



The Bourn Flood Risk Management Scheme

Engagement Plan 2024

This document sets out the Engagement Plan for the remainder of 2024 to support the initial stages of the Bourn Flood Risk Management project.

Date: August 2024

Version: 1

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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Position statement

In January 2024 the Environment Agency presented a flood risk management scheme to the community with concept plans for the 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 flooding to properties in the immediate area and downstream. These preliminary plans were put forward before full modelling was completed and the storage capacity fully understood, raising concerns with the surrounding community. They presented a worst-case scenario, 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 why a scheme is needed and to discuss options for flood risk management with a focus group. All options remain on the table, including 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 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.

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 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 community benefits, including environmental enhancement, improved local amenities, increased climate resilience, and biodiversity net gain.

Key Engagement Aims:

- Build relationships, trust, and work collaboratively with all stakeholders and communities.
- Ensure key stakeholders and the community understand the flood risk in the area and what can be done to help reduce the risk to homes and businesses.
- Address local concerns and provide clear information.
- Engage in discussions about the appraisal reports, learn from local knowledge, focusing on those who may be directly impacted by any potential scheme and the communities at risk of flooding.

- 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.

By the end of the year, our goal is to establish a collaborative approach with the community and all stakeholders. To foster a shared understanding of the flood risk and be working together towards viable solutions, reaching agreements with key stakeholders and the community on how the project can progress.

What is the appropriate engagement method for each group?

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.

Several 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 Direct conversations with Community Groups Website and Newsletter Drop-ins
Residents & users of the park	Representatives at Focus Group meetings Direct conversations with Park Groups Website and Newsletter Drop-ins
Wider community	Website and Newsletter Drop-ins Media awareness
Landowners	Representatives at Focus Group meetings Meetings Direct conversations
Local political and media interest	Meetings Direct conversations Website and Newsletter 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 discussion points at this stage are consistent for all five engagement groups, although the method of delivery and detail will vary. These will evolve as conversations with stakeholders proceed. The current key questions to address:

1. Why is it needed?

Improve the understanding of the need for a flood risk management solution by providing evidence of the historic, current and predicted future flood risk to communities.

2. Discuss Options

Discuss a range of options that could be considered for a flood risk management solution, including information on the ideas which are not feasible to be taken forward for a variety of reasons (technical, financial etc) – and why temporary storage in the parks could be one proposed solution.

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.

We also need to inform the community so that we all understand what the potential options could offer, including potential opportunities to increase biodiversity and improvements to the environment.

4. What can we influence?

Ensure there is clear understanding of what decisions can be made together and what areas are unlikely to be influenced by others. The options appraisal reports will be made public and discussed with all key stakeholders. This will include the comments and ideas put forward to date and during the engagement process.

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
August 2024 Planning stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP meeting • Website - review. • Focus Group – planning and invite participants
September 2024 Why is it needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MP/Cllr email update – Engagement Plan • Cllr meeting – Engagement Plan • Website – edit/update content and add the Engagement Plan • Landowner meetings • Newsletter to mailing list – link to updated website
October 2024 Why is it needed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group – hold meeting #1 to share Engagement Plan and Draft Appraisal Report 1 • MP/Cllr update - Appraisal report 1 • Website – add Appraisal Report 1. • Newsletter by email – with website update. • Landowner meeting to discuss draft Appraisal Report 2
November 2024 Discuss Options / What will this mean?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus Group –meeting #2 to discuss draft Appraisal Report 2 and possible site visit • MP/Cllr update - Appraisal report 2 • Website – update and add Appraisal Report 2. • Newsletter by email with website update
December 2024 Discuss Options / What will this mean?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newsletter by email with website update • Landowner meeting • Drop-in events (tbc)

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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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