March 22 2018

Dear Mr Periam,

Subject: Application for Oxford Flood Attenuation Scheme

This letter accompanies a minerals application submitted to Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the Environment Agency for a scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to Oxford – the Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (OFAS). The Environment Agency is working in partnership with Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Thames Water Utilities Ltd, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Oxford Flood Alliance, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and University of Oxford to deliver the OFAS.

The scheme will manage the flood risk to Oxford over the next 100 years, reducing the frequency of flooding by creating more space for water within the existing western floodplain of the city.

The proposals

The proposals broadly comprise of the construction of a new two-stage channel, to the west of Oxford city centre. This will carry excess flow from the Seacourt Stream, Bulstake Stream and Hinksey Stream channels during a flood event, thereby reducing the water level in the main River Thames and so reducing the frequency of flooding in built-up areas.

The scheme also includes:

- Provision of new flood defences (embankments and walls) to protect properties which would otherwise continue to flood even with the reduced river levels;
- Provision of new culverts and bridges to cross highways and footpaths to maintain access routes;
- Installation of flood gates for access (under normal, non-flood conditions) through the new defences noted above;
- Creation of new and/or improved habitat for flora, fauna and fisheries, where it does not compromise flood defence or other environmental features; and
- Removal of Towles Mill, in conjunction with a separate scheme at the upstream end of the Seacourt Stream, this will facilitate fish passage around Oxford for the first time in over a century.

The proposals will reduce the risk of flooding for around 1,500 properties and key infrastructure such as transport links and utilities. We have included a full appraisal of the scheme within the supporting information accompanying the application. Particular reference has been paid to the impact of the proposed scheme on landscape and habitats. The development of our proposals in
the Green Belt can be justified and we have provided a Green Belt Statement as part of the Planning Statement which sets out the Very Special Circumstances that exist.

**Supporting Information**

The following information is submitted to support the application:

- Completed application form including ownership certificates
- Location and site plan
- Planning Statement including a Green Belt Statement
- Further plans and drawings as set out in the section 1 of the Planning Statement
- Environmental Statement - Volume 1 Non-Technical Statement and Volume 2 Environmental Statement
- Statement of Community Involvement
- Flood Risk Assessment
- Materials Management Plan
- Utilities Statement
- Contamination Report

A planning application fee of £78,000 has been paid by bank transfer.

Overall the flood alleviation scheme is in compliance with policy and is expected to bring significant long-term benefits to Oxford. The scheme will reduce the risk of flooding to large areas of the city of housing, businesses, transport links, public spaces and areas of high historic and amenity heritage value. The multi-beneficial scheme will also deliver a net gain in habitats, increase biodiversity, improve landscapes and provides some new amenity features for the local community.

I look forward to working with you to achieve a positive outcome.

Yours sincerely

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Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme
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Keep up to date with the scheme!