

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

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 relief benefits to Oxford. We have analysed various options to construct new channels or enlarge existing channels in the floodplain and have determined the best scheme to achieve our objectives.

We will be sharing details of the scheme at The Assembly Room, Oxford Town Hall on Tuesday 28 June from 2-8pm, you are welcome to drop-in. You can also access the information on our website:

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

Or on our new Facebook page: www.facebook.com/oxfordscheme/

What is the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme?

There are 4,500 properties in Oxford at a 1% or higher annual risk of flooding. This figure could rise to nearly 6,000 by 2080 with the predicted effects of climate change. Major roads, railway lines, schools and businesses could also be affected by flooding. The Environment Agency carries out regular maintenance activities and operates assets to reduce the flood risk as much as possible, reducing this to 1,800 properties at risk.

In 2009 we carried out the Oxford Flood Risk Management Strategy, a detailed study of the flood risk from rivers in Oxford. The strategy described how we can manage flood risk in Oxford over the next 100 years. Since the January 2014 floods, we have been working with our partners including Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Thames Water and the Oxford Flood Alliance, to develop a scheme in line with this strategy, to reduce flood risk to residents and businesses in Oxford.

We have carried out investigations into the flood risk and possible options to alleviate this risk. Our investigations show that we can increase capacity in Oxford's western floodplain by constructing a new flood relief channel, reducing the flood risk to the majority of the 1,800 properties currently at risk.

Analysis of the route options

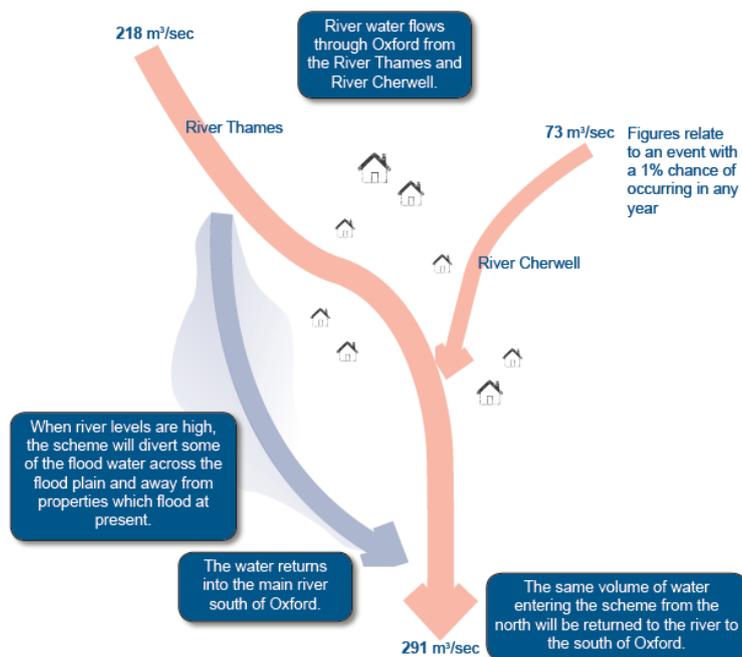
Between 19 January and 1 March 2016 we held a public consultation on options for a flood alleviation channel. We ran this online and held 5 public events which almost 900 people attended. The consultation received over 300 responses, enabling us to understand the public's preferred option. We used these comments to help shape the route for the scheme.

We used a multi-criteria analysis to rank the options in order of preference, considering economic, social, technical, environmental and institutional factors. Based on this, we have now determined the best scheme.



The scheme

The scheme runs from North of Botley Road down to Munday's Bridge. We originally thought the scheme would need to extend further, down to Sandford, as well as including works at Weirs Mill Stream. However, our investigations have shown that there are better ways to reduce flood risk, which avoid any work to the Sandford area or any permanent disruption to the residential moorings at Weirs Mill. The scheme will work by diverting flood water across the open flood plain and away from properties which flood at present.



What happens next?

We will now begin working on our outline design for the scheme. The design has two phases: outline and detailed. At outline stage, the fundamental engineering behind the scheme must be agreed. At detailed design, we add detail about the scheme and how it will be built.

There are various approvals we must go through, including getting planning permission, before construction can begin. The scheme has funding from central government, the Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, and local councils, but needs further contributions to enable construction. We continue to work with our partners to find the remaining funding. We are also working on arrangements for removing and reusing construction materials, as well as looking at how the channel will be maintained after construction. Provided the scheme is fully approved and funded, the earliest we can expect to start work on a channel is Spring 2018. Construction is expected to take 3 to 4 years.

Working with communities

From an early stage we have been working with our partners and local environmental groups to ensure that the scheme will bring environmental, social and cultural benefits as well as reducing flood risk. Along with our partners, we have been meeting with landowners, community groups, local flood groups and councillors to discuss the scheme. We have also run a series of focus groups with downstream communities to help us plan wider engagement in areas downstream of the scheme.

The event on 28 June will be an opportunity for local communities to find out about the proposed scheme. The next consultation events will take place during the detailed design phase and will be a chance to influence how the channel and surrounding area will look. We currently expect to be at this stage by Spring 2017.

For more information visit our webpage

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

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