



The Bourn Flood Risk Management Scheme

Engagement Plan – first quarter 2025

This document sets out the Engagement Plan for January to April 2025 to support the initial stages of the Bourn Flood Risk Management project.

Date: December 2024

We are the Environment Agency. We protect and improve the environment.

We help people and wildlife adapt to climate change and reduce its impacts, including flooding, drought, sea level rise and coastal erosion.

We improve the quality of our water, land, and air by tackling pollution. We work with businesses to help them comply with environmental regulations. A healthy and diverse environment enhances people's lives and contributes to economic growth.

We can't do this alone. We work as part of the Defra group (Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs), with the rest of government, local councils, businesses, civil society groups and local communities to create a better place for people and wildlife.

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TheBournFRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk

Position statement

In January 2024 the Environment Agency presented ideas for a flood risk management scheme to the community with concept drawings of what could be possible. These included an idea for temporary storage of river water within three parks in Bournville. This would reduce the flow of water in The Bourn at peak times to reduce the risk of fluvial (river) flooding to properties in the immediate area and downstream. These preliminary concept plans were put forward before full modelling was completed and the storage capacity fully understood, raising concerns with residents in the immediate vicinity of these flood storage areas and the community using the parks. The plans presented a concept idea of what could be possible, and in hindsight, gave the wrong impression of where we were within the project especially for the start of meaningful engagement with the community. Ground investigation works, which would have supplied evidence for the feasibility, or not, of using the parks for water storage have been postponed, whilst we engage with the community about the fluvial flood risk, why a scheme is needed, and to discuss options for flood risk management with a focus group. All options remain on the table, including the option to do nothing, but there is a compelling case for the need for a flood risk management scheme in this area, and the initial baseline modelling of fluvial flood risk has shown this. We are committed to working in collaboration with the community to find a solution that meets all of our objectives.

The focus group meetings in October and November were attended by representatives of park groups and the flood risk community. The initial October meeting discussed the fluvial flood risk and the need for a flood risk management scheme. The potential for a severe storm to cause catastrophic fluvial flooding, in addition to surface water flooding has been discussed, and a Flood Risk Appraisal report produced in collaboration with the focus group. We need to be clear that the scope of this project is to reduce the risk from fluvial flooding, but we will work with partners to support them in addressing the areas prone to surface water flooding.

The second focus group meeting discussed potential flood risk management options. This was a high-level discussion of the types of flood risk management and what methods could be suitable in this catchment. Four shortlisted options were put forward by the Environment Agency; Do minimum (maintain current maintenance but with no other interventions); create Flood Storage Areas; install Property Level Flood Resilience (PFR); Flood Storage combined with Natural Flood Management. Thoughts about the risks and benefits of each option were captured and suggestions received for any other options that it is felt should be considered.

What are the aims and objectives for the next phase of engagement?

The Environment Agency wants to work with the community to ensure that any proposed solutions to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and businesses are in keeping with the local heritage of the area and acceptable to the community.

Raising awareness of the fluvial flood risk in the area, while enhancing the understanding of what is possible to reduce that risk, will be key as we work with the community.

We will provide clear information to address community concerns and, through open and honest engagement, explore options.

This project has the potential to unlock a wide range of benefits, including environmental enhancement, improved local amenities, increased climate resilience and biodiversity net gain.

Key Engagement Aims:

- Continue to build collaborative working relationships with key partners to understand the opportunities for a holistic flood risk management approach.
- Continue to build relationships, trust, and work collaboratively with communities, to ensure we listen to suggestions and clearly explain our objectives.
- Ensure the community understands the fluvial flood risk in the area and what can be done to help reduce the risk to homes and businesses.
- Address local concerns, provide clear information around the purpose and the opportunities that investment in flood risk management can offer.
- To encourage community participation in identifying flood risk management opportunities and improvement ideas to the local area that benefit the community and the environment. Align these efforts with other regeneration initiatives and opportunities.
- Keep statutory bodies updated and informed to ensure all appropriate permissions are secured.
- To ensure MPs (Member of Parliament), local councilors and the media are kept up to date and understand the purpose of any potential scheme.

Our goal for the end of 2024 was to use focus group meetings to establish a collaborative approach with community representatives and stakeholders. To foster a shared understanding of the flood risk and be working together towards viable solutions. Through the focus groups we have built relationships and shown that fluvial flooding is a significant risk and arrived at the consensus that some form of flood risk management is required as the option to 'do nothing' was not preferable.

For the first quarter 2025 the goal is to consider in more detail what flood risk management options are feasible and socially acceptable. There will be a new website platform in 2025 to inform the wider community of the fluvial flood risk and offer reassurance that all options of flood risk management are being considered. The Environment Agency aims to find a win-win scenario, where fluvial flood risk is reduced and there are tangible benefits for the community and nature.

What are the appropriate engagement methods for distinct groups?

It is important we make time and space to enable communities and partners to share their views with the EA team and other delivery partners, through two-way constructive and meaningful engagement.

Five engagement groups have been identified, and different engagement methods will be used as appropriate for each group:

Engagement Group	Main Engagement Methods
Homes and businesses at risk of flooding	Representatives at Focus Group meetings Website and email updates Attendance at community meetings Drop-ins
Residents & users of the park	Representatives at Focus Group meetings Website and email updates Attendance at park group meetings Drop-ins
Wider community	Website and email updates Drop-ins Media awareness
Partners and Landowners	Representatives at Focus Group meetings Monthly Meetings Direct conversations Invited to Drop-ins
Local political interest	Quarterly Meetings or as required Website and email updates Invited to Drop-ins

What decisions can we make together?

It is essential to define what decisions can be made together and what are outside of our joint decision making for a variety of reasons. It is important to be clear and honest, so everyone understands what is being offered during the engagement.

The decisions that we can make together:

- As a community how do we want to protect those homes and businesses at risk of flooding.
- How do we want to enhance and protect the local area for the community and future generations.

Areas that are unlikely to be influenced by others include:

- Determination of any final engineering requirements to technical, legal, health and safety standards.
- Standard of flood risk protection to be offered by any potential scheme.
- Use of government funding in line with principles and rules set out by Defra and Treasury.

By working in partnership and consultation with all stakeholders we aim to agree upon an acceptable solution, where the details of any design will be informed in line with community and land-owner requirements.

Key topics of discussion

The current key questions to address are:

1. Why is Flood risk management needed?

Improve the understanding of the need for a fluvial flood risk management solution by providing evidence of the historic, current, and predicted future flood risk to communities. Whilst setting expectations that surface water flood risk will remain.

2. Discuss the Options

Discuss the options that could be considered for a flood risk management solution, including providing information on the ideas which are not feasible to be taken forward for a variety of reasons (technical, financial etc)

Shortlisted Options – discuss limitations, issues and opportunities of each:

1. Do minimum – continuing current maintenance
2. Flood storage areas – define locations and concept plans.
3. PFR – define locations
4. Flood Storage with additional NFM – explore what is possible in the Bourn Catchment
5. Other suggested options

3. What will this mean?

We need to understand what the impacts and benefits to the community and stakeholders may be for any options that are decided to be taken forward.

To communicate the limitations and opportunities of all options that have been considered.

To invite input on the potential opportunities that investment in flood risk management can bring to the area and environment.

4. What can we influence?

The Environment Agency aim to bring benefits to communities, nature as well as flood risk management. If any proposals put forward are seen too detrimental by key stakeholders, modifications can be discussed and ultimately decisions made with community and stakeholders influencing whether a scheme proceeds at all.

Engagement Action Plan

The following Action Plan will be updated as the project progresses. These are based on current understanding and could change as the project moves forward.

Month/Stage	Engagement Actions
January 2025 Why is it needed? Discuss Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly MP/Cllr update • New Website launch and publish Options Appraisal Report • Mailing list sent update • Partner and landowner meeting
February 2025 Discuss Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group #3 site visit • Press release – new website
March 2025 Discuss Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website and Mailing list sent update • Partner and landowner meeting • Focus Group #4 refining the Options
April 2025 Finalise Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly MP/Cllr update • Wider engagement and localised drop ins

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Visit our website [Bourn Flood Risk Management Scheme](#)

Email: TheBourn@environment-agency.gov.uk

Floodline

Report a flood incident: 0345 988 1188 **(24 hours)**

Find out about call charges (<https://www.gov.uk/call-charges>)

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