

[News story: River Thames Scheme](#)

[Outline Design](#)

Over the last 4 years the Environment Agency have been developing the design of The River Thames Scheme, reducing flood risk to 15,000 homes and 2,400 businesses in communities along the Thames between Datchet and Teddington.

The Environment Agency and their partner organisations have used environmental data collected from their programme of surveys to design a scheme that meets requirements set out in legislation as well as delivering the scheme's vision. They talked to communities who shared ideas on the design of the proposed channel, deciding what it will look like and how it could be used.

The final outline design is now complete, together with proposals for landscape enhancement, recreation opportunities and habitat creation.

Flood Channel Route

As part of the design phase, several changes were made to the original alignment set out in the Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2009, including shortening the channel to just under 15km.

View [maps of the channel route](#).

New public green spaces

The landscape vision for the scheme was developed to visually connect the new flood channel with existing heritage sites and key landscape features through the creation of 4 new country parks and a wetlands centre.

These country parks feature new hills with viewpoints across the landscape from the top. During construction, materials dug out to create the flood channel will be used to create the country parks, which will avoid the need for thousands of additional lorries on local roads.

The creation of these new public open spaces will bring health benefits for communities and opportunities for tourism, recreation and leisure.

There is a lot of work to do to make this vision a reality. The team will continue to talk to partners, statutory bodies and communities to develop the design for these areas in the next phase of design work leading up to the submission of the River Thames Scheme planning application.

Recreation

In order to improve the current network for pedestrians and cyclists, the area around the flood channel will provide new footpaths and cycle paths that have been designed to connect to the existing network. New footbridges

connecting footpaths will be built across the flood channel. The four raised viewpoints will become park areas with public access. The flood channel itself will provide opportunities for fishing, boating and canoeing on some sections.

Habitat Creation

The scheme is committed to minimise disruption to habitat and the environment as much as possible during the construction phase of the new flood channel. This will be achieved through the creation of two new habitats at Abbey Meads and Desborough Island and over 100 hectares (roughly 150 football pitches) of new habitat will be created. This will ensure the project does not cause a net loss in biodiversity.

Next steps

Preparations for the planning application and next phase of design work are underway. The planning application will include the opportunity for communities to discuss the proposals and details of how to get involved will be published later this year.

For more information about the River Thames Scheme please visit the [information page](#)