

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme

Newsletter

March 2022

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

The planning application for the scheme has been submitted to Oxfordshire County Council as the local planning authority. The council will hold an online public consultation before deciding whether to approve the application. All the information submitted to the council is available to read on the Oxfordshire County Council ePlanning system:

[Planning Register | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

We want to ensure Oxford's communities are as protected as possible from the increased floods we'll see in coming decades. We value the support of local communities in achieving this. Visit the ePlanning system if you would like to find out more or leave a comment on our application.

You can find more information about the scheme on our [website](#). This includes information on the [benefits and environmental features](#) of the scheme, as well as an extensive [FAQs page](#). If you have any questions that aren't covered in our FAQs, please email us at OxfordScheme@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Keeping Oxford resilient in the face of a changing climate

Climate change is happening now. The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme will help Oxford adapt to our changing climate, ensuring the city is more resilient to face the increasing floods of coming decades.

Climate change projections are built into the design of flood schemes to ensure they are fit for the future. The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme will be effective against the scale of the largest Oxford flood in living memory - 1947. With climate change, this size of flood is expected to occur more frequently. The floods of recent decades, such as 2007 and 2014, will be seen much more often.

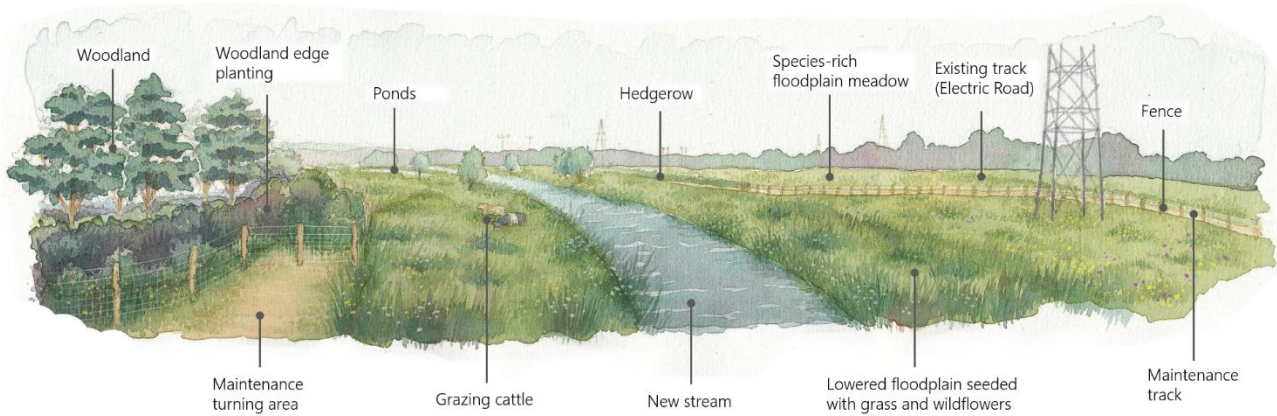


Helen Road, Oxford, flooded in 2007

Next steps

While the planning application is being determined, we are working with landowners to ensure we have access to the land needed to build the scheme.

We will submit an additional planning application to transport material to the railway sidings in south-west Oxford so that material from site can be removed by rail. If we are successful in this, it will reduce traffic pressures on the local road networks.



Impression of the new stream, viewed from Devil's Backbone

Why the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme?

- ✓ The scheme will reduce flood risk to all properties in Oxford currently at risk of flooding from the River Thames.
- ✓ Everyone who lives, works in or visits the city will benefit from the reduced flood risk to vital transport links including the railway, Botley and Abingdon roads and other local roads.
- ✓ The scheme will help to keep Oxford open for business in times of flood, protecting its thriving local economy.
- ✓ Oxford residents will enjoy improved peace of mind from the worry of flooding.
- ✓ The design of a new stream with wetland wildlife corridor will bring additional environmental benefits, including over 20 hectares of new wetland habitat. The scheme will leave biodiversity in a better state than it currently is, leaving a true green legacy for the city.

Landscape management

The Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme has been sensitively designed to integrate with the existing landscape and local environment. It will be grazed in the summer to maintain plant diversity with an additional vegetation cut to remove woody growth if necessary. A new maintenance track will allow our field teams access, this will also form a new permissive path in the scheme area for walking and cycling.

The environmental charity Earth Trust are currently advising us on how to ensure that the scheme's landscape and habitats are carefully maintained for the lifetime of the scheme and that they continue to establish and improve in the future. They are also advising on the public health and wellbeing benefits of the scheme with opportunities to engage the community with this special green place.

In the longer term, we will work in partnership with a local environmental organisation to ensure dedicated specialist resources for long term habitat maintenance. We will maintain the scheme landscape and specialist habitat for the scheme's lifetime.

The scheme will provide local communities with a cherished landscape, which benefits people and wildlife for generations to come.

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