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Bath Quays Waterside : Flood Defence Project

Scheme Description

Key Project Sponsors

The Council and the Environment Agency are working together to deliver a very important infrastructure project to deliver flood defences for parts of the city centre that will also begin to build a positive relationship between Bath's city centre and the River Avon.

This project builds on, and brings together, work completed over a number of studies, including the Environment Agency's Bath Flood Defence Scheme in 2004, the Council's Flood Risk Management Strategy in 2010 and the evidence base that has been collated by the council to support its core strategy, most notably the 2013 Bath Flood Risk Management Technical Note produced by Black and Veatch.

Policy Context



- B&NES Economic Strategy, Draft Core Strategy and National Planning Policy Framework:
- Protection of green belt
 - Prioritise brownfield development
 - Bath growth targets (net increase):
 - o 5,700 jobs
 - o 6,000 homes
 - Key Bath development sites located on River Avon
 - No adverse impact on flood risk to third parties
 - Safe means of access/egress in flood conditions



- Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Requirement to protect & enhance green infrastructure
 - Identifies importance of River Avon & Kennet & Avon Canal corridors
 - River ecology and habitats
 - Flood solutions create clear opportunities to deliver ecological and amenity benefits



- Public Realm & Movement Strategy & Pattern Book
- Connecting river to network of city centre streets and public spaces: enhanced access
 - Importance of green corridor
 - Opportunity for 'garden streets' with SUDS, trees & ecology near to riverside
 - Public art and animation
 - Legibility and wayfinding



- Bath City Riverside Enterprise Area Masterplan and Placemaking Plan:
- Masterplan will advise on how to deliver key sites and development opportunities within.
 - The Masterplan also informs the preparation of the Placemaking Plan and will provide planning policy for future developments.



- World Heritage Site
- Take into account Statement of Outstanding Universal Value
 - Important attributes, Trees and Bath's green links
 - Impacts on built heritage

- River Strategy and Transport Strategy
- Project to co-ordinate with emerging strategies

Flood Defence Project

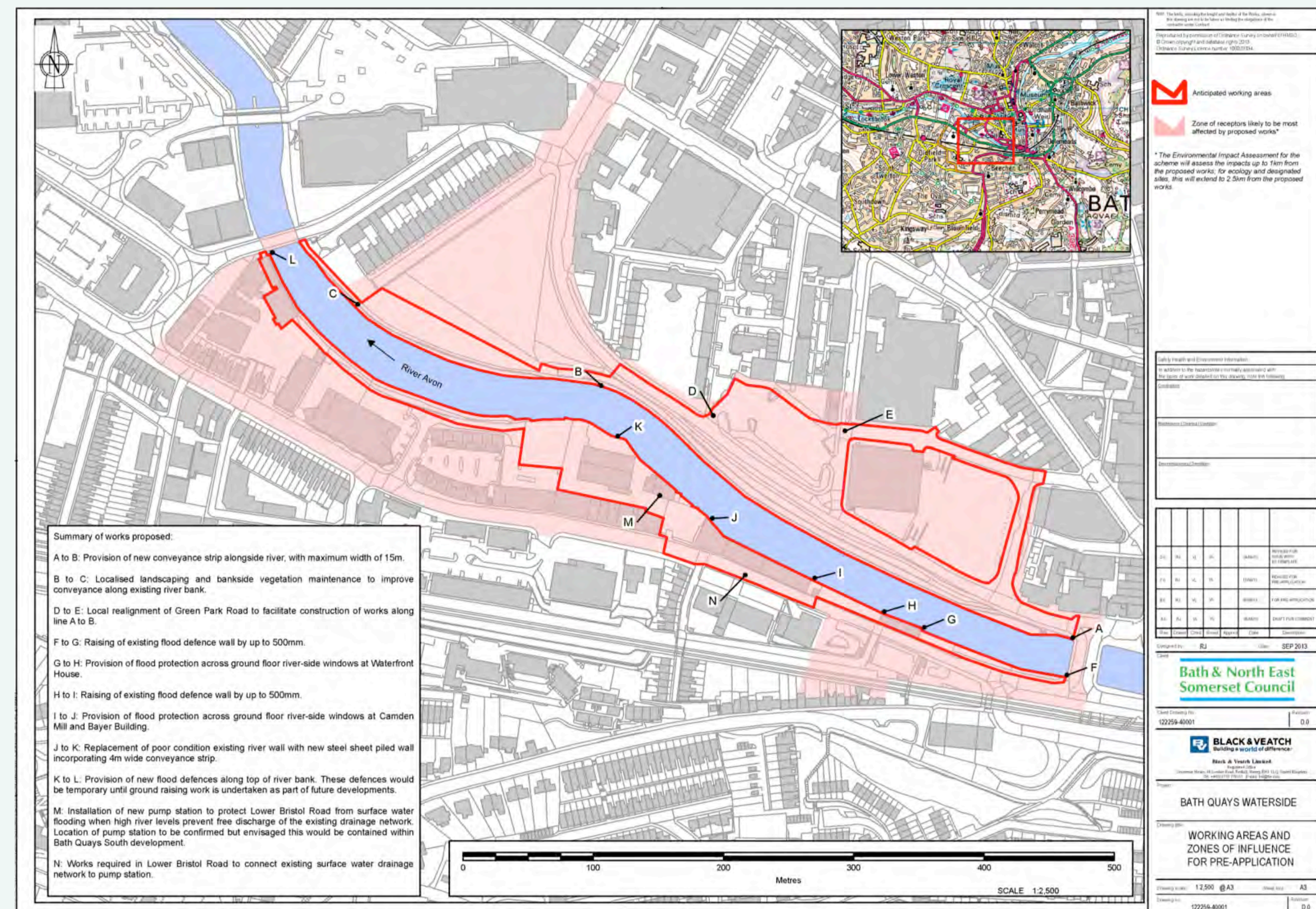
Lower Bristol Road is a key access route into and out of the city as well as providing the main access to a number of residential and industrial units in the south Bath area. Modelling confirms that existing flood defences protecting Lower Bristol Road would be overtopped during a 1 in 50 annual probability event.

Lower Bristol Road is at a high risk of flooding from the local surface water drainage network. The risk of flooding is increased when discharge into the Avon is prevented by higher river levels.

The Environment Agency previously investigated the feasibility of improving the standard of flood protection in this area. However the improvements did not have a sufficiently high benefit cost ratio to attract funding at the time (2004).

The Council is currently progressing its Masterplan for Bath. This includes proposals to develop key Enterprise Areas alongside the River Avon. Works will be required to reduce the risk of flooding to the sites and to provide safe access to / egress from them.

This project presents an opportunity to realise a long-held objective for the Environment Agency and B&NES to work in partnership to deliver flood risk management improvements along the River Avon. These improvements would benefit local residents and businesses on the south side, who would receive a greater level of flood protection, and the wider community, who will benefit from reduced flooding disruption and an enhanced river corridor, with development on both banks.



Ecology

The River Avon is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest and is home to a range of important habitats and species. During recent stakeholder engagement meetings it was clear how important the local environment and preservation of ecology was to people.

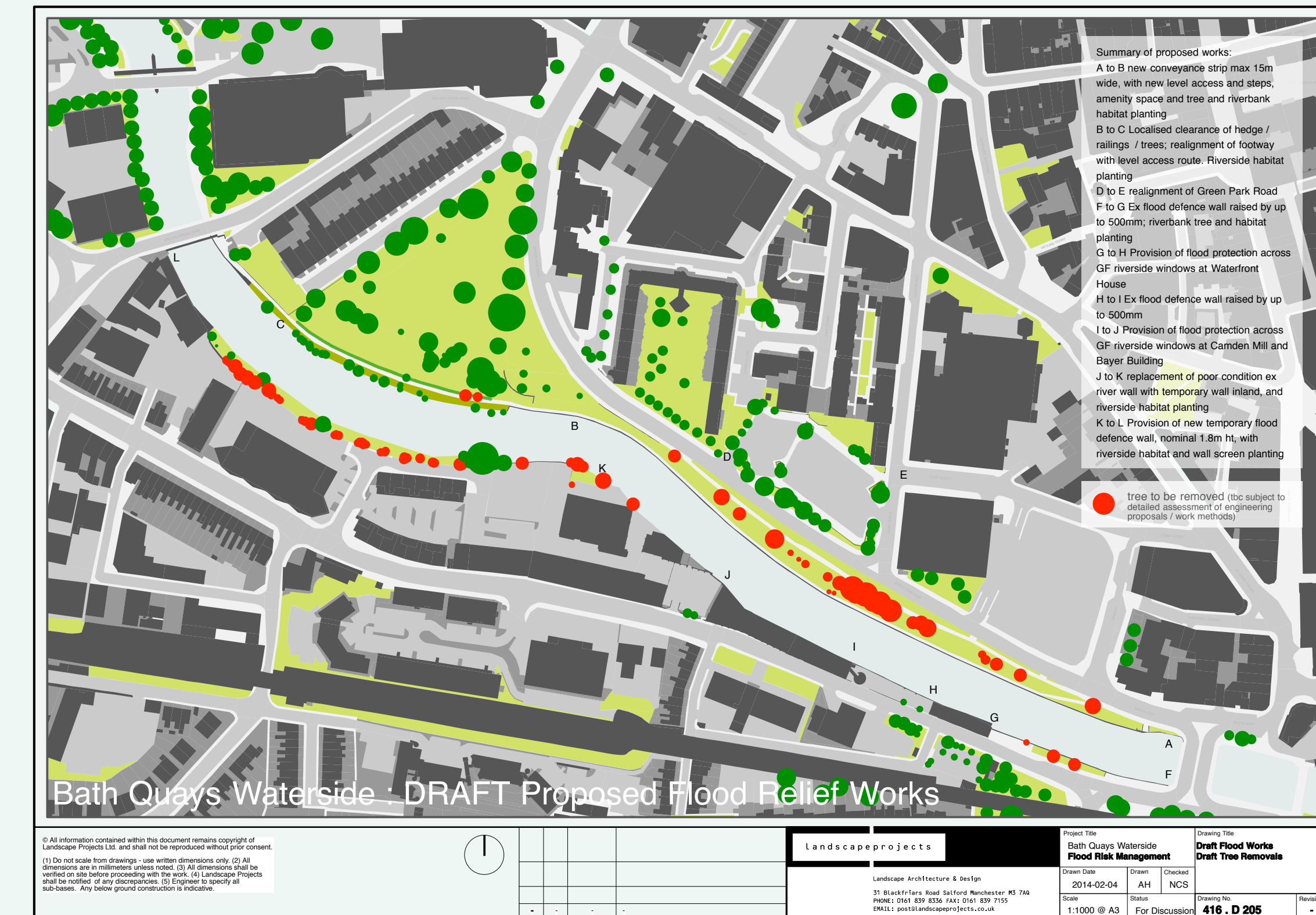
The project team is taking very seriously their responsibility to safeguard wildlife and trees that could be affected by the plans. Expert opinion has been sought from the Environment Agency, Natural England and the private sector. A wide range of ecological surveys within the area identified for the scheme

have been carried out, including surveys for bats, otters, kingfishers, reptiles, trees and vegetation. Plans are in place to avoid adverse impacts on wildlife, appropriate mitigation and enhancement of the area.

Flood Defence Project : description

The Bath flood defence project will affect the Bath Quays Waterside area in the following ways:

- Enlarging the capacity of the river to convey flood water will lead to widening of the towpath and re-profiling of the bank alongside Green Park Road.
- This in turn requires that Green Park Road is diverted away from the riverside northwards to link up with Corn Street.
- Trees along the southern verge of Green Park Road and along the new road alignment will be removed and replaced with new planting.
- New flood walls will be built to protect the south bank and Lower Bristol Road from flooding. The flood walls will replace existing walls where present.
- Some existing trees, on the proposed line of the new wall will need to be removed. Tree loss will be mitigated with new replacement trees, where required.
- The loss of trees on the north side of the river will open up local views, but will not have any substantial effects on wider views across the city.
- The area of accessible amenity landscape alongside the river will increase due to the increase in width of the towpath.
- Improvements to pedestrian and cyclist access to the north bank will be possible as a result of the flood works.



Trees

Tree surveys have also been carried out. One group of trees that will be affected are on the north bank of the River opposite Avon Street car park. These will require removal to allow the works to Green Park Road and are mainly Poplar trees from the 1970s, these trees were planted to screen Green Park Road from the opposite side of the river and are reaching the end of their natural life.

The new scheme will reinstate mature trees and carry out landscaping. For example, we are investigating planting a mixture of species including more fruiting species that will help to attract birds. Options for creating quiet areas along the River - mainly on the south bank - for the benefit of creatures such as otters are also being considered.



(above) view of the Poplar trees which will be affected by the river bank re-profiling.