University of Salford
Community
Keeping Salford Dry

University of Salford Manchester

Profile
- Higher Education
- 23,440 students (includes full and part time students)
- 2500 staff
- Urban

About the project

Summary
Floods from the River Irwell periodically devastate the lives of the families and businesses in the Lower Broughton and Kersall areas of Salford most recently on Boxing Day 2015. The project brings together the University, local communities, the local authority and the Environment Agency (EA) in an innovative partnership to create a flood protection scheme designed to safeguard over 1400 homes and 500 businesses, provide a high quality 5.5ha wetland wildlife habitat and improve sports facilities for local and student groups.

Scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2016, the scheme creates a 15 ha basin capable of holding 580,600m^3 of flood water and reducing the risk of flooding from 1 in 75 to 1 in 100 years

Project partners
Working with the local community, the University, Salford City Council and the EA identified an opportunity to come together to use land owned by the University and the council to create a basin that will manage peak flows in the river Irwell, reducing the risk of flooding. The project has been funded through the Environment Agency's Growth Fund and Salford City Council. The University has contributed its land into the scheme and is foregoing development value to enable the scheme to be completed.

The results

The problem
Floods from the River Irwell periodically devastate the lives of the families and businesses in the Lower Broughton and Kersall areas of Salford most recently on Boxing Day 2015.

The approach
Working with the local community, the University, Salford City Council and the EA identified an opportunity to come together to use land owned by the University and the council to create a basin that will manage peak flows in the river Irwell, reducing the risk of flooding. The land which was the University's sports fields has been excavated with the material used to build an embankment around the basin. Rising river water flows over an inlet weir and is retained by penstocks until levels downstream subside and the water can be safely released back into the river. Works started on the project in March 2015 following extensive consultation with local community and environmental groups. Monthly sessions have continued over the life of the project with the feedback from community groups developing the end product. Examples of this include improved access arrangements, interpretation, habitat development eg otter holt provision and artworks.

Performance and results

The anticipated financial benefit to the local area from the scheme is at least £12m, including avoided costs of rehabilitation after flood events. Additionally the impending presence of the new scheme has enabled the Council to approve the development of new housing scheme in Lower Broughton. As part of the negotiations the University has agreed to exchange its sports pitches for council owned pitches adjoining the University campus. Whereas the University pitches have been exclusively for student use, all the pitches will be available to the community. The University's grounds maintenance regime has improved the quality of the community pitches and will continue to improve the amenity value.

In addition to reducing the flood risk from 1:75 to1:100 years, the scheme has created a 5.5ha wetland habitation, designed by The Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust with input from the community steering group. Approx. 5km of new paths have been created around the basin which will provide a valuable asset for the local community.

Social benefits include providing direct engagement with community groups through the design of the scheme, providing facilities for leisure and healthy lifestyles through active sports or informal recreation. Community groups engaged include Broughton Trust, Kersall Vale Allotment Society, Salford Friendly Anglers & Garden Needs.

One unexpected benefit has been the increased use in the sports pitches near the University by the local community as a result of the University's improved grounds maintenance regime. Summer evenings now see local families and groups of young people picnicking and playing informal sport in areas formerly avoided.
Involving students in the various stages of the projects has provided real life learning situations from the sports teams, wildlife and environmental management through to the Archaeology unit which undertake assessments of the site. The new habitat will provide opportunities for research on biodiversity and ecosystem development at both University and school level.

The future

Lessons learned

1. Understanding the drivers, protocols and processes of the various partners
2. Agreeing the allocation of resource inputs especially funding at the outset
3. Maintaining excellent communication across all stakeholders throughout the life of the project

What has it meant to your institution to be a Green Gown Award finalist?

Winning the Green Gown for 'Keeping Salford Dry' recognises not only the University's role but also the excellent collaboration with the local community, the City Council and the Environment Agency, who have come together to develop an environment that has tremendous benefits for the community in which the University sits

Professor Helen Marshall, Vice-Chancellor

Further information

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