

Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme: Environment Agency message

Thank you for your email of 23 September requesting further information on the South Hinksey construction options, the programme for the A423 bridge works and the transport of workers via the Network Rail path.

Construction Compound

As you are aware, we are considering the viability of using of 'field 3', to move the construction compound to the north to provide a buffer zone from the village. To allow us to use field 3 we must undertake feasibility assessments. We have already completed an initial environmental survey of the field. As these investigations must be undertaken seasonally, we have arranged for further environmental surveys and a full archaeological survey for spring 2020. We are in discussion with the landowner of the field, as any use would be subject to a land agreement.

Whilst these ongoing investigations are taking place, we will continue to review a buffer zone in field 1 immediately adjacent to South Hinksey, as an alternate approach to using field 3. If we are able to use field 3 for the construction compound then we will do so, and we will amend our plans accordingly.

Rail

Immediately following the selection of our contractor VBA, we started discussions with DB Schenker about whether it is feasible to use the adjacent rail sidings for the removal of spoil. We have identified 2 potential access routes to the rail sidings and initial environmental surveys have been completed. Until we have the necessary approvals in place, and therefore more certainty about our construction start date, we are unable to confirm where the receiving sites are for offloading the spoil. We need to avoid a situation where the spoil is double handled and may introduce impacts to other communities.

We intend to retain our plan to remove spoil by road, as this is the only option that currently provides the certainty we require to remove it from the flood risk area. If rail proves feasible and beneficial then we will change to this option and amend our plans accordingly.

Transport of Site Workers via Network Rail Path

At the community meeting in June, we discussed the site access for construction workers. We explained that there will be significant construction work taking place at Old Abingdon Road and Kennington Road to accommodate the new channel and didn't think access for site workers via the Network Rail path was possible. However, we agreed at the meeting to look into this.

The planned construction at this location is confirmed, with temporary and permanent work for the duration of the scheme construction. As such, creating an access route off Old Abingdon Road is not possible.

A423 Kennington Rail Bridge

We are working closely with Oxfordshire County Council and other stakeholders to identify the best way forward for both the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme and the replacement of the A423 Kennington Rail Bridge. The replacement of the bridge is a complicated and challenging project being led by the county council, with significant third party involvement including Network Rail and Highways England.

For the delivery of the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme, we are looking at two possible options. We are investigating whether we construct our scheme before the bridge replacement work takes place, or whether we pursue a combined solution with the county council, when they replace the bridge. It will ultimately be a decision by leading authorities, including the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council, as to which option we proceed with.

Kind regards

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