



It's everyone's water

Oxford Sewage Treatment Works

Quarterly Report July 2026



Executive Summary

- A major upgrade to Oxford Sewage Treatment Works is now underway.
- The upgrade consists of two projects which will accommodate growth in the area and deliver environmental commitments as part of our AMP7 and AMP8 work programmes.
- The forecast completion date of the works is 2030.
- A quarterly update on our progress for all stakeholders will be provided through this report. This report reflects work up to 30 June 2026. The next report will be published by the end of October 2026.



Background

- Oxford Sewage Treatment Works (STW) is located south of the city near Sandford-on-Thames.
- To facilitate growth and protect the environment, we are finalising plans for a major upgrade at Oxford STW costing more than £270 million which will provide a significant increase in treatment capacity, larger storm tanks and a higher quality of treated effluent going into the river.
- The major upgrade will take time, so we will be delivering through two parallel projects to maximise speed of delivery and environmental improvement.



Environmental Obligations

In addition to planning for population growth Thames Water has an obligation to comply with its environmental permits. The Environment Agency sets the standards we are required to meet. This is delivered through the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP). These obligations are set out below.

WINEP Drivers

- There is a requirement to increase Flow to Full Treatment (FtFT) to 1,434 l/s (from 1,040 l/s) by 31 March 2025. Increasing FtFT will reduce the frequency and volume of spills to the environment.
- There is a requirement to reduce Ammonia in the final effluent from 3mg/l to 1mg/l by 31 March 2025 to maintain water quality and protect aquatic life.
- There is a requirement to reduce Phosphorus from 1mg/l to 0.25mg/l (stretch target 0.15mg/l) by 31 March 2030 to improve water quality and minimise algal blooms.
- There is a requirement to undertake work to support the Dissolved Oxygen (DO) level in the final effluent by 31 March 2027. DO is required for the survival of fish and other aquatic life.



Timeline / Objectives

The work at Oxford STW has been split into two projects. The first (Capacity Upgrade to meet 2031 demands) will reduce spills, increase the capacity of the STW to accommodate population growth to 2031 and improve effluent quality in the Northfield Brook. The second (Capacity Upgrade to meet 2041 demands) will further increase treatment capacity to accommodate population growth to 2041, delivering our environmental obligations for flow and quality required by WINEP.



2031 Capacity Upgrade (Target Date 2027)

- **Inlet Works extension** to accommodate 1,283 l/s (currently 1,040 l/s).
- **Optimisation of** existing works to maximise process performance at 1,283 l/s with increased DO in the final effluent.



2041 Capacity Upgrade (Target Date 2030)

Increase FtFT of 1,434 l/s, reduce Ammonia to 1.0mg/l and reduce Phosphorous to 0.25 mg/l in the final effluent.

Treated effluent from Oxford STW discharges into the Northfield Brook, a tributary of the River Thames. The quality of the Northfield Brook is currently classified as 'Poor' under the Water Framework Directive. This will improve to moderate once the 2031 capacity upgrade works are commissioned in 2027. This improvement is driven primarily by reduced storm spills. This improves further to "Good" when the main project is delivered in 2030.

Both projects are on track to be complete by their respective target date.



Stakeholder Engagement

We continue to engage fully with all our stakeholders during the upgrade to Oxford STW.

Stakeholder engagement meetings

- Meetings held with Local Planning Authorities, the Environment Agency, Defra, local residents, Oxfordshire Badger Group and developers, giving progress updates and assurance on the upgrade scheme.

Environment Agency

- Engagement with the EA around the Final Effluent Dissolved Oxygen output compliance.

Stakeholder Assurance and Engagement plan

- Engaged with the Oxfordshire Conty Council regarding planning approval.

Developers meeting

- Updated the developers and other stakeholders in June 2026 on progress made. Meetings will be held quarterly to provide assurance that we will deliver an interim solution in 2027 and a permanent solution by 2030.



Oxford STW Progress

Update April to June 2026

2031 Capacity Upgrade

- Sludge Blending tank repairs complete.
- Inlet works extension concrete channels, storm overflow and grit removal base construction progressing.
- Secondary treatment works progressing.
- Final Effluent interim solution and Storm Screen design completed.

2041 Capacity Upgrade

- Contractor appointed and Design well under way with early works to de-risk the project also underway.
- Site surveys and 3D imagery complete.
- Order placed for the supply of additional power to the site.
- Planning for the new HV sub-station approved.
- Planning for new buildings, screening hill and new incoming road alterations to site has been submitted.
- TW land leased to farmers brought back into Thames Water control to enable the project site office establishment.



Oxford STW the next 6 months

2031 Capacity Upgrade

- Complete secondary treatment works.
- Complete baffles and aeration pipework.
- Complete Real Time Control works.
- Complete inlet works extension civil works.
- Secondary treatment commissioning and optimisation work will be complete.
- Site wide optimisation commencement in the bioresources assets and in operational technologies.

2041 Capacity Upgrade

- Design work continues.
- Commencement of critical enabling works including:
 - Manufacturing of power assets;
 - Design and Construction enabling works for power assets; and
 - Further commercial engagements for additional supply chain partners.
- Construction of new building for electricity upgrade, planning approval for temporary highway access, landscape, looking to establish project offices and welfare facilities.





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