

Flood testing in Oxford hailed as a success

Press release

Training exercise sees Environment Agency and its partners assemble temporary flood defences in the city.



Officers assemble temporary flood barriers at South Hinksey

The Environment Agency and its partners put up temporary flood barriers today at two Oxford locations in a training exercise to prepare for potential flooding.

As part of Exercise Oxford Flood 20, the Environment Agency deployed temporary flood barriers at South Hinksey. At the same time Oxford Direct Services erected Oxford City Council's barriers at Bullstake Close. Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Services also took part in the exercise to test pumps that would be used to take water away from Botley Road.

Temporary flood barriers are portable one metre high metal frames that can be put up as needed to help protect people and properties. The exercise was an opportunity to test the Oxford emergency plans.

Mark Hill Operations Manager, Environment Agency, for Oxford, said:

It's really important that we regularly test our emergency response arrangements. We need to ensure that we're prepared and that our staff are fully trained.

This exercise demonstrates how we and our partners are working together to protect Oxford from flooding now and in the future. We know how devastating floods can be for anyone living or working in the Oxford area. So it is vital that we have these temporary barriers ready in case of flooding ahead of the construction of the Oxford flood alleviation scheme.

The Oxford flood alleviation scheme is a major partnership project being developed by the Environment Agency, to reduce flood risk to homes, businesses and transport links in Oxford and the surrounding area.

Cllr Yvonne Constance, Oxfordshire County Council and Oxford flood alleviation scheme sponsor/partner, said:

There is a very strong partnership that works closely together to protect communities and businesses in Oxford from flooding.

While the permanent flood alleviation scheme is top priority and much work is being done to deliver it, we also have plans in place to protect properties and keep roads open in specific locations that we can activate if there is a threat of flooding. These plans have been effective in the past and I am sure that local people will be reassured to see them being rehearsed to ensure everything is in order should we need to enact them.

The scheme will help protect this world renowned city from the devastating effects of flooding, benefiting local people and everyone that works in and visits Oxford for many decades to come. It is designed to provide a long term solution to manage flood risk in Oxford, taking climate change projections into account.

Further information on the scheme can be found [online](#).

Notes to editors

- Photographs of the event are available on request.
- The Thames Valley Local Resilience Forum lead on incident response.
- Although temporary barriers reduce the impact of flooding when in place, the Environment Agency cannot guarantee that they will always be used and be effective in all situations. The Environment Agency strongly advise that residents still take action to increase preparedness and reduce the impact of flooding to their property.
- Oxford has a long history of flooding. A number of significant floods in past decades have caused property damage to homes and businesses and closed the railway and major roads, bringing the city to a standstill. Properties have been flooded in 7 years since 2000. Climate change is expected to cause more frequent and more severe floods.
- The Oxford flood alleviation scheme is a major partnership project being developed by the Environment Agency to reduce flood risk to homes, businesses, and transport links in Oxford and the surrounding area.
- The scheme is designed to reduce flood risk from a major flood of a scale not seen in Oxford since 1947. This means the scheme is designed to cope with floods far bigger in size than any of the floods Oxford has experienced in recent decades.
- The scheme will cost around £150m and will be one of the biggest flood schemes in the country.

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