

# Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

January 2019

**We are working with local partners to deliver a new flood scheme for Oxford, which will reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and major transport routes into the city. The scheme is designed to provide a long term solution to manage flooding in Oxford for the next 100 years, taking climate change projections into account.**

The scheme is not a concrete channel, but rather will enhance the existing floodplain to the west of Oxford, most of which is farmland and flood meadow. We will dig out material to create a natural looking stream which will always carry water, and a wider shallower area to the side of this, which will be planted with vegetation and only carry water in times of higher flows. This creates more space for water away from built-up areas, reducing flood risk in the city whilst fitting with the existing landscape. The design will create over 20 hectares of new habitat for wildlife.

## Scheme update

Our planning application for the scheme is currently being considered by Oxfordshire County Council and we are hoping for a final planning decision at their next Planning Committee meeting in early March. All the information is available for viewing on Oxfordshire County Council's website (search for planning application: MW.0028/18).

Our Compulsory Purchase Order for the scheme has now been submitted to government and we are continuing to listen to and talk with affected landowners. It is always our aim to reach agreement with landowners directly rather than to enforce a Compulsory Purchase Order.

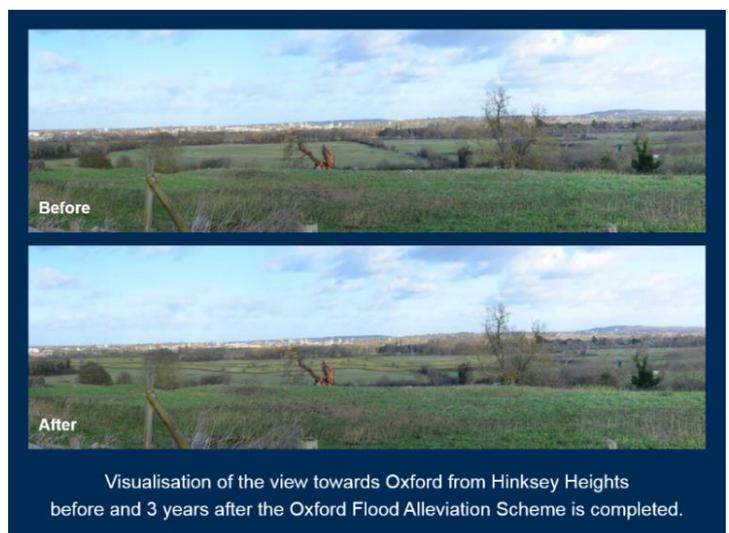
## What will the scheme look like?

We have designed the scheme to be as natural as possible in appearance and to blend into the surrounding fields. It will work with the natural floodplain and fit in with the existing environment, most of which is farmland and flood meadow. The scheme will enhance the existing floodplain to the west of Oxford, running from just north of the Botley Road down to south of the A423 near Kennington, where it joins the River Thames.

We know that the scheme area has great importance for local residents who enjoy

recreational activities and its unique natural environment. In addition to reduced flood risk, the aim of the scheme is to deliver a long term green legacy, which includes creating new habitat, increasing biodiversity, and improving the experience of recreation in the area for generations to come.

If the scheme is approved we believe it will help to safeguard the Green Belt in this area, as it will need to remain as a functioning flood alleviation scheme for at least the next 100 years. This will help to maintain and preserve the openness of this part of the Green Belt.



During the construction stage there will be inevitable changes to local landscape, due to the presence of construction vehicles, construction compounds and excavations. However once the scheme is complete and vegetation established, most of the area will continue to look very similar to how it does now.

On Willow Walk we will be removing the existing culverts and their metal railings and will install a new bridge in their place, to allow flood water to pass underneath Willow Walk.

## The best scheme for Oxford

We are passionate that the scheme design is the best option to manage flood risk in Oxford in the long term, reducing the risk of devastation from major floods that are expected to become more frequent and more severe. We are aware that some local residents have asked about dredging, and whether large-scale dredging of the existing rivers and streams would help reduce flood risk.

Dredging on its own would never be the answer to protect Oxford from large floods. Even if we were to dredge all the existing rivers and streams in Oxford it would not provide the extra capacity needed for water in a major flood. In fact it could be costly and damaging. We need to be very careful about where we dredge, as done in the wrong place it can be disruptive to the environment and can increase flooding downstream. Rivers also tend to deposit more silt after dredging, making it inefficient and needing constant repeating. It would simply not be effective or sustainable in Oxford.

## Forward look

We plan to submit the Full Business Case for the scheme to government this year. If all approvals are in place construction will start in 2019 and is expected to take 3 to 4 years.

To request larger versions of the visualisations in this newsletter please email

[OxfordScheme@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:OxfordScheme@environment-agency.gov.uk)



Visualisation of the view across Hinksey Meadow towards Willow Walk before and 3 years after the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme is completed.

In the Hinksey Meadow area the existing Seacourt Stream will act as the first stage channel. The second stage channel will be routed to the edge of the meadow. This will be planted with vegetation and for most of the year will be dry.



The 2 culverts under Willow Walk looking south-west towards Hinksey Lane

The new bridge will replace the 2 culverts and allow water to move freely under this section of Willow Walk and across the floodplain

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