

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

August 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 flooding in Oxford for the next 100 years, taking climate change projections into account.

The scheme 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 seeded to create floodplain meadow and will 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.

Our Environmental Vision

We have reached an exciting stage in developing our Environmental Vision for the scheme. This is our long term plan to support the effective management of the scheme area. Creating the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme provides a unique opportunity to not only help protect Oxford from flooding, but to create a wetland wildlife corridor to the west of Oxford. We want to leave local communities with a cherished asset, which benefits people and wildlife for generations to come. Several kilometres of the scheme area will see new habitat including floodplain meadow, wetland landscaping, tree and hedgerow planting. We'll also be improving existing footpaths in the area.

As well as ensuring habitats are properly cared for and that the scheme keeps working, our Environmental Vision goes beyond this to bring additional benefits - for example building community connections and helping improve health and wellbeing. To enhance our management approach in this way, we will partner with a specialist environmental organisation, who will dedicate specific resources to the area for many years.

We are currently advertising to find the best environmental organisation to work with us on this exciting project for Oxford.

The successful partner will build relationships with local groups and create opportunities for education, environmental research and ecological enhancements.

This is a unique opportunity for the benefit of wildlife, sustainability and health, in the heart of Oxford. Interested organisations will need to return their completed application forms by 7 October 2019. Our advert and more information about the Environmental Vision is available on our website.

Oxford's Environmental Vision will establish its own legacy and ensure the scheme becomes an integral part of the Oxford landscape.



Climate emergency

Working on the scheme, we are very aware of the devastating effects that climate change will bring. Global heating will drive more extreme rainfall and bring increasingly unpredictable weather. When climate change is taken into account, our flood modelling shows an increase in both frequency and severity of floods in the coming decades. We are working to leave Oxford with the resilience to cope with these changes over the next 100 years, designing the scheme not only to reduce the impacts of flooding at current levels, but taking climate change projections into account. This is why we have designed the scheme to cope with floods of a major scale last seen in Oxford in 1947.



What stage is the project at?

Before construction of the scheme can start we need to secure a grant of planning permission and confirmation of our compulsory purchase order (CPO). The CPO will ensure we have access to all the land needed for construction and operation of the scheme. As some affected parties have objected to the CPO, there will be a Public Inquiry, which will be heard by an independent inspector.

In a separate recent development, Oxfordshire County Council informed us that the A423 Kennington Railway Bridge will need replacing. Our design for the scheme includes installing new culverts close to the bridge to carry water under the road above. We are working closely with the county council, who are one of our partners on the scheme, to ensure the work to the bridge will be coordinated with the scheme. In light of this, we have requested that a date for the CPO public inquiry is not set until we have determined with the county council the way forward for the bridge work.

We continue to progress with developing the scheme. Getting an Environmental Vision partner on board early gives us the opportunity to explore and develop the Vision in a truly collaborative way. We will be able to engage partners and communities to provide the best possible long term green legacy for Oxford.

Keep updated on the scheme – and please share this newsletter



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