

Milton Keynes floodplain forest, River Great Ouse

Privately funded through gravel extraction, this project has successfully tackled the risk of flooding, improved the quality of the landscape, and plant and wildlife, and created educational opportunities.

Project summary

Location: Milton Keynes, England

Length: 50ha, approx. 2000m

Cost: €1,120,000

Dates: Works began May 2007,
Completion due by 2014/15

Delivery

Delivered through: Private funding from Hanson Aggregates Ltd through commercial gravel extraction.

Partners: The Parks Trust, Hanson Quarry Products, Scott Wilson, Milton Keynes Council.



Risk of flooding to local properties

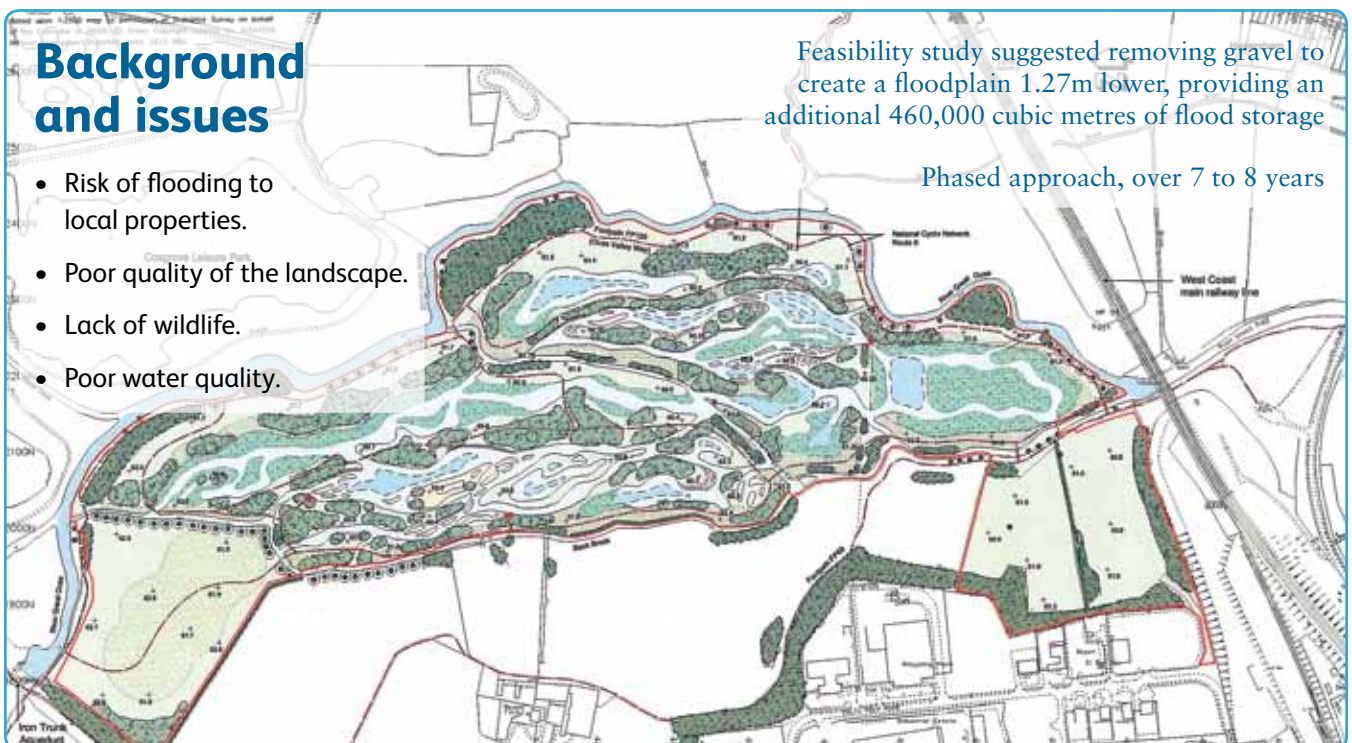
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Background and issues

- Risk of flooding to local properties.
- Poor quality of the landscape.
- Lack of wildlife.
- Poor water quality.

Feasibility study suggested removing gravel to create a floodplain 1.27m lower, providing an additional 460,000 cubic metres of flood storage

Phased approach, over 7 to 8 years

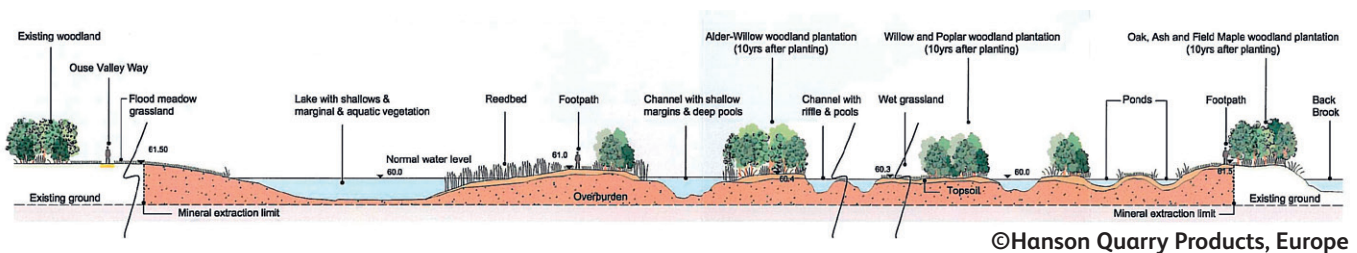


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Step-by-step

1. 1992 – The Parks Trust charity established to manage 1,800ha parkland in Milton Keynes.
2. 1994 – Proposal to create floodplain forest developed and feasibility study carried out.
3. 2000 – Contractor (Hanson Gravel Aggregates) awarded contract to remove gravel, restore and enhance site.
4. 2004 – Consultation (some opposition from councillors, planning officers and public), planning permission was granted.
5. 2007 – Project began to remove soil, extract gravel and create river habitat. A residents' liaison committee was set up and events, letters and open days organised to ensure ongoing community involvement.

Cross section of floodplain forest



Benefits

- Public access to the area.
- Created an educational park for Milton Keynes.
- Reduced risk of downstream flooding.
- Increased flood water storage capacity.
- Created habitat.



4.1km of paths, boardwalks and bridges provide full public access, some of which will be underwater during flood.



The park being used as an educational resource

Lessons learned

- Introduced measures to sustainably manage the risk of flooding.
- Unique partnership project led by a charity with funding from a private gravel extraction company to improve the environment for wildlife and people.

Project Contact: The Parks Trust