

Graveney flood alleviation scheme: frequently asked questions

1. Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority responsibilities

We, the Environment Agency are responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion in England and Wales. We have operational responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from Main Rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea. Main rivers are usually larger rivers and streams, designated as such, and shown on the [Main River Map](#). We carry out maintenance, improvement or construction work on main rivers to manage flood risk. Other rivers are called 'ordinary watercourses'. Lead local flood authorities (in this case Croydon and Lambeth Councils), district councils and internal drainage boards carry out flood risk management work on ordinary watercourses and surface water flooding. The Graveney Flood Alleviation Scheme only includes options for works on Main Rivers. Other risk management authorities may consider schemes on ordinary watercourses within the catchment.

2. What is being proposed?

The proposed scheme has been designed to reduce river flows in the Norbury Stream by storing flood water temporarily in Norbury Park. However, we are also working closely with both Croydon and Lambeth councils as well as Thames Water, to design the scheme to improve surface water drainage as well. We are aware of a large surface water outfall at Granville Gardens downstream of Norbury Park. Our modelling assessment takes account of this outfall and our scheme includes installing a flap valve (non-return valve) to reduce the risk of river water backing up into Granville Gardens. Water levels in the river are predicted to be lower with the scheme for the most frequent events, and higher for the more extreme events. However, under all events the Granville Gardens outfall is completely submerged and so the flap valve is designed to reduce the risk under all scales of flood events.

We have taken surface water flowing into the river close to Thornton Heath (THRG) into our modelling. However, the scheme will now not include any works at THRG and therefore will not look to change any river flows or surface water inflows in this area.

2.1. Why is nothing being done in Thornton Heath Recreation Ground (THRG)?

When further assessing our options for THRG with Croydon Council, we identified 14 trees holding great environmental importance to the area which need to be preserved. Also, the current design would have taken away too much recreational space. Our feedback from residents told us that the trees and the recreational space are important to them. As a result, no scheme in Thornton Heath is currently being taken forward at this stage. However, further options in this area may be explored in the future.

3. Security, safety, mitigation and construction management

3.1. How will residential security be maintained?

Some concerns have been raised regarding the security of residential properties as a result of the proposed works in Norbury Park. We are sensitive to these concerns and have listened to peoples' feedback. We will ensure, if the scheme goes ahead, that all affected property boundaries are made secure with appropriate fencing e.g. at Kuala Gardens.

3.2. How will tree loss be managed?

Other concerns have been raised regarding potential for tree loss. We are sensitive to these concerns and have listened to peoples' feedback. Trees will be planted to replace those that are lost. Some, if not all are likely to be saplings to mitigate for the removal of mature trees. This provides the park managers with the opportunity to recommend species of tree which will be better suited to the public space.

3.3. How will public safety be ensured?

A further question raised concern over the safety of the proposed re-naturalised river channel. The channel will be open; however, we will ensure that the slope angles will be set at a shallow angle with public safety in mind to minimise the risk of falling into the river. Structures such as trash screens will include safety signage. We have designed one of the new bridges over the re-naturalised river to allow for vehicle use, for activities such as mowing and events.

3.4. Will there be disruption to access to the park during construction?

In the short term, if the project progresses through to construction, access to the park is likely to be disrupted. Alternative routes will be made clear and diversions kept to a minimum distance. After construction, access will resume as before.

3.5. What will be the working hours during construction?

If the project progresses through to construction, the working hours would likely be 7am to 6pm but noisy working would be limited to 8am to 5pm. Noise is often unavoidable in many types of construction, but we will plan and deliver the work in accordance with local council Environmental Health Officer requirements. Weekend working is always discouraged as a policy and only carried out in exceptional circumstances and with prior warning to those affected. Any formal parking restrictions or suspensions shall be arranged formally through the local council.

4. Funding and partnerships

The scheme will be part-funded by central government (Defra). The amount of funding will be determined by a funding calculator, which prioritises funding for schemes which have the greatest benefit to properties and the environment. The same approach is applied to all schemes in England. Full funding from Defra is unlikely. Contributions will therefore be required for any scheme to be taken forward; the project cannot go ahead unless full funding has been agreed. These contributions can come from a range of sources including local authorities, water companies, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), private businesses and individual property owners. We are working closely alongside Croydon and Lambeth Councils to progress this project and we are pleased to confirm that a re-naturalised river does align with the objectives of the Norbury Park Masterplan.