURVIVE

- Call 999 if in immediate danger
- Follow advice from emergency services
- Keep yourself and your family safe

Visit check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/plan-ahead-for-flooding

#PrepareActSurvive

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