

Engaging with the community in 2019

Much of the country has experienced flooding this winter and more flooding may occur before the winter is over. We want to work with communities to prepare for possible flooding and to reduce future flood risk.

Last year we hosted a series of pop-up events to share our plans and listen to your feedback about our work to reduce flood risk in your area. Our plans are not finalised and are not guaranteed to go ahead. We want to hear your ideas to help shape our work.

What happened at the pop-ups?

We held 7 pop-up events over the summer, to raise awareness of flood risk in Reading and Caversham and our work to reduce it. You may have seen us at Christchurch Meadows, Waitrose, outside Tesco and by the Whittingtons Tea Barge. We also attended Reading Water Fest, the Weller Centre BBQ (Peppercorn Event), Reading Pride and Caversham Farmers Market. We spoke with 264 local residents to inform you of our work and hear your feedback to our proposals.



Water Fest, Saturday 15 June 2019



Reading Pride, Saturday 31 August 2019

What did you ask?

1. How likely is flooding in this area as it hasn't flooded that badly recently?
2. You are talking about flood walls. How high would these be?
3. You are talking about a conveyance channel. How would it work and would it increase flooding elsewhere?
4. Would you need to remove any trees to build the scheme? How many?

What did we say?

1. In Reading and Caversham a large number of homes and businesses are at risk from a major flood. In 2014 the area was affected by a minor flood but with a slight increase in river level the area affected and impacts could have been much larger.

Reducing flood risk in Reading and Caversham



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Reading has not seen major flooding since 1947. This flooding was from snow melt in combination with heavy rainfall which overwhelmed the rivers. With climate change we do not expect to see an increase in flooding from snow melt, but we do expect to see more intense rainfall that would lead to major flooding.

2. Wall heights would vary to ensure that the top of the wall would be at the same level even where the ground gets higher or lower. For the most part, walls and embankments are likely to be a similar height to existing walls and fences. Where this is not the case we are looking at how we can soften the appearance of walls. We will discuss these options with local residents.

3. In a major flood, water would currently flow through the houses north and east of Christchurch Meadows. The water would then return to the River Thames further downstream. To reduce this flow we would need a conveyance channel at Reading Bridge in addition to the walls and embankments. You can see the channel's approximate location in image 'b' shown by a black dashed line. The channel prevents flooding increasing elsewhere by mimicking the natural flood flow. We would not build a scheme that increases flood risk to another community.



a) Current flood risk from a major flood



b) Flood risk from a major flood after proposed scheme

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5. We are committed to doing everything we can to reduce the impact of a scheme on the local environment. We are working out how many trees are likely to be affected if a scheme goes ahead. We are looking at how we can change the alignment and construction techniques used to reduce this number. We will share this information with the public in the next few months. We will plan how any trees lost would be replaced.



Christchurch Meadows pop-up 14 August 2019

What are our plans for 2020?

- We will be hosting a series of drop-ins in February and March. We want to share and get feedback on the updated designs and images of what the scheme could look like. The scheme is not fully funded and does not have permissions in place. We need the support of the community and partners to deliver the scheme.
- The very earliest we would be applying for planning permission is the end of this year. We are in discussion with the Planning Authority and will share the same information with them and the public.
- Visit our website to find out more information:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/north-reading-and-lower-caversham-flood-alleviation-scheme/north-reading-and-lower-caversham-flood-alleviation-scheme>
- Look out for updates about the scheme on the Environment Agency's Twitter and Facebook accounts.

If you have any questions or would like anything featured in future editions of this newsletter please contact:
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