**HOW TO READ AND COMMENT ON THE PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE OXFORD FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME**

**You need to comment by 9 May 2022!**

**How to read the planning application**

The full application for the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS) is at

<https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/MW.0027/22#undefined>. Scroll to the bottom of the page, click ‘accept’, and on the next page click ‘documents’. There are 302 documents, some of which are more important than others, which is why this little guide has been put together.

**Overview:** A [general scheme overview](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4264&imageId=10245&isPlan=True&fileName=GENERAL%20SCHEME%20OVERVIEW.pdf) shows the components of the scheme in operation. More detailed diagrams of the 3-5 year scheme construction are at:

* [North of Botley Road](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3836&imageId=10060&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%201%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)
* [Hinksey Meadow](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3837&imageId=10061&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%202%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)
* [North Hinksey village, Osney Island](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3838&imageId=10062&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%203%20NORTH%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)
* [New Hinksey](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3839&imageId=10063&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%204%20NEW%20HINKSEY%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)
* [South Hinksey area](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4274&imageId=10255&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%203%20SOUTH%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)
* [South Hinksey to Kennington Road](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4276&imageId=10257&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%204%20NORTH%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)
* [Kennington](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3840&imageId=10064&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%204%20SOUTH%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf)

A set of maps show the [extent of flooding](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4349&imageId=10301&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20-%20Fig%201_4%20Flood%20extents_IMSE500177-CH2-XX-ZZ-VS-EN-1002.pdf) with and without the OFAS under various scenarios.

The [environmental statement](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3884&imageId=10108&isPlan=True&fileName=Environmental%20Statement%202022%20IMSE500177-CH2-00-00-RP-E-0654.pdf) (ES) and its [non-technical summary](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3885&imageId=10109&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20Non-technical%20Summary_IMSE500177-CH2-XX-XX-RP-EN-0700.pdf) are the main reports that discuss the impacts of the scheme. The ES includes some [visualisations of what the completed scheme will look like](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4285&imageId=10266&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20App%20I-8%20Viewpoint%20Sheets%20-%20figures%207.8%20-%207.45.pdf).

Appendix Q of the ES shows that a [‘no channel’ alternative](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3987&imageId=10211&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20App%20Q%20Modelling%20Review%20of%20No-channel.pdf) would have almost the same flood protection as the proposed OFAS scheme, and have a better benefit:cost ratio. The channel component of the OFAS scheme has by far the most environmental, social and economic costs, but provides only about a 5% reduction in flood risk.

**Traffic:** Table 11.3 of the ES shows that construction of the OFAS would involve [almost 200 HGV movements per day](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3884&imageId=10108&isPlan=True&fileName=Environmental%20Statement%202022%20IMSE500177-CH2-00-00-RP-E-0654.pdf) for 3-5 years:

* Into/out of the Botley Road at the Seacourt Park & Ride: 36/day
* Into/out of South Hinksey at the north end of the village: 144/day
* Into/out of Abingdon Road: 14/day

Page 244 of the environmental statement notes that a [40mph speed limit on the A34](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3884&imageId=10108&isPlan=True&fileName=Environmental%20Statement%202022%20IMSE500177-CH2-00-00-RP-E-0654.pdf) would be requested between the Botley Interchange and a point south of South Hinksey. To prevent completely unacceptable queues at the Hinksey Hill interchange, Sec. 4.2.4 of the transport assessment proposes that a [20mph temporary carriageway will link Kennington Road and Old Abingdon Road](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3964&imageId=10188&isPlan=True&fileName=OFAS%20ES%20Appendix%20M%20Transport_Assessment.pdf).

**Biodiversity**: Table 8.8 of the ES explains that the OFAS would result in the [loss of 3.1ha of Hinksey Meadow](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3884&imageId=10108&isPlan=True&fileName=Environmental%20Statement%202022%20IMSE500177-CH2-00-00-RP-E-0654.pdf), of which 1.33ha is rare MG4a grassland (about 1% of all the remaining MG4a grassland in England and Wales). Appendix C-5 of the ES explains that the OFAS would probably [dry out the rest of Hinksey Meadow](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3897&imageId=10121&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20App%20C-5%20Appendix%20C%20Response%20to%20Task%204%206%20April%202017.pdf) to the point where the plants that make it a rare MG4a grassland would no longer be able to survive. In other words, the OFAS would indirectly affect the whole of Hinksey Meadow.

The OFAS proposes to [create new sites of MG4 grassland](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3914&imageId=10138&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20Appendix%20D-23%20MG4%20Grassland%20Mitigation%20IMSE500177-CH2-XX-A2B-RP-EN-0709.pdf), but the ES notes that “Habitat creation and translocation are not a substitute for in situ conservation of this kind of habitats, the latter approach always being preferable where possible”.

Table 8.8 of the ES also states that [most of the pond at Kennington Pit Local Wildlife Site will disappear](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3884&imageId=10108&isPlan=True&fileName=Environmental%20Statement%202022%20IMSE500177-CH2-00-00-RP-E-0654.pdf). Table 7.4 of the ES explains that [most of Kendall Copse will be lost](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3884&imageId=10108&isPlan=True&fileName=Environmental%20Statement%202022%20IMSE500177-CH2-00-00-RP-E-0654.pdf). The scheme would also affect [otters](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3905&imageId=10129&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20Appendix%20D-19%20Otter%20survey%202018%20IMSE500177-CH2-XX-00-SU-EN-0714.pdf), [bats](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3903&imageId=10127&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20Appendix%20D-10%20Bat%20Surveys%20-%20results%20of%20Tree%20Climb%20Inspections%202017.pdf), [water voles](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=3906&imageId=10130&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20Appendix%20D-16%20Water%20vole%20and%20otter%20survey%202016%20IMSE500177-HGL-06-ZZ-RE-I-000173.pdf) and other species in the area.

**Visual**: The ES shows few photomontages of what the scheme will look like. Figure 7.12 shows the [loss of trees at the Seacourt Nature Reserve](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4285&imageId=10266&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20App%20I-8%20Viewpoint%20Sheets%20-%20figures%207.8%20-%207.45.pdf). Figure 7.21 shows that the proposed [bridge at Willow Walk would be enormously wide and paved](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4285&imageId=10266&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20App%20I-8%20Viewpoint%20Sheets%20-%20figures%207.8%20-%207.45.pdf), more like an airport runway than a pedestrian and cycle track. Figure 7.35 shows what the [Devil’s Backbone](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4285&imageId=10266&isPlan=True&fileName=ES%20App%20I-8%20Viewpoint%20Sheets%20-%20figures%207.8%20-%207.45.pdf) would look like.

**Cumulative:** Cumulative impacts are impacts that individually are minor but together are major. The OFAS would have some significant cumulative impacts:

* Loss of 2000 trees in the area (Table 7.5 of the ES)
* [South Hinksey is encircled by construction compounds and access routes](https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Document/Download?module=PLA&recordNumber=10517&planId=4274&imageId=10255&isPlan=True&fileName=AREA%203%20SOUTH%20-%20LOCATION%20FOR%20CONSTRUCTION%20ACCESS%20AND%20TEMPORARY%20STORAGE%20AREAS.pdf) for 3-5 years
* Loss of recreational access to much of the area during construction

**How to comment on the planning application**

You can fill in the form at <https://myeplanning.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/MW.0027/22#undefined> and/or send your comments to (may as well send to all three):

* planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk
* planning@whitehorsedc.gov.uk
* veronica.james@environment-agency.gov.uk

Please be clear about whether you are opposing or supporting the OFAS. If you support the idea of flood alleviation but oppose this scheme (e.g. because its impacts would be too severe), please oppose this scheme but write that! Points that are likely to have particular resonance[[1]](#footnote-1) are:

* Harm to the Hinksey Meadow and Kennington Pit Local Wildlife Sites.
* Unacceptable impacts on traffic on the A34, including a 40mph speed restriction and uncertainty about the effectiveness of a temporary bridge at Kennington
* Harm to people’s health, particularly in South Hinksey, from noise, vibration, dust and air pollution.
* The fact that the proposed scheme does not follow the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ of first avoiding impacts (e.g. no channel through Hinksey Meadow), then mitigating (narrower channel) and then compensating (trying to create new sites). A ‘no channel’ option would avoid most of the OFAS impacts.
1. These points relate to the planning framework that Oxfordshire County Council and the Vale of White Horse District Council must follow, i.e. the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan, the Vale of White Horse Local Plan, and the National Planning Policy Framework [↑](#footnote-ref-1)