

Tenbury Wells Flood Risk Management Scheme (FRMS) - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Updates to FAQ document in June 2022:

Amended questions

26

New questions

none

1. Why are you doing the scheme?

Tenbury Wells in Worcestershire is situated on the banks of the River Teme. A tributary, the Kyre Brook, also joins the River Teme in the town. Both the River Teme and the Kyre Brook have a long history of flooding.

After the flooding in February 2020, the Government committed an additional £4.9 million of public money to allow a flood risk management scheme (FRMS) for Tenbury Wells to be progressed. The aim of the FRMS is to reduce the risk of river flooding to properties.

Our aim is to be in a position to start construction by spring 2023.

2. What are the key activities in the coming summer months of 2022?

We are at the design stage of the project. The key upcoming activities are:

- Finalising and costing the scheme's design. This will include landscape and environmental considerations and more detailed engineering options.
- Undertaking Property Flood Resilience (PFR) surveys (refer to question 5).
- Ongoing public engagement at final design stage and pre-construction phase.
- Ongoing engagement with key stakeholders, including Malvern Hills District Council, Worcestershire County Council, Severn Trent Water, English Heritage and the Hereford Anglican Church.

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- Working towards the submission of a planning application for late autumn 2022. This includes work underway on the Environmental Impact Assessment which will inform the planning submission.

3. Will there be more engagement with the community as the scheme progresses?

We want to work closely with the community and key stakeholders and are keen to engage with you throughout the project. We will share more detailed information about the scheme at the following key stages;

- Once design and landscaping options have been further developed.
- Prior to submission of the planning application.
- Prior to starting construction on site.

There are limitations to the extent of how much we can adapt the scheme based on feedback we receive. This is due to heritage, engineering, budgetary and landowner constraints. However, where possible we will take feedback into consideration.

How we engage with you will be dependent on Coronavirus (COVID -19) restrictions, but we hope to host some face to face meetings in the future, if it is safe to do so. Please be assured that we will also continue to share information with you about the scheme on a regular basis, through our newsletter and online information page. This is explained in question 10 below titled 'Will we be kept informed about the scheme?'

4. Will my house be protected against flooding?

At this stage in the design process, we predict that the scheme, when complete, will reduce flood risk to approximately 120 residential and 145 commercial properties.

The FRMS will be designed to provide a 1 in 100 year Standard of Protection (SoP) (equivalent to a 1% chance of flooding at any given year), with an additional allowance for climate change.

5. Is the design finalised? Some areas don't appear to be protected.

The proposed scheme consists of raised ground, flood gates, flood walls and improvement to some existing structures. The precise location and height of the raised ground and flood walls are subject to detailed design and consultation with key stakeholders and engagement with the community. We are reviewing some specific areas of the scheme, in particular, for example at St. Marys Church, with a view to incorporating additional properties or assets if possible.

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A number of properties within Tenbury have been identified as potentially benefitting from Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures. These properties are at risk of flooding but not directly protected by the scheme. They were identified based on an assessment of the flood model and feedback from residents at the public engagement events. Property surveys are due to take place in the coming weeks.

The scheme will be designed so as not to increase flood risk elsewhere.

6. Does the scheme consider climate change?

We always consider climate change when designing and implementing a scheme. We follow Environment Agency guidance and add allowances for climate change.

7. Does the scheme consider surface water issues and other types of flooding?

The scheme aims to reduce fluvial (river) flooding from the River Teme and the Kyre Brook. We will work with our partners, including Severn Trent Water and Worcestershire County Council, to consider surface water drainage and groundwater flood risk across the town.

We are aware that certain areas of the town are affected by surface water flooding. We are working closely with Severn Trent Water and Worcestershire County Council to make sure that the scheme avoids causing any detrimental surface water flooding.

We are also aware that a number of properties suffer from groundwater ingress to basements and low levels in houses. To better understand how the groundwater behaves across the town we have installed several groundwater monitoring points as part of our site investigation work. We will monitor the groundwater over a period of around 6 months.

8. Will there be other improvements in the town as part of the scheme?

As part of the scheme, we will be looking to upgrade some existing walls and walkways where we can. We will also be looking to provide environmental enhancement and minimise any damage to the existing environment (for example, avoiding unnecessary tree removal) wherever possible. We will be working with the local community and stakeholders to identify any other opportunities for improvements and added benefits. However, it is important to note that the scheme has a fixed budget and must reduce flooding to the town as a priority.

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9. I live in an area where I am not protected by the defences. Will my flood risk increase?

We undertake flood modelling to ensure that the scheme does not increase flood risk elsewhere. Where we have identified a change in flood risk, we have already engaged with the property owner to explain the risk and offer additional measures to protect their property. The scheme will be scrutinised in a flood risk assessment as part of the planning consent required from Malvern Hills District Council. It is important to us that we do not move flooding from one place to another.

10. Will we be kept informed about the scheme?

We will keep people informed and engaged throughout the length of the scheme. We will do this through regular newsletters and our online information page, which can be accessed at the following link <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/west-midlands/tenbury-wells-flood-risk-management-scheme>.

If you would like to receive our newsletter, please email your contact details to Tenbury.FRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk, or call our National Customer Contact Centre on 03708 506 506 during office hours and we will add you to our mailing list.

PLEASE NOTE- By providing us with your contact details you consent to the Environment Agency using the details provided to contact you with updates about the Tenbury Wells Flood Risk Management Scheme. We will keep your contact details until the project is closed or until you withdraw your consent, whichever is sooner.

You can withdraw your consent to receive these updates at any time by emailing us at Tenbury.FRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk or calling 03708 506 506. We will not share your details with any other third party without your explicit consent, unless we are required to by law.

The Environment Agency is the data controller for the personal data you provide. For further information on how we deal with your personal data please see our Personal Information Charter on GOV.UK (search 'Environment Agency personal information charter') or contact our Data Protection team. Address: Data Protection team, Environment Agency, Horizon House, Deanery Road, Bristol, BS1 5AH. Email: dataprotection@environment-agency.gov.uk

11. Will there be disruption to me during the construction works?

As we have not finalised the design for the scheme, we cannot provide any information about disruption to individuals. However, any scheme is likely to provide some level of disruption, such as noise, road closures and construction traffic. We will keep the community informed whilst developing the scheme to ensure people are made aware of

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any disruptions in advance and are able to talk to us about their concerns. We always work with contractors who are 'considerate neighbours'.

12. How are you going to access the construction area?

We will minimise the disruption to local residents and always consider health and safety when looking at access routes, such as putting adequate traffic management systems in place. As part of our design process, we will look at access arrangements to all areas of the scheme and make sure that all individuals who are directly affected are consulted.

13. When working on sections of the scheme, will there be foot path closures and will there be alternative routes available?

Unfortunately, footpath closures will have to take place during the works. This is mainly for health and safety purposes. We will be looking at all the affected footpaths and determining where alternative routes and diversions will be required.

14. Can I approach your staff directly on site to discuss the proposed scheme?

To help keep everyone safe during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic we ask that you avoid/minimise your contact with our site staff and contractors as much as possible.

If you have concerns or queries relating to the scheme, please do not approach our staff and contractors on site. We ask instead that you contact us via email on Tenbury.FRMS@environment-agency.gov.uk or by telephone during office hours on 03708 506 506.

15. Have you considered dredging to alleviate flood risk?

As part of our Initial Assessment, we considered a number of options to alleviate flood risk to Tenbury Wells. Dredging is neither an effective nor affordable long-term solution to the issues of flooding in the town.

In extreme flooding events, the small increases in width and depth achieved by dredging a waterway do not provide enough capacity to contain the excess flood water.

Dredging may also be ineffective in reducing flooding, as the natural processes in many rivers can cause silt to build up again quickly. As a result, it is not affordable to continuously dredge the length of the watercourse.

The Environment Agency also has a duty to protect valuable river habitats, and dredging has been proven to cause considerable damage to river ecosystems.

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16. Do you undertake maintenance of the watercourses?

We undertake regular maintenance of the River Teme and Kyre Brook in Tenbury Wells.

The responsibility of maintaining a watercourse sits with the riparian landowner. However, we will intervene if there is an increased flood risk to residential properties from a structure or channel, such as a blockage. We will inform the riparian landowner to rectify the defect or carry out the removal ourselves where there is a heightened risk of flooding. For further information on riparian rights and responsibilities, please refer to our 'owning a watercourse' guidance on GOV.UK at the following link

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse>

You can contact our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 to report a flood or possible cause of flooding.

17. What will be the impact of the scheme on heritage and conservation?

We are consulting heritage experts to ensure the scheme is in keeping with the heritage of the town. The choice of materials will be agreed with Malvern Hills District Council as part of the process of meeting the planning conditions before we start work.

18. Will the Flood Risk Management Scheme damage the environment?

The Environment Agency has a biodiversity net gain approach to the development of the scheme. This is to ensure any biodiversity loss because of the scheme is mitigated within the river catchment.

Whilst we will make every effort to limit the loss of trees in the final design of the scheme, it is inevitable that we will need to remove some trees and vegetation to complete the work. Where removing trees cannot be avoided, we will plant replacements. For every tree lost because of our work, we will plant five more. We will also be working with residents and other groups to identify suitable planting in the local area, and if necessary, opportunities in the wider Tenbury Wells area.

19. Is Natural Flood Risk Management (NFM) being considered as part of the solution to alleviate flooding?

Working with natural processes and using NFM measures where appropriate will help us manage and reduce flood risk in an efficient, cost-effective, and sustainable way.

We are working with the Severn Rivers Trust and landowners to deliver NFM across the River Teme catchment. Whilst the scheme itself is not delivering NFM measures, we are linking in to the Teme catchment NFM project through our biodiversity net gain initiative.

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20. Will the church graveyard be affected by the works?

Since early in the development of the project, we have worked with local landowners and key stakeholders, including St Mary's Church. We initially considered alternative options including the option to install a flood defence which would protect the church. However, this would have required a highly significant level of disturbance in the consecrated grounds of St Mary's, causing significant disturbance to large numbers of graves.

Whilst there remains a requirement for some of our work to be undertaken within the graveyard, which will involve moving a number of graves, we are working with heritage experts and the Hereford Anglican Church to ensure our work is carried out in a sensitive manner.

21. How will the scheme operate during a flood event?

Access through the defences will be achieved by providing flood gates. The flood forecast does not provide sufficient time for the Environment Agency to deploy to site and operate the flood gates. Consequently, the scheme will be community led. Once the design of the scheme is finalised, we will engage with the community to develop a Community Flood Plan. Completing a plan will help determine what practical actions to take before and during a flood, helping reduce the damage flooding can cause.

22. Is there enough funding to complete the scheme?

Any flood scheme is subject to government funding rules based on achieving a positive cost benefit ratio, and all schemes will have to go through a series of stages to gain approval for funding. At each stage the scheme will be subject to scrutiny in order to ensure that the scheme offers value to the taxpayer.

We have secured funding to allow a flood risk management scheme for Tenbury Wells to be progressed to the next stage. As with any government funded scheme, we must continue to ensure that the cost does not outweigh the benefits and there is a constant review of this element of the project.

The latest review of the design has allowed the project team to undertake another cost estimation of the scheme. This has identified higher costs than estimated at the Initial Assessment stage. The reasons for this cost increase are due to the increased complexity of the engineering constraints, unforeseen changes in design, and industry wide increases in material costs.

Inflation and industry wide cost increases have caused most construction material costs to rise by 20% in the last 12 month period – some, including steel, cement, and bricks by much more.

Working with partners, the project team are undertaking a review of the design to assess where greater value can be achieved from an engineering perspective, looking again at

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where the scheme can achieve greater benefits to improve the benefit cost ratio, and investigating additional funding sources.

23. How do the scheme's costs compare to its funding?

The £7.2m project cost estimated in January 2021 was based on conceptual design which included a number of necessary assumptions. Now that we have progressed the project to 'outline design stage' we have a firmer understanding of the total cost and benefits.

As of May 2022, the scheme costs £9.8m. The complex nature of the design must consider the significant context of the area such as heritage, historic, environmental designations and working within a constrained church graveyard. To date these have led to cost increases and programme delays of several months. Inflation has caused most construction material costs to rise by 20% in the last 12 month period – some, including steel, cement, and bricks by much more.

The scheme benefits amount to £8.4m; this includes reduced risk of damage to homes, businesses and heritage sites, reduced risk to life, improvement in mental health across the town, and increased biodiversity. Government funded projects need to have more benefits than costs. The project team are working hard with others to reduce the costs through design modification, value engineering and partnership working.

The project currently has £6.6m of funding from:

- £1.1m Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA)
- £4.9m Summer 2020 Economic Recovery Fund
- £0.6m Contributions from Malvern Hills District Council, Local Enterprise Partnership, and Worcestershire County Council.

We were therefore working with a funding gap already, and now with project cost increases we have a £3.2m funding gap. We are working very hard to bridge this funding gap. Our partners remain committed to funding and delivering the scheme and we will continue to work together to reduce the funding gap.

24. How will the emergency services access the town when the scheme is operational?

We are working with the emergency services whilst we develop a plan for the operation of the scheme. This will include details on what actions need to be taken before and during a flood event, and how the emergency services can continue to provide those services to the Tenbury Wells area.

25. What is the River Severn Partnership?

The Tenbury Wells FRMS is one of two water management schemes currently being developed through funding secured by the River Severn Partnership (RSP).

customer service line **03708 506 506**

floodline **03459 88 11 88**

incident hotline **0800 80 70 60**

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The RSP was chosen by Ministers as one of four pilots and allocated funding to assess a range of climate change scenarios and identify the decisions that need to be taken now, and those that may need to be taken in the future, to manage the risk of flooding and coastal change along the length of the River Severn. For further information on the River Severn Partnership, please see the website <http://www.riversevernpartnership.org.uk/>

26. When will construction start and when will the scheme be finished?

Construction is due to start in spring 2023, aiming for full completion in spring 2025, depending on funding, approvals and any unforeseen engineering challenges on site.

The project team have considered if the construction period could be condensed, but this would involve closing off the town for business and access routes which isn't viable for the community, as we understand from the public consultation feedback in November 2021. The construction programme is under regular review to achieve efficiencies where possible.