

Kennington Bridge to be Replaced



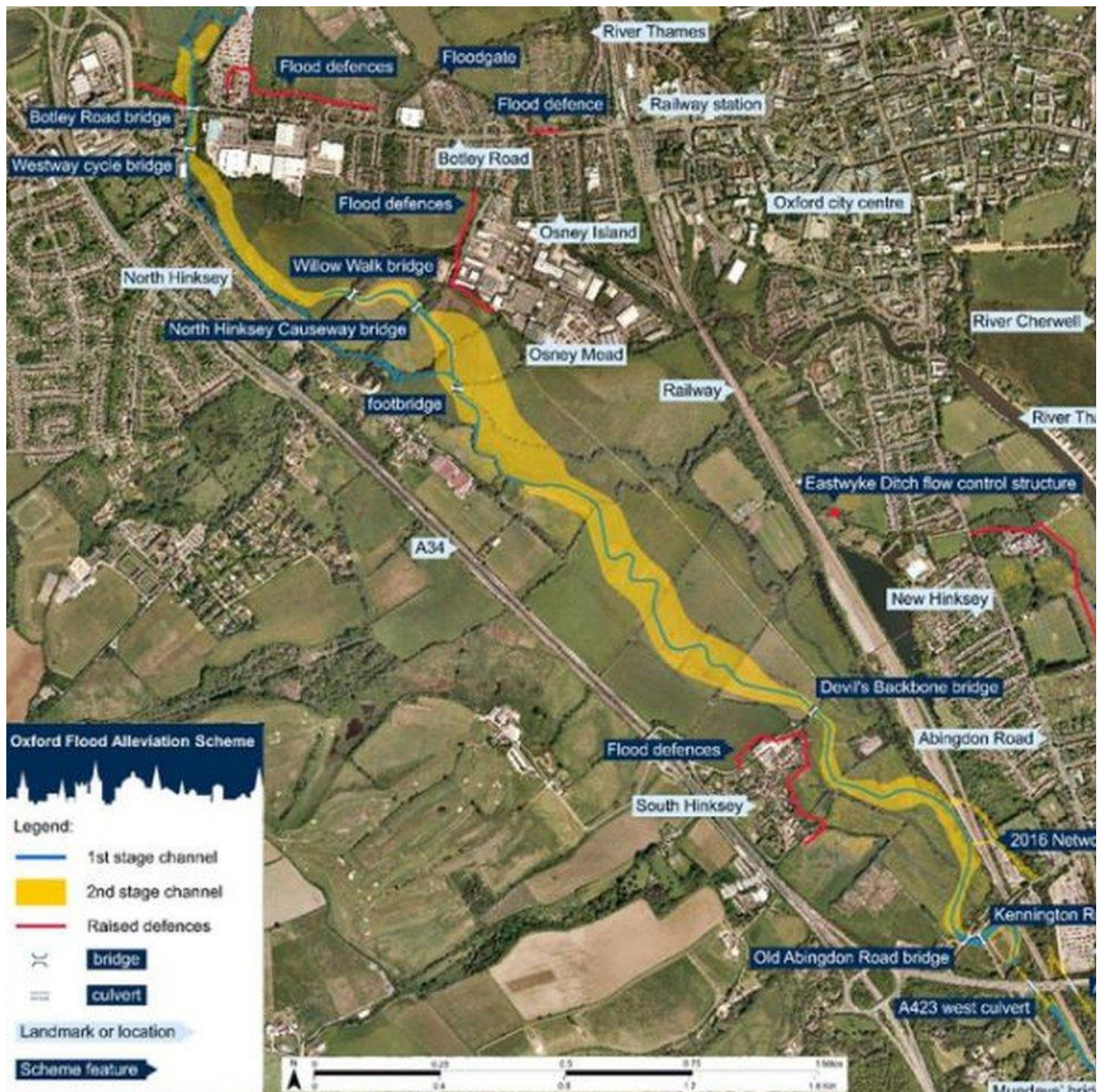
An Oxford County Council spokesman said, "Unusual design features of the bridge on the A423 mean it is not cost effective to maintain, inspections have found. Planned maintenance work inspections revealed there was no way to replace the worn support bearings. The bridge and road will remain open for at least two years before work begins. The replacement will be partially funded by the county council, which will approach organisations such as the Environment Agency and Network Rail to fund the remaining amount".

The bridge was built in 1965 and is on the route of the proposed Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme.

County councillor Yvonne Constance said replacing the bridge would "secure the long-term viability of the strategic road network and delivery of a robust flood alleviation scheme. We fully recognise the impact that the construction will have on the Oxfordshire transport network and local residents. We will work with all affected stakeholders so they can plan ahead and help us minimise the impact."

Culverts will be installed under the A423 close to the bridge to allow water to pass through during normal times and in times of flood to give additional capacity to the area.

Work had already begun to prop up the underside of the bridge when the problems were discovered. As a result, the new £40million bridge and the £150million Flood Alleviation Scheme will now go forward together.



Oxford Flood Alleviation Scheme (Environment Agency)

Archaeological survey trenches are also being dug in a field close to the A34 at South Hinksey, where workers on the scheme could be based. The project, which has been delayed due to the bridge works, will eventually see a stream created to the west of Oxford, with the aim of taking rainwater off the fields and preventing flooding.

By designing and building both the bridge and flood alleviation scheme together, the county council said it would enable it to "reduce disruption" and "ensure the best use of public money". The updated design will use open channels instead of culverts to allow the flow of floodwater under the bridge, the authority added.



Archaeological survey trenches are also being dug in a field close to the A34 at South Hinksey (Oxfordshire County Council)

Flooding in the area is not new as this picture from 1894 shows and the flooding has continued to this day. The railway was shut for three days. Significant floods in recent decades have caused damage to homes and businesses and closed the main railway line and major roads. *(As a child growing up in the early 1950s, I can remember that the road out of the village just here had a wooden walkway about three feet high to enable people to get out of the village when the water was too deep to travel through – ED)*



The scheme is being created by the Environment Agency, Oxfordshire County Council, Oxford City Council, Vale of White Horse District Council, Thames Water, Thames Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, Oxford Flood Alliance, Oxfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, University of Oxford and Highways England.