

# A proposed reservoir in the Fens

Approach to Community Consultation



October 2022





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# 1. Introduction

**Anglian Water is consulting on proposals for two new strategic reservoirs for the East of England region. One reservoir is to be located in the Fens, for which we are working in partnership with Cambridge Water, and the other in Lincolnshire.**

This document is about our proposals for the reservoir in the Fens and how we are consulting communities and stakeholders so their feedback can help shape our plans.

Our proposals are at an early stage, and we plan to gather feedback from the public over several phases of consultation.

**Our first phase of consultation runs from 12 October to 21 December 2022.**

This document sets out the details of where, when, and how we are consulting the communities affected by our proposals. It also explains consultation plans with wider stakeholders.

It explains who we are and why we believe these reservoirs are required to meet the future demands for public water supply and our responsibilities to the environment.



Rutland Water, East Midlands

## About Anglian Water

Anglian Water supplies water and wastewater services to almost seven million customers in the East of England and Hartlepool. We employ around 5,000 people in the region. As a purpose-led business, we recognise we have a huge opportunity – and responsibility – to contribute to the environmental and social wellbeing of the communities we serve. As one of the largest energy users in the East of England, we are also committed to becoming a net zero carbon business by 2030.

Anglian Water is investing heavily today to help prepare for tomorrow. We continue to lead the water sector in tackling leakage, exceeding our regulatory targets in excess of 10 years running.

Work is already underway on a half-billion-pound investment to lay hundreds of kilometres of new, interconnecting pipes to bring water from the wettest areas in the north of Lincolnshire to the drier areas in the south and east of the region. We are also installing over one million smart meters in customer homes, and delivering a multitude of abstraction reduction programmes, protecting precious chalk streams and rivers.

## About Cambridge Water

Cambridge Water is a water only company supplying high-quality drinking water to around 351,000 people in and around the city of Cambridge. Our operating area extends from Ramsey in the north to beyond Melbourn in the south, and from Gamlingay in the west to the east of Cambridge city.

We have a long history of delivering an essential public service that enables our customers to go about their daily lives. We work in partnership with our local communities, and to protect and enhance the local environment. We also run an efficient business, which is in everyone's interests.

We are playing our part to deliver an ambitious £600 million investment programme by 2025 – our largest ever – to deliver for our customers, communities and the environment.



## Strategic context

### Making sure we continue to have a reliable supply of water takes careful planning and co-ordination, nationally and regionally.

The **National Framework for Water Resources** explores England's long-term water needs. It considers what actions are required to provide water in the future, and how much is needed in each region.

The five regional water resource groups develop regional plans. In our region, that's **Water Resources East (WRE)**. Regional plans set out more detail on the water supplies for the region, including the needs of the environment. The emerging WRE regional plan identifies the need for new reservoirs as a key element of the overall package to ensure our region can continue to thrive.

Water companies then develop a **Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)** setting their plans and investments – such as improving efficiency; addressing leakage; restoring the environment; and building new water resources.

Anglian Water and Cambridge Water's existing plans – both published in 2019 – set out what we need to do from 2020 to 2045. Both plans identified new reservoirs as a crucial solution to meet the growing demands on water supplies in the East of England.

Both Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are currently developing new plans setting out what we need to do from 2025 to 2050. We will each publish our new plans in draft in November 2022 for public consultation (a separate process from the consultation on the proposed reservoir in the Fens). The proposal for the new reservoir in the Fens will continue to be an important part of both our plans.

The proposed new reservoir would help to secure water supplies for the region, while protecting the environment from the effects of climate change.



Through all our work to identify the best performing site, we've sought input from a range of stakeholders on our proposals, as they continued to develop.

This has ensured our work has been informed by those responsible for the local area and the region's environment, alongside our own teams.

We have engaged with:

- national bodies such as Natural England, the Environment Agency, and Historic England
- the local authorities in Cambridgeshire to keep informed of their own proposals for the region, and seek their opinion on how the reservoir could minimise potential impacts, and maximise potential benefits

- existing water-focused groups including Water Resources East and the Fens Water Partnership, of which Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are members
- agriculture groups to hear their views on the importance of water to agriculture as a key industry for the local economy

This work has helped guide and inform the development of our proposals so far to ensure we're assessing factors that are important for the region.

These groups and organisations, alongside others, are also being encouraged to provide their feedback to this consultation, so we can continue to take their views into account.

## A new reservoir in the Fens

**Anglian Water, working in partnership with Cambridge Water, is proposing a new reservoir in the Fens that will secure water supply to our customers for future generations.**

The new reservoir will store more water so it's always on tap when we need it, meeting the challenges of a changing climate and a growing population. It will mean less water is taken from sensitive sources, such as chalk streams, helping us to protect and restore the environment.

Alongside meeting these challenges, the project presents significant social, economic and environmental opportunities. Our vision for the project goes beyond just building a reservoir. We want to create a place where water, people and nature come together.

That means creating space for wildlife, such as wetlands, alongside enabling new recreational and educational activities and natural places for people to explore. It also means creating new jobs and providing opportunities for local businesses and tourism.

Together, Anglian Water and Cambridge Water have undertaken a detailed site selection study to identify a proposed site for the reservoir. We've considered a wide range of factors as part of this study from people and communities, landscape and environment, engineering requirements, and many more.

Through this process we've identified a best-performing site – one which balances all of the factors we must consider, and that provides opportunities to unlock wider benefits.

The proposed site is between Chatteris and March, near to Doddington, Wimblington and Manea. During times of high rainfall, river flows from the Great Ouse catchment would feed the reservoir with water. The water stored at the reservoir will then be treated and transported so it can be supplied to people's homes and businesses throughout the year.

### Building the reservoir and its connecting infrastructure

To build the reservoir, we will excavate soil and underlying material from the site and use this to create a surrounding embankment that will contain the water in the reservoir.

In addition to the embankment, the primary infrastructure needed is:

- a water treatment plant
- water pumping equipment and pipelines
- inlet/outlet facilities within the reservoir
- other equipment for operating and maintaining the reservoir

Your consultation feedback will help inform our design process. We will provide further information on the location of this infrastructure as part of a future consultation, where you will be able to provide feedback on these proposals.



# About the project development and consenting process

In England, projects of a large enough size and scale are classed as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). The reservoir in the Fens falls within that category.

The Planning Act 2008 sets out the threshold for what qualifies as an NSIP, as well as the process a project must follow to achieve development consent (the type of planning permission these processes require).

This requires applicants to develop proposals in detail, including thorough environmental assessments, prior to submitting an application to the Planning Inspectorate. A key part of this pre-application process is consultation with communities and stakeholders so their feedback can help influence the proposals and identify opportunities to mitigate potential effects.

**Consultees are defined by the Planning Act as follows:**

## **s42-s43: statutory and prescribed stakeholders**

Stakeholders defined as prescribed by the relevant planning regulations<sup>1</sup>. This includes organisations such as local planning authorities (including parish councils), utility businesses, government agencies and statutory undertakers.

## **s44: people with an interest in land**

People who own, occupy or have another interest in the land in question, or who could be affected by a project in such a way that they may be able to make a claim for compensation.

## **s47: local communities**

Local communities affected by the proposals, including residents and businesses, groups and organisations who are considered part of these communities.



## **Multi-phase consultation**

Our autumn 2022 consultation is the first phase in a multi-phase approach – at least two more consultations will follow. We are required to undertake at least one round of consultation that complies with the relevant statutory requirements of the Planning Act 2008.

When proposals are finalised and an application submitted, the Planning Inspectorate will examine the application before making a recommendation to the relevant Secretary of State. Ultimately, it will be for the Secretary of State to decide whether the project should be given development consent.

Development consent would provide Anglian Water, in partnership with Cambridge Water, with the necessary approvals to construct, operate and maintain the reservoir.

### CONSULTATION PHASE ONE

#### Consultation on:

- The area we have identified for the reservoir and its embankments (pink area on the map)
- The area we have identified for supporting infrastructure and during construction. This is also where we could include wildlife and environmental areas, spaces for leisure and recreation, education facilities and others (grey area on the map)
- Early concept design for the reservoir and the features you would like to be considered in the design of the reservoir as it's developed

### CONSULTATION PHASE TWO

#### Consultation on:

- Developed proposals for the reservoir and proposed mitigation and enhancement opportunities
- Options for associated infrastructure, including transfers, and confirmation of the source of the water transfer
- Anticipated impacts including short-term and temporary construction impacts (such as traffic routes) and long-term operational impacts (such as landscape and flood risk)

### CONSULTATION PHASE THREE

#### Consultation on:

- Final proposals for the reservoir and associated infrastructure that are planned to be the subject of the application for development consent (above)
- Developed mitigations and enhancement plans
- Preliminary Environmental Information



**For more information on this process, please visit:** <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

<sup>1</sup> Schedule 1 of the Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure Regs 2009.

## 2. Consultation overview

Our aim is to gather feedback from the public on the proposals for a new reservoir in the Fens and encourage input in the early design proposals. We are engaging the public through a range of means, supporting widespread participation and encouraging people of all ages and backgrounds to have their say.

### What we are consulting on



The consultation materials present the best performing site for the reservoir in the Fens.

The consultation also includes an early concept design for the proposed reservoir on which we are also seeking comments. The design of the reservoir will evolve as the project develops, as a result of feedback and ongoing technical work.

The reservoir will provide new opportunities for communities to benefit from leisure and wellbeing activities, just as the existing Anglian Water reservoirs do.

#### For this consultation we are asking for your feedback on:

- The area we have identified for the proposed reservoir and its embankments (pink area on the map)
- The initial wider area of land we have identified for supporting infrastructure and during construction. This is also where we could include wildlife and environmental areas, spaces for leisure and recreation, education facilities and others (grey area on the map)
- Early concept design for the reservoir and the features you would like to be considered in the design of the reservoir as it's developed

#### We also welcome comments on:

- our approach to consultation and the methods used to engage, as set out in this document
- other factors people think are relevant to the development of our proposals

### Where we are consulting

We have identified a consultation zone based on the potential effects of the proposed reservoir.

This includes the communities and stakeholders which may be affected:

- by lasting effects linked to the reservoir should it be constructed at the proposed site, such as land use or visual effects
- by temporary effects such as a result of construction, including from construction noise
- and those which are most likely to benefit most from the social and economic opportunities linked to the reservoir



The consultation zone is where the majority of our consultation activities are focused, such as community events, information displays and on-the-ground publicity. This zone is intended to help focus our consultation activities, however, anyone is welcome to take part in our consultation regardless of whether they are inside or outside this zone.

To build wider awareness and encourage participation, we are also carrying out additional activities for a broader audience, such as media advertising and publicity.



# 10 WEEKS



OUR FIRST PHASE OF CONSULTATION WILL RUN FROM 12 OCT TO 21 DEC

THIS IS OUR FIRST CONSULTATION IN A MULTI-PHASE APPROACH.

## Who we are consulting

Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are committed to delivering consultations that anyone can take part in. We have placed equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our business planning and decision-making.

Our consultation is open to all. We are using digital methods to allow people to engage whenever they wish. However, recognising not everyone wants to engage digitally, we are also providing the tools to fully engage with the project through hard copy materials and face-to-face events.

Any physical events are planned to be accessible and inclusive to ensure we engage with as wide a demographic as possible. We are doing this through a variety of means such as choice of location and timing.

In accordance with groups defined by the Planning Act, we are consulting with:

### s47: local communities affected by the proposals

- communities in the consultation zone
- elected representatives of these communities (such as MPs and ward councillors) not defined by other sections of the Planning Act
- representatives of people considered seldom heard within these communities. We have sought advice from the local authorities on which representatives to include. Based on aspects of user experience of mobility, confidence and accessibility, the following characteristic groups have already been identified:
  - Young and old people
  - People with physical disabilities or learning difficulties
  - People who are time poor (such as those with young families or without typical working patterns)

### Stakeholders in addition to the community consultation

This document outlines our plans for the community consultation and the activities we are carrying out to encourage participation, in line with the requirements of s47 of the Planning Act. While affected communities are the intended primary audience for these activities, they are open to all consultees.

In line with the broader requirements of the Planning Act, we are also consulting with the following stakeholders:

### s42-s43: statutory and prescribed stakeholders

We are consulting with stakeholders defined as prescribed by the relevant planning regulations<sup>2</sup> to ensure they are able to comment on the project at an early phase.

This includes organisations such as local planning authorities (including parish councils), utility businesses, government agencies and statutory undertakers.

We have identified additional stakeholders who may be interested in our proposals because of their area of knowledge or specialism (for example, local historical societies and conservation groups). They are being issued with information at the start of the consultation.

### s44: people with an interest in land

We are engaging with landowners, where they can be accurately identified, who are immediately affected by the area of our proposals. For those who we might not be able to identify, such as tenants and leaseholders, we encourage them to make themselves known to us so that we can include them in the consultation.

<sup>2</sup> Schedule 1 of the Applications: Prescribed Forms and Procedure Regs 2009.



# 3. How we are consulting

To encourage participation in the consultation and provide people with information, we are undertaking a range of activities.



## A digital-first approach

We are taking a digital-first approach to this consultation with a significant majority of activities delivered online. This will provide broad reach and accessibility for all of those living and working in the area.

A digital-first approach allows people to engage at their own convenience, as well as being in line with current planning recommendations. It also provides good opportunities to ensure activities are suitable for those with disabilities or who have health and mobility difficulties.

Using digital tools allows for a greater variety and quality of consultation materials, compared solely with printed documents.

However, some people are unable to engage digitally, or may prefer not to do so. The consultation remains accessible to those without digital access, through physical events and hard copy materials that provide people the opportunity to meet our teams and find out about our proposals. Our project hotline is also available for anyone wanting to contact the project team.





# Consultation materials

A variety of materials have been created, these are listed below.

Collectively these publicise the consultation and provide varying levels of detail about the proposals so people can choose the information relevant to their own interest.

All materials are hosted on the project consultation website. Hard copies are available for those that prefer to complete a form in hard copy.

Materials have been written so they are easy to understand and make good use of images and diagrams to explain our work.



CONSULTATION MATERIAL	DETAIL
<a href="#">Project consultation website</a>	The project website has full details of the project proposals. It holds all consultation materials. A digital feedback form is available.
<a href="#">Consultation postcard</a>	A consultation postcard, with a high-level explanation of the project and clear signposts of how to find out more (including website, contact details for the project team and details of consultation events).  The postcard is being sent to all residential and business addresses in the consultation zone.
<a href="#">Consultation brochure</a>	An overview of the context to the project and outline of the potential benefits and impacts of the project. It is available to download from the website, or in hard copy on request from the project team.
<a href="#">Site selection report</a>	An explanation of the process we have followed to identify a proposed site for the reservoir. Available to download from the website and requests for hard copies will be considered on a case-by-case basis (a reasonable copying charge may be applied).





## Requests for consultation materials

People are encouraged to view all materials online as a first course of action.

Hard copies of the community materials – including the consultation brochure and feedback form – are available at our consultation events, and from the project team on request, free of charge.

Requests for consultation materials in alternative formats (e.g. large text) will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact us if you have need for information in alternative formats.

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## Consultation events and webinars

We are holding a programme of in-person events and webinars for members of the public to meet our team, ask questions, and find out about our proposals.

This consists of four events held in community halls close to the proposed site, and four pop-up events held in areas of high footfall in nearby urban centres. Pop-up events are aimed at areas reaching people as they go about their daily lives.

Event locations have been chosen to maximise accessibility for all those affected by the project. They are being held in central locations such as community halls in the towns and villages closest to the proposed site for the reservoir.

A buildings accessibility checklist has been completed to ensure all venues chosen are accessible for all.

Events will be attended by representatives of Anglian Water and Cambridge Water. This will include a comprehensive range of subject specialists at each event, so that members of the public can ask questions on specific topics.

We are also holding community webinars, in line with our digital-first approach.

All events and webinars are timed to maximise attendance, including a spread of weekdays, weekends and evenings. Please see our website for details of the consultation events and webinars.

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## Reference document locations

Our site selection report is available online. Reference copies will be available to view at consultation events and at locations close to the proposed reservoir.

Please see our website for details of locations.



## 4. Publicising the consultation

The consultation is being publicised using a range of tools to reach as wide an audience as possible, and to encourage participation in the consultation. The publicity will be based around key milestones and planned appropriately according to each phase.



### CONSULTATION POSTCARD

Sending the consultation postcard (see above) to all residential and business addresses in the consultation zone.

### MEDIA RELATIONS

Issuing news releases to coincide with each milestone to local and regional media.

### ONLINE MEDIA

Publicising key dates and information online, via social media channels and project websites.

Working with local authorities and other regional partners to utilise any existing channels to increase participation, and encourage local groups to share details of our consultation through their own channels.

### NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

Publishing advertisements in local newspapers. These will include key dates, website details and information on how to get involved.

### POSTERS

Issuing posters to elected representatives and to suitable community locations (such as libraries) with details of the consultation, and request they are displayed in the local area.

# 5. How to take part and how we will use your feedback

## How people can provide feedback

Individuals can complete a response and/or provide separate comments through the following response channels. Each of the response channels is free to use.

Anglian Water and Cambridge Water cannot guarantee that responses submitted through methods other than those set out below will be included in our analysis and reporting.

The project hotline is available for people to ask questions or request hard copy documents. We are not able to accept verbal submissions (via the hotline or in events) as feedback. Where this is required for accessibility reasons, we will manage these on a case-by-case basis.

**The consultation is open from 12 October to 21 December.**

**All responses must be received by the deadline. Only under exceptional circumstances would we accept responses submitted after that date.**

METHOD	DETAILS
<b>Interactive feedback map</b>	Interactive map of the project on the website, including options for people to drop pins on the map to leave comments in specific locations.
<b>Feedback form</b>	Fill in and submit the online feedback form on the website. Hard copies are also available on request.
<b>E-mail</b>	Email your comments or a completed response form to <a href="mailto:info@fensreservoir.co.uk">info@fensreservoir.co.uk</a>
<b>Freepost</b>	Post your response form or comments to the consultation freepost address. <b>Freepost Fens Reservoir</b>  The freepost address is the only text needed on the envelope, no stamp is required.

### What we do with your feedback

We will review all of the feedback we receive and consider it alongside further technical work. We will present how we have developed our proposals, including how we have taken on board the feedback we received, as the project progresses.

This will include publishing a *Phase One Non-Statutory*

*Consultation Report* that details the feedback we have received and how we have considered it.

### Data privacy

Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are committed to protecting the personal information we are given. We manage personal information in accordance with all applicable data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulations


which came into effect in 2018. For more information, see our full data privacy notice on our website.


**As part of the planning process, the Planning Inspectorate may request full copies of any feedback submitted to the project.**

**The Planning Inspectorate's data privacy notice is available on its website.**


## 6. Contact us

Our team will be available throughout the consultation.  
Please get in touch with any questions.

 EMAIL US  
[info@fensreservoir.co.uk](mailto:info@fensreservoir.co.uk)

WRITE TO US   
Freepost  
Fens Reservoir

 CALL US  
0800 915 2492

VISIT OUR WEBSITE   
[www.fensreservoir.co.uk](http://www.fensreservoir.co.uk)



