News story: Community resilience measures June 2017: River Thames Scheme

Introduction

The River Thames between Datchet and Teddington has the largest area of undefended floodplain in England. Over 15,000 homes and businesses within the area are at risk from flooding.

The River Thames Scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to homes, businesses and critical infrastructure (roads, sewerage network, and power supplies).

We need a range of solutions to manage the risk of flooding in the River Thames Scheme area and so the scheme consists of:

- construction of 17 kilometres of new flood channel built in 3 sections
- capacity improvements to weirs at Sunbury, Molesey and Teddington
- community resilience measures
- major incident planning
- habitat creation

Community Resilience Measures (CRM)

We are progressing initial assessments for Community Resilience Measures across the scheme area. This involves analysing data from flood modelling and surveys to look for areas that could benefit from more localised permanent, temporary or property level solutions.

Types of CRM may include permanent flood defences in the form of flood walls or embankments, temporary flood defences that can be deployed in advance of a flood or property level flood intervention consisting of flood doors and barriers.

Initial assessments

The first stage is to group properties together based on the modelling and survey data into areas that could benefit from CRM. The next stage is to identify what type of measure could be used. This is done by engineers based on the location of the properties, the physical and environmental constraints in the area, the flood modelling, past experience and by looking at the costs and benefits for each option.

Appraisal

Once we have completed initial assessments we will identify areas that can be taken forward for more detailed appraisal and consultation with communities

to select a preferred solution.

CRM will not be suitable for all communities and properties. Our assessments will identify those measures that can be taken forward based on how much they cost and the benefit they provide along with engineering decisions.

Those CRMs taken forward for implementation will qualify for partial central government funding. The remaining funding is expected to be provided from partnership contributions as part of the wider River Thames Scheme.

Property level programme

You may also be aware of our Property Level Programme (PLP) which has installed flood protection measures to hundreds of properties within the Lower Thames Area. The PLP programme is now closed with works to the last few remaining properties soon to be completed.

Next Steps

Most of the data we need is collected from an office however you may see RTS representatives visiting areas to understand the location better. We will also be using local knowledge of previous flooding to better understand how we can help.

We understand you will want to know how you will be affected and we would like to talk to communities later in the year once we have reviewed the data from our initial assessments.

In the meantime we will keep you updated on the progress of our assessments and let you know how and when you can get involved via our River Thames Scheme newsletter

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News story: Archaeology surveys June 2017: River Thames Scheme

Archaeological surveys will start in June 2017 and are expected to finish at the end of the year. They will take place in areas of Chertsey Abbey Meads, Kingsmead Quarry, Thorpe Hay Meadow, Desborough, Datchet, and Shepperton.

We use different survey techniques in different areas to give us a wide range of data. This gives us a better understanding of what is likely to be in the ground. We use this information to plan the construction of the River Thames scheme.

The results of these surveys will help us identify targeted locations for trial trenches, in late 2017, to evaluate the archaeology.

Geophysical Surveys

Different materials below the ground can cause local disturbances in the Earth’s magnetic field that are detectable with sensitive equipment. Archaeologists use hand held devices or small hand pulled carts to establish the presence of buried archaeological remains and the potential of the study area.

Earthworks Surveys

Help identify the presence of archaeologically significant earthworks or landscape features. Archaeologists look at the areas and compare what they see with historical maps and aerial photographs.

Borehole Surveys

Archaeologists dig boreholes and hand auger pits to record the composition of the ground. This information enables archaeologists to draw conclusions about how and when the area may have been used. The boreholes are excavated using specialist construction equipment.

Electrical Resistivity

Tomography Surveys Archaeologists insert magnetic probes into the ground to gather more data about the composition of the ground to support the information recorded by the borehole surveys.

Metal Detecting Surveys

Archaeologists use high performance metal detectors to detect different types of metals in the ground. This information is used to identify areas that could contain archaeological remains.

Field Walking Surveys

Archaeologists walk along marked out areas looking at the land for features to identify areas that could contain archaeological remains.

All works are carried out under the supervision of either our consultant engineers or a member of Environment Agency staff, in accordance with an agreed method statement.

If you would like more information about the River Thames Scheme please visit our website

Environment Agency
June 2017

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Environment Agency
June 2017

Press release: School visits to talk water safety

The visits to schools around Marston-on-Dove, followed a number of reports over recent weeks of children playing on weirs, which are often used by the Environment Agency to monitor river flows.

During the talks schoolchildren heard about the dangers of the water around weirs, some of which are not always obvious, including strong underwater currents and sudden changes in water depth. They were also given information about how they could avoid these risks by taking note of warning signs, not walking or climbing on weirs and avoiding swimming near weirs, locks, bridges or other structures on rivers.

Emma Smailes, Operations Manager from the Environment Agency said:

> We know that children love to explore the outdoors, especially during summer holidays, and we want to help them remain safe whilst doing so. That is why we felt it was important to talk to the children directly to remind them of the potential dangers when playing near structures in rivers.
>
> We would also encourage parents and guardians to speak to their children, teenagers and young adults to warn them about the dangers and basic safety points when out having fun.

David Walker, Leisure Safety Manager from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents said:

> At this time of year it’s especially important for parents to have a conversation with their family about the risks of open water, particularly in the areas where it’s prevalent.
>
> Many of the risks aren’t obvious, such as weirs, and the effects of cold water shock. It’s important to think about this in advance so that if, on the rare occasion, you see someone in trouble or get into trouble yourself, you know what to do.
>
> If you want to go for an outdoor swim, it’s always best to go to

supervised sites such as lidos. Programmes such as the Swim Safe scheme give children the experience of swimming in open water, teaching them about how to stay safe in a controlled environment

More information about water safety is available from The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents