# Abingdon Temporary Defence Management Plan – Public Information

## Why we are using a temporary barrier

Following the flooding events in 2024, we are improving how we protect homes in Abingdon. When heavy rainfall is forecast, we aim to put temporary flood barriers in place to help protect properties in Chaunterell Way and Nash Drive. This updated approach replaces an earlier design that was found to be too long and too difficult to safely install across several sites at once.

The new, shorter barrier route focuses on the homes most at risk and can be deployed much more quickly. It is 340 metres long and uses barrier types that suit the space available at different points along the route.

However, it is important to note that temporary flood barriers may not be erected if they will be deemed ineffective, for example during large scale flooding like that experienced in 2007. In addition, the barrier may not be erected if conditions and available resources make it unsafe or impractical to do so.

## What the temporary barrier looks like

The route of the temporary barrier can be seen on the map below.

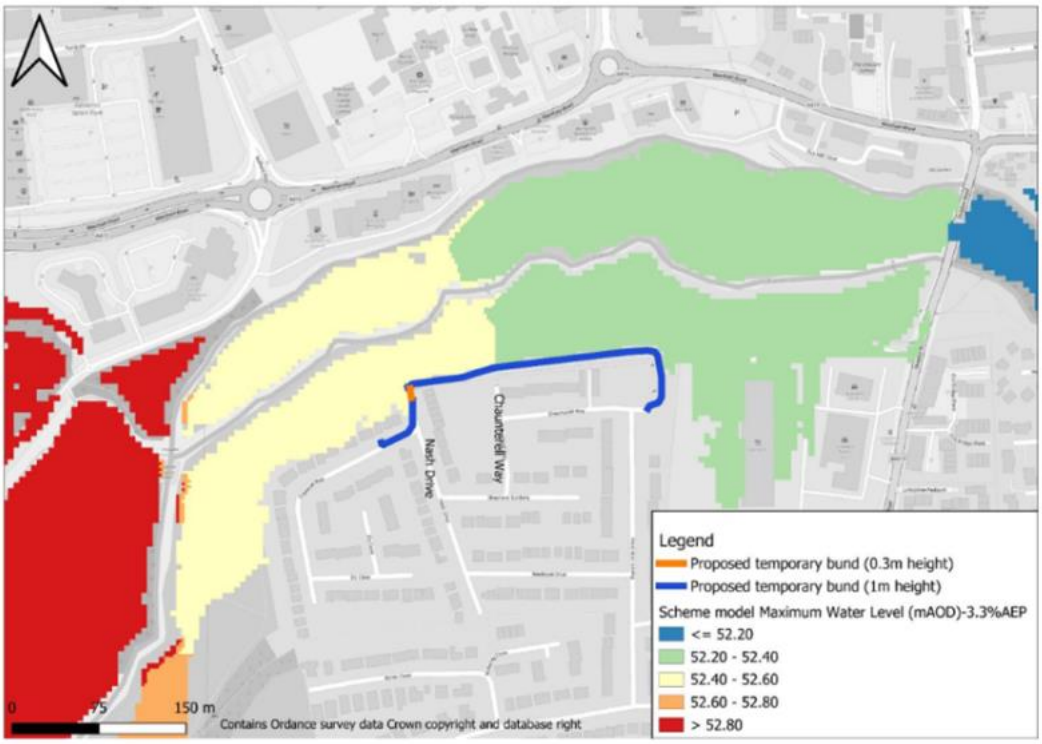

The barrier will use two different types of defences, chosen to suit the layout and space available at each location:

- Metal A-frame barriers (1 metre high) will be installed along Orpwood Way, Nash Drive, through the meadow, across the recreation ground, and through the private garden and car park at Jenyns Court. (A stretch of which is shown in the photo below, taken during the test deployment of the barrier in September 2025.)

- A 10-metre sandbag wall (30cm high) wrapped in a protective plastic membrane will be placed along the informal footpath at the north end of Nash Drive, where there is less space.

**How the temporary barrier works**

The barrier is designed to provide protection from a flood that has a 1 in 30 chance of happening each year (3.33%.) Computer flood modelling shows that the barrier route described above should successfully prevent floodwater from the wider floodplain reaching Chaunterell Way and Nash Drive during a flood with a 3.33% annual chance of occurring




The model shows that the planned barrier route is not expected to cause any meaningful increase in flooding nearby during a 3.33% flood event. The only predicted change is a very small rise, (up to 15mm,) in water levels in a few gardens on Orpwood Way, but **not the properties themselves**.

Because these predicted impacts are so small compared with the benefit of protecting homes, the modelling indicates that it is reasonable to use the temporary barrier. However, it is acknowledged that further unplanned interventions may also be required during a flood incident and this could include deployment of pumps as required and/or sandbags on standby

## The triggers for the deployment of the barrier

We decide when to deploy the temporary flood barrier by closely monitoring rainfall and river levels. Because the River Ock can rise quickly after heavy rain, we rely on rainfall information to give us as much warning as possible before the river starts to respond. Most of these decisions are based on rainfall readings from the Stanford and Abingdon rain gauges, along with an understanding of how wet the ground already is. We also track water levels at several points along the River Ock, (Stanford Vale, Charney Bassett, Wantage, and Letcombe Regis,) to help us judge when conditions are likely to lead to flooding

Live rainfall and river levels can be accessed online via Find river, sea, groundwater and rainfall levels - GOV.UK

## FAQs

**Will we get advance notice that the barrier is going up?**

- Our incident response team will be monitoring the situation closely and our operational teams prepare equipment in advance, so everything is ready to go if needed. However, when a barrier needs to be deployed, it often musthas to happen quickly, and there isn't time to provide advance notice. We understand this may be inconvenient, but please be assured that any action taken will always prioritise the safety and wellbeing of the community.

**How long will the barrier be up for**?

- The barriers will remain in place until we are confident that there is no longer a risk of flooding to properties, and it is safe for our operation team to access the area to remove it.

**How long will it take to put up/down?**

- The installation and removal of the barrier is expected to take approximately six to eight hours.

**When would the barrier be deployed? Could it be put up overnight?**

- Our operational team will always aim to put the barrier in place during daylight hours, as this allows our teams to work safely and efficiently.

**Will there be vans/equipment blocking up my road/driveway? Will I have to move my car?**

- Our operational team will do everything possible to keep disruption to a minimum. Because of the way the barrier needs to be positioned, a few properties at the end of Orpwood Way may find their driveways temporarily blocked. If this affects you, our staff will attempt to get in touch to arrange for cars to be moved when needed, however this may be at very short notice.

**Will this affect my housing insurance?**

- Insurance companies each assess flood risk differently, using data such as Environment Agency flood maps, commercial risk tools, and their own claims history. There is no single industry approach, and the Environment Agency has no role in determining insurance cover or setting premiums. Because insurers make individual commercial decisions, a temporary flood barrier does not automatically affect your home insurance. If you're unsure, the best option is to check directly with your insurer

**Have you got plans for a permanent defence in Abingdon?**

- Our current interventions for managing flood risk in Abingdon include providing a flood warning service, carrying out river maintenance and a flood wall at St Helens Mill. We have explored several other interventions for managing flood risk in Abingdon, most notably flood storage upstream of Abingdon on the River Ock. Whilst this is technically feasible, the costs of such a scheme in relation to benefits is low which means we would not be able to gain approval or funding for a scheme. Benefits are limited by the area available for flood storage, and the A34 embankment already providing some protection.
- The White Horse Reservoir, (previously known as South East Strategic Reservoir Option,) presents opportunities to improve the environment, such as increasing flood resilience and enhancing habitats and we will work with water companies to secure environmental benefits through the design process wherever possible.