

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

November 2017

We are working with local partners on a scheme to reduce flood risk to homes and businesses in Oxford, as well as to services and major transport routes into the city.

We will be lowering parts of the floodplain and working on some of the existing rivers and streams that run through it, to make more space for water and reduce flood risk to the city. In some areas we will be building new flood walls and embankments.

Archaeological investigations

We have now finished the excavation stage of our archaeological investigations and the team from Oxford Archaeology are moving on to the next phase of analysing the finds. We excavated almost 200 trenches across the scheme area.

The results will help identify the archaeology that remains along the route, so we can minimise the impact of the flood scheme, and identify any areas where further archaeological investigations may be needed.



Photo: Oxford Archaeology

Archaeologist works on the stone causeway discovered near Willow Walk.

The discoveries provide some interesting new insights into the history of the floodplain.

The findings appear to span three key time periods: from the roaming days of hunter-gatherers, to the farming communities of the

Bronze and Iron Ages, through to the traders of the medieval period.

Early on in our excavations some small stone flints from the late Mesolithic period were found near South Hinksey. These indicate that 6000 years ago hunters may have stopped in this area to make their tools.

The finds that may date from the Bronze Age and Iron Age include an ancient trackway and a large ditch enclosure, which may have held animals. And intriguingly, evidence of Bronze Age or Iron Age round-houses were also uncovered in trenches close to South Hinksey. This was an unexpected find which might suggest a larger settlement. Deposits associated with the houses, including fragments of pottery and animal bones, are now being analysed and dated.

Perhaps the most exciting find has been a stone causeway near Willow Walk, which appears to be medieval. Digging has been completed and the team from Oxford Archaeology are now performing the crucial analysis of the finds to confirm dates and build a better picture of what the discoveries will tell us.

Environmental work

We have completed our latest round of environmental surveys and are including the results in our Environmental Impact Assessment. We know that badgers, otters

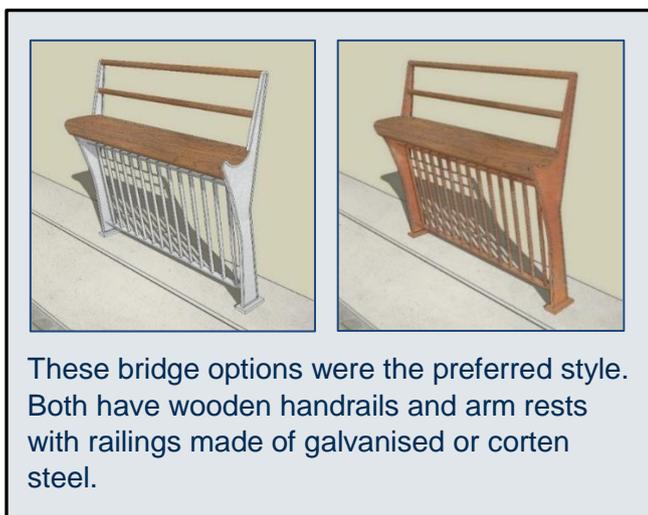
and water voles live in various locations across the scheme area.

We aim to minimise disturbance to these species, where we possibly can. Where disruption is unavoidable we are creating new habitat to prevent any harm. We will carry out further environmental surveys before any construction work begins.

Consultation 2017

Thank you to everyone who responded to our consultation earlier this year. We are using the feedback to inform our detailed design of the scheme, along with technical issues, environmental and social impacts.

Most people who responded were in favour of benches and cycle racks, and information boards were also popular.



To find out more about the responses and feedback we received please view the full report at: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/thames/oxford-fas-consultation-2017/>

Modelling results

We have completed our latest modelling, which shows us how water is predicted to flow when the scheme is complete. This is now being independently reviewed.

We will use the results to confirm details of the scheme design. For example, to confirm the height we need to make flood walls and embankments. It will also help us to make sure that the scheme will work during low flows, as well as during floods.

Forward look

We are using environmental surveys and modelling results to refine our detailed design of the scheme. This includes finalising details such as the exact location of earth embankments and flood walls, and the type of material used on different sections of the scheme.

We are continuing to develop plans for landscaping and maintaining the scheme when it is complete.

We are working with local partners to secure the remaining funding needed. We are confident that the remaining contributions will be committed to.

If we gain all the required approvals, we plan to start the 3 year construction period in winter 2018.

To request this newsletter in a different format, please call the Environment Agency on 0370 850 6506.

Keep updated on the scheme

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 <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/reducing-flood-risk-in-oxford-and-abingdon>

