



It's everyone's water

Oxford Sewage Treatment Works

Quarterly Report April 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 31 March 2026. The next report will be published by the end of July 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.

Both projects are on track to be complete by their respective Target Date.

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.



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 and developers, giving progress updates and assurance on the upgrade scheme. Quarterly update meetings will be held going forward.

Environment Agency

- We met with the Environment Agency in February 2026 to provide a progress update on the scheme.

Stakeholder Assurance and Engagement plan

- Quarterly update provided to Ofwat on programme and cost.

Developers meeting

- Updated the developers and other stakeholders in March 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 January to March 2026

2031 Capacity Upgrade

- Flow balancing tank cleanout complete.
- Inlet works extension construction with screw piling, manholes and preparation for concrete structures complete.
- Secondary treatment works progressing.
- Final Effluent interim solution and Storm Screen design developing.

2041 Capacity Upgrade

- Contractor appointed and Design commenced with early works to de-risk the project started.
- Placed order the supply of additional power to the site.
- TW land leased to farmers in final stages of being brought back into Thames Water control to enable the contractor establishment and site extension.



Oxford STW the next 6 months

2031 Capacity Upgrade

- Complete pipework upgrades.
- Concrete inlet extension work.
- Complete secondary treatment build.
- Secondary treatment commissioning and optimisation work will commence.
- Site wide optimisation commencement in the bioresources assets and in operational technologies.

2041 Capacity Upgrade

- Design work will continue on this capacity upgrade.
- Commencement of critical enabling works including:
 - Manufacturing of power assets.
 - Design and Construction enabling works for power assets.
 - Further commercial engagements for additional supply chain partners.
- Planning application submission for electricity upgrade, temporary highway access, and landscape.





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