

CA ANGLIA Box 15



# flood risk management

Halesworth Flood Alleviation Scheme

Preferred option consultation  
September 2005

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# Introduction

We have permissive powers to manage flood risk and minimise the damage caused by flooding in England and Wales.

The town of Halesworth in Suffolk has a history of flooding. We are currently proposing a scheme to increase the standard of flood protection provided within the town. This consultation document presents

the proposed flood alleviation scheme and the process by which this scheme was developed. This is your opportunity to find out about the proposed scheme and give us your feedback.

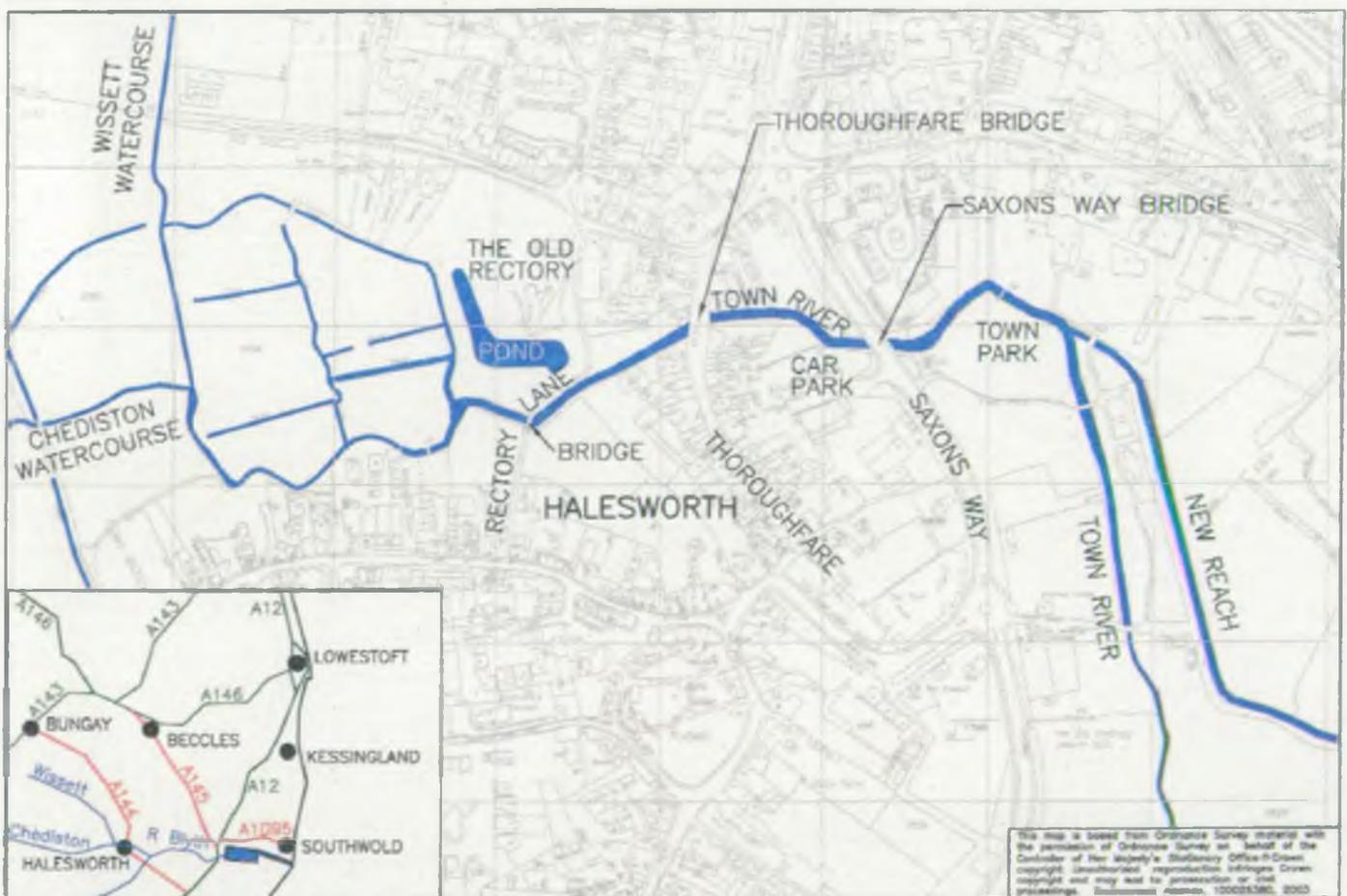


Figure 1 Halesworth – Location plan



# Background

The market town of Halesworth is situated on a tributary of the River Blyth, approximately 20km south-west of Lowestoft in north east Suffolk.

The tributary comprises the Chediston and Wissett watercourses which converge on the western edge of the town to form the Town River. Downstream of the town centre the river splits into two, one branch forming the New Reach, before joining the River Blyth to the south-east.

Halesworth has been subject to regular flooding from the Town River throughout the last century, with records going back to 1912. Currently, some 55 properties are located within the flood risk area – see our website for details [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk). The existing

flood defences were constructed following the floods of 1968. These comprise a widened channel through the town, some low earth bunds around the Old Rectory and channel improvements around the Thoroughfare Bridge to maximise flows under the bridge.

Flooding occurred most recently in October 1993 when approximately 45 residential and commercial properties were affected. These were mainly to the south of the river in the vicinity of the pedestrianised high street, the Thoroughfare.



**Flooding in Halesworth in the Thoroughfare in October 1993**

In order to receive funding for a flood alleviation scheme, we must prove to Defra that the scheme is technically, economically and environmentally acceptable, fulfilling the criteria set out by Defra.

Since the flooding in 1993, we have undertaken numerous studies to determine whether the risk of flooding in Halesworth can be reduced. Flood alleviation works are funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). In order to receive funding for a flood alleviation scheme, we must prove to Defra that the scheme is technically, economically and environmentally acceptable, fulfilling the criteria set out by Defra.

Since 1993 we have identified and investigated a number of options for flood alleviation. These are

detailed in Table 1 of this document. However, no option adequately reduced the risk of flooding in Halesworth whilst remaining economically justifiable and environmentally acceptable.

The flood alleviation scheme now proposed and described in this document has been identified as the most viable option to adequately reduce flood risk. Although the scheme will not meet the Defra funding criteria on economic grounds, we estimate that the works could be funded by local flood levies from Waveney District Council.



View from the Town River looking towards the Thoroughfare Bridge

# Options considered

The flood alleviation options considered during the development of the scheme are described in Table 1 below.

**Table 1 Summary of options considered**

Option	Description of option	Reasons for discounting option
Do Nothing		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased flooding risk</li> </ul>
Maintain	Periodic channel clearance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk that channel may not be cleared before potential flood event</li> <li>Insufficient channel capacity</li> </ul>
Upstream flood storage	Locations on Wissett Watercourse Locations on Chediston Watercourse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High construction costs</li> <li>Would not store adequate volumes of water to significantly reduce flood risk</li> </ul>
Channel improvements along length of river between Rectory Lane Bridge and the New Reach	Channel deepening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional bank stabilisation required</li> <li>Increased future maintenance requirements</li> <li>Additional expensive works at the upstream end of the New Reach</li> </ul>
	Channel bed widening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effects on bank stability upstream and downstream of town centre</li> <li>Increased siltation in river</li> </ul>
	Creation of rectangular concrete channel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Visually unacceptable</li> </ul>
	Options through Town Park in conjunction with flood berm works between Thoroughfare Bridge and Saxons Way Bridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hydraulically, environmentally and visually unacceptable</li> <li>Loss of amenity in the Town Park</li> </ul>
Provision of flood walls throughout the town		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmentally unacceptable as town centre is of regional heritage importance</li> <li>Construction of a pumping station required to prevent flooding behind the flood walls</li> <li>Likely increase in flooding upstream of Halesworth</li> </ul>
Small scale containment works	Channel improvement works upstream of the Thoroughfare Bridge	<b>Preferred flood alleviation option</b>

# The proposed scheme

We are proposing to construct new flood defence structures on the southern bank of the Town River upstream of Thoroughfare Bridge.

The proposed scheme comprises the following works shown on Figure 2:

- Application of a waterproof coating to the riverside walls of existing buildings immediately upstream of Thoroughfare Bridge along a 46m length of the southern riverbank.
- Increasing the height of a six metre section of wall within this stretch by approximately 200mm to bring it up to the required defence level.
- Further upstream, replacement of a 32m length of existing low level piling with a new combination brickwork/piled floodwall. These works will be undertaken adjacent to private gardens. The new floodwall will be approximately 1 to 1.2m high above ground level and will match the adjoining wall. Figure 3 shows what this new wall will look like once built.
- Construction of a new 130m length of floodwall comprising steel sheet piling in an area of currently disused ground to the rear of properties on the

western side of the Thoroughfare. The new floodwall will be up to 1.2m high and will tie into higher ground away from the river. An example of this structure is shown on Figure 4.

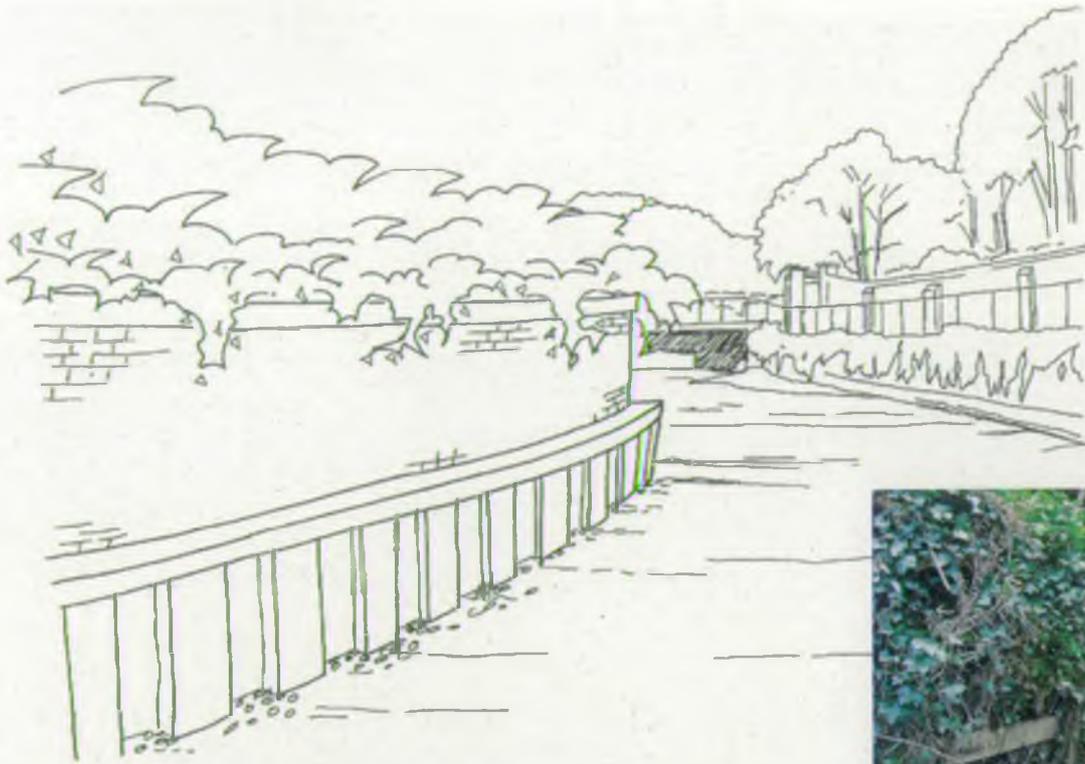
The new floodwalls will reduce the risk of flooding to properties in the Thoroughfare by blocking the passage of floodwaters from the Town River to the town centre.

Some localised ground raising and repair works may also be required between the Thoroughfare and Saxons Way Bridge. This would prevent any potential flood waters reaching the Thoroughfare from the car park area. The scope of these works will depend on the standard of flood protection to be achieved. This is yet to be finalised.

Construction of the scheme is planned for spring/summer 2006, subject to planning approval, and will take a period of four months. Access to the works area will be gained from Chediston Street.



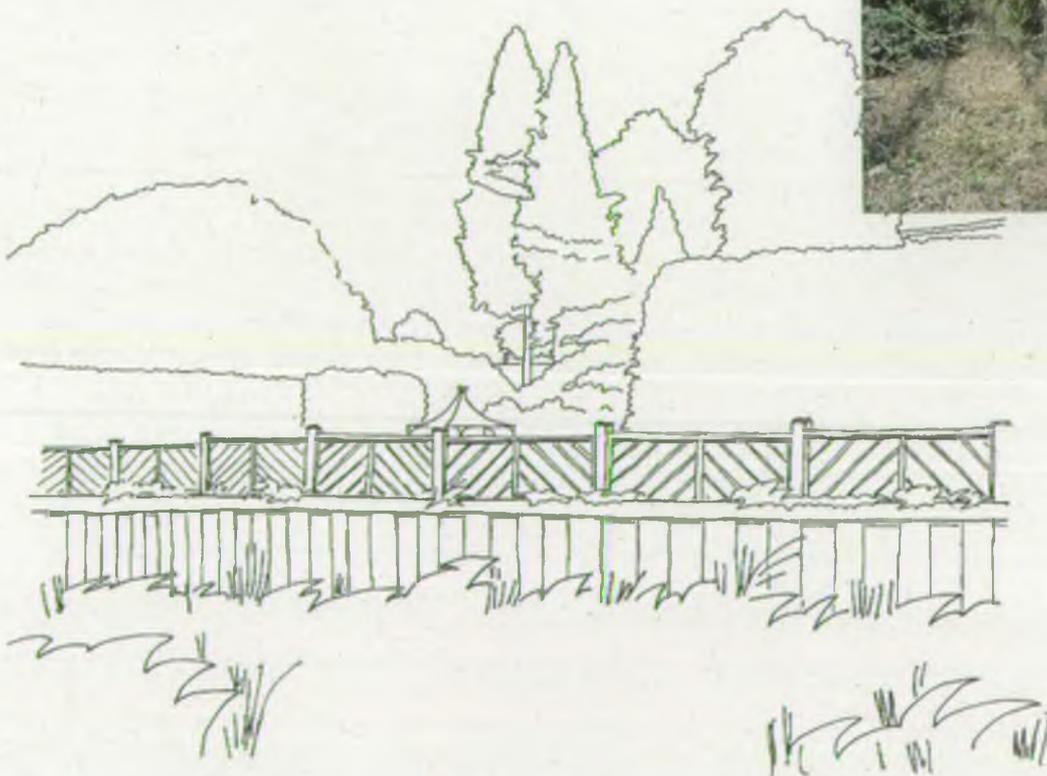
Figure 2 Location of proposed works



**Figure 3 Sketch of the proposed floodwall along river bank**



**Existing views are shown above and below**



**Figure 4 Sketch of the proposed piled floodwall**

# Environmental considerations

We are undertaking an environmental assessment of the proposed scheme.

At present we have identified the following potential environmental issues and enhancement opportunities:

## Potential key issues

- Permanent loss of land under the footprint of the new floodwall
- Change in appearance of the area of disused ground and views into this area from Rectory Lane
- Disturbance to local residents and businesses from increased noise, traffic and visual intrusion from construction machinery during works
- Disruption of traffic along Chediston Street whilst gaining access to the works site during construction
- Potential impacts on the character of Halesworth Conservation Area and the setting of nearby listed buildings

- Effects on the nature conservation value of the river channel and the area of disused ground including loss of bushes and trees
- Potential temporary deterioration in water quality from accidental spillages or in-channel working
- Potential damage or disturbance to unknown archaeological features

## Potential enhancement opportunities

- Improvements to visual appearance of the river channel
- Improvements to ecological or amenity value of the river channel

We welcome your comments on these and any additional issues or potential enhancements you suggest need to be considered.

# Consultation

This consultation document is the next stage in the development of the scheme and its purpose is to encourage interested parties to express their opinions on the proposed scheme and raise any concerns.

The objectives of this consultation are to:

- Provide an update on progress made so far;
- Describe the proposed flood alleviation scheme;
- Identify any key concerns relating to the proposed scheme; and

- Outline the proposed programme and further consultation opportunities.

Consultation with organisations and individuals who express an interest in the scheme will continue throughout the future development of the scheme as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Outline of current and future consultation process**

Stage in Programme	Consultation Opportunity	Timescale
Selection of preferred option Detailed environmental assessment of preferred option	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Distribution of this consultation document, presenting the preferred option</li> <li>■ Public exhibition on 22 September 2005 at St Mary's Church Hall, Halesworth</li> <li>■ Meetings with consultees and stakeholders</li> </ul>	September – October 2005
Issue of an environmental report Application for planning permission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Local Planning Authority consultation process</li> </ul>	December 2005 – January 2006
Detailed Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continued consultation with all affected consultees</li> </ul>	Winter/Spring 2005/06
Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continued consultation with all affected consultees</li> </ul>	Spring/Summer 2006

## What happens next?

Following on from this consultation we will finalise the design and undertake an environmental assessment of the proposed scheme.

A planning application for the works will then be made to Waveney District Council in December 2005/January 2006 and funding approval sought.

Subject to receipt of planning and funding approvals, we anticipate that construction of the Halesworth flood alleviation scheme will start in spring/summer 2006.

# Consultees

The following organisations will be consulted as part of this consultation process. Responses from other interested parties are welcome.

## Statutory Consultees

Countryside Agency  
English Heritage  
English Nature  
Waveney District Council

## Other Interested Parties

Landowners, local residents and businesses  
Council for the Protection of Rural England  
Halesworth & District Museum  
Halesworth and Blyth Valley Partnership Group  
Halesworth Millennium Green Society  
Halesworth Town Council  
Heart of Suffolk Recreational Project  
Inland Waterways Association – Ipswich Branch  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)  
Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership  
Suffolk County Council  
Suffolk Wildlife Trust  
Please let us know if there are other groups we should be talking to.

# Contacts

If you have any queries or issues you wish to discuss please contact:

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We would be grateful if responses are returned on the enclosed consultation reply slip to the above address by the date shown on the slip.

Thank You

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or about your environment?**

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