

Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project



Phase One Consultation Community
Webinar FAQ Summary
22, 23 and 24 July 2020



Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project - Phase One Consultation Community Webinar FAQ Summary (22, 23 and 24 July 2020)

Between 22 and 24 July we held a series of three community webinars to receive questions and discuss our proposals for the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation project. This document summarises the questions we received during the webinars, and the answers provided by the project team. It also addresses the limited number of questions which we were unable to respond to during the sessions, due to the level of interest and the number of questions we received. The questions and answers have been summarised into the following sections based on the most common themes and issues arising during the webinars:

- Site selection;
- The planning and development process;
- Impacts on the local environment and communities; and
- Tunelling and operation.

Site selection

Q: It appears that proposals for a site in the Green Belt would not be compliant with South Cambridgeshire District Council's Local Plan or the National Planning Policy Framework?

Proposals located in the Green Belt, including the relocation project, must be considered in the context of national as well as local planning policy. As the Green Belt designation is a non-statutory planning policy, development within it may be permitted in special circumstances. This will be examined by the Planning Inspectorate, and we believe we have met these circumstances.

Q: Have you considered smaller distributed plants rather than one large facility?

A: Our initial options appraisal considered the project background, the existing plant's catchment Areas, infrastructure, policy requirements, and other strategic and technical factors. After considering the different factors, we identified several possible options for the relocation project that included: a single new waste water treatment plant (WWTP) in the existing Cambridge and Waterbeach drainage catchment areas, north or south of the existing WWTP; a single new WWTP (or expansion of an existing WWTP) outside of the existing Cambridge and Waterbeach drainage catchment areas; or several new WWTPs (or expansion of existing WWTPs), in various locations in or near the existing Cambridge and Waterbeach drainage catchment areas.

Our assessment (which can be read in detail on our website: <https://cwwtpr.com/document-library/>) showed that the best performing option was for a single WWTP located in the north or south of the combined Cambridge and Waterbeach drainage catchment area.



Q: Could the plant at Site area 3 not be further away?

A: The area of land highlighted is not the size required for the actual plant which will be much smaller, and the positioning of which will be determined later if this site area emerges as the selected site.

Q: What about the option of a new plant north east of Waterbeach?

A: During the early site selection work this site area was excluded because of flood risk. Further details can be found on our website: (<https://cwwtpr.com/document-library/>).

Q: Why is the size of the footprint of each site area different?

A: The site selection study that resulted in identification of the 3 site areas involved a 'sieving' approach and comprised stages to exclude areas of land where the plant could not be relocated. Taking account of, for example, flood zones, 400m buffer between the site area and residential property and proximity to protected and statutory designated sites.

This process removed excluded areas of land and results in the irregular shapes.

The relocated waste water treatment plant will be around half the size of the existing waste water treatment plant, meaning that it will also be much smaller than any of these given site areas once it is located within the final site area selected.

Q: Does AW have a preferred site already?

A: No, we do not. We have undertaken a detailed site selection study to identify the best performing site areas from a range of environmental, community, operational, planning and economic considerations. We have now launched the current public consultation to help us identify our preferred site.

Q: On what basis will the decision regarding the final location of the site be made?

A: We will be assessing environmental, community, economic, operational, programme and planning policy factors alongside the feedback we receive during the public consultation, to help us identify a final site.

Q: What will the area of the actual new plant be?

A: We expect the new plant will need around 22 hectares, around half the size of the existing plant, with possible landscape requirements in addition to this.



The planning and development process

Q: How will the project be funded and how much will it cost?

A: The regional and national strategic importance of this last significant redevelopment opportunity within Cambridge has been recognised both by local councils, through the development of the proposed Area Action Plan, and by Homes England, the government's "housing accelerator".

The proposed relocation will be funded by the Government's initiative to help deliver housing in areas of high demand - the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF). A grant of up to £227m has been awarded for the relocation of the treatment plant.

Q: Why does the current plant have to be relocated?

A: The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan consultation (live from 27 July to 5 October) proposes a new low-carbon city district for Cambridge which could create 8,000 homes and 20,000 jobs over the next 20-plus years.

Regeneration of the area requires the Anglian Water Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant to be relocated as it sits within that area on the last large brownfield site and will make way for up to 5,600 of those homes.

Although the relocation project is not an operational necessity, it provides an opportunity to design and build a brand new, modern, carbon-efficient waste water treatment facility to serve the needs of Cambridge and the wider area now and in the future.

Q: Would Homes England fund a smaller development at the existing site?

A: The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (AAP) – which is currently being consulted on (live from 27 July to 5 October) – proposes a new low-carbon city district for Cambridge which could create 8,000 homes and 20,000 jobs over the next 20-plus years.

Regeneration of the area requires the Anglian Water Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant to be relocated as it sits within the last large brownfield site in the area. Releasing this site will make way for up to 5,600 of the homes set out in the AAP. This site therefore represents a significant area within the AAP and enables the majority of new homes to be delivered.

A partial release of this site would not allow for the desired level of housing to be provided and therefore we would not anticipate Homes England funding to be provided to accelerate homes to the area. The business case would not stack up.



Q: What is the scheduled completion date for the relocation?

A: Based on our current schedule, we anticipate completing the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant by 2028.

We are currently developing our proposals for the relocation, which will be informed by three rounds of consultation. We anticipate submitting these proposals as a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate by mid-2022 which, if accepted, would allow construction to begin in 2024.

Q: How does the project meet the criteria for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)?

A: The National Policy Statement for Waste Water states that a waste water treatment plant in England is an NSIP if it is expected to have a capacity exceeding a population equivalent of 500,000. The current plant has the capacity to treat more than that and the new plant will be built with the capacity to treat a 548,000 population equivalent to ensure it can accommodate the future growth of Cambridge, therefore exceeding the NSIP threshold.

Q: As the Government are funding the relocation, how will this benefit the local community?

A: This development will create opportunities for thousands of new homes and jobs. The project will also deliver a new, relocated facility that will continue to provide vital services to Cambridge and Greater Cambridge in a modern, carbon-efficient waste water treatment plant.

Q: Are you aware of/consulting other developers in relation to their plans in the area?

A: Yes, we are aware of the other planned developments in the area and will be monitoring these and engaging with developers and local planning departments as part of the consultation process.

Q: Do you have a remediation plan for the existing site?

A: We have undertaken contaminated land investigations on the existing site, which showed that there is low contamination, and there will be further examination of this. We are also working alongside the Environment Agency as part of this process.

Q: Why are you relocating in order to redevelop the existing brownfield site when the three site areas you are consulting on could be used for housing instead?

A: The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (AAP) sets out the importance of the location of this site and its suitability for new homes. This includes its proximity to the city centre, existing transport links and local amenities. The relocation of Anglian Water's plant, which sits on the last large



brownfield site within this area, will make way for thousands of homes in a new low-carbon district in a sustainable location.

The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service vision is for an inclusive, walkable, low-carbon new city district with a lively mix of homes, workplaces, services and social spaces, fully integrated with surrounding neighbourhoods.

Q: Will the new plant be built to accommodate the new homes in Waterbeach as well as the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan development?

A: Yes, the new plant will be able to serve the existing homes in the Cambridge and Greater Cambridge area as well as the new homes coming from Waterbeach New Town and the new housing planned to be built on the existing site.

Q: How was the current phase one consultation publicised?

A: Our consultation leaflets including feedback form and freepost envelope were delivered directly by Royal Mail using data of all registered property addresses within our core consultation zone to ensure maximum coverage. Our consultation information was for the attention of all those with an interest at each address, using Royal Mail postal data to ensure this is in line with best practice for the use of personal data and established standards for public consultation. We have also been advertising the consultation period through local businesses and parish councils, adverts in the local press and other media coverage.

Q: Who make the final decision about whether or not the project will go ahead?

A: The project is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and the application for a Development Consent Order (DCO) to relocate the plant will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) on behalf of the Secretary of State for DEFRA, who will then make the final decision. We are also in close collaboration with Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, the Combined Authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council and the local Parish Councils, who have and will continue to be consulted as part of the application process.

Q: Will profits from the sale of the current site be shared with Anglian Water's customers?

A: The relocation project provides the opportunity for Anglian Water to build a new modern facility for Cambridge and Greater Cambridge that will continue to provide vital services to the area and at no cost to our customers. The relocation is being funded by Homes England to unlock the site to make way for thousands of new homes.

Proposals for the development of the site released are at an early stage and will be subject to a separate planning and consultation process. Any increase in value from the site will be shared with



our customers and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority for re-investment across the area.

Impacts on the local environment and communities

Q: Site area 3 at Horningsea is a wildlife habitat with several species of bat, hares, solitary bees, foxes and insects. Could these be threatened by the construction and operation of the plant?

A: We are engaging with the Wildlife Trust and Natural England to discuss mitigation of these potential impacts. There is also a possibility to provide enhancements to wildlife, and detailed survey work will be undertaken to find out which habitats may be affected.

Q: How have you considered the impacts which Site areas 1 and 2 would have on Mere Way?

A: The location of the waste water treatment plant (WWTP) within the site areas 1 and 2 has not yet been confirmed although, since Mere Way is a byway, it is highly unlikely that it would be severed. The route of the Mere Way would therefore remain intact and its use as a footpath and cycle route would not be affected. The users of Mere Way will be considered as both visual and community receptors in the Stage 4 site selection process, and mitigation will be identified to reduce the amenity impact on those using it.

Q: Cambridge Council has a policy for biodiversity. Will this plan be followed?

A: We will engage with the Cambridge City Council biodiversity officer, who is a consultee in the process, and will be adhering to their policy as required.

Q: What environmental assessments are being undertaken?

A: Surveys are currently being carried out in the area, including wildlife and environmental audits to look at protective ecosystems and archaeology. Once a preferred site area is selected there will also then be further detailed surveys of this site and the surrounding area.

Q: Were you aware of the interest in Honey Hill and surrounding land by the National Trust, in relation to their vision for the expansion of Wicken Fen Nature Reserve?

A: Consultation is ongoing with environmental bodies including the National Trust, and the final site selection report will include further environmental assessments.



Q: Does Site area 3's proximity to an SSSI and Nature Reserve make it a sensitive site?

A: Site area 3 is a much bigger area than will be used for the final plant and the position of this would be decided based on what causes the least environmental impact on any sensitive sites.

Q: What impacts would the potential pipeline corridor for Site area 3 have where it crosses the river near Waterbeach?

A: The corridor is just an indicative suggestion of the actual pipeline and we are currently assessing potential impacts in the area. Were the pipeline to cross the river near Waterbeach, the river would not be impacted as the pipeline would pass underneath it.

Q: What standards are being set for odour release?

A: The opportunity the relocation provides in building a new plant is that we can use modern technology and design to reduce the likelihood of odour occurring.

In designing the new plant, we will be prioritising the prevention of odour occurring in the first place. This will be through targeting controls in areas where odour may occur and designing the treatment processes to reduce odours being released.

Q: Does the 400m buffer zone to prevent odour also allow for wind direction?

A: The 400m buffer zone is a standard consultation area which is adopted by ourselves and Cambridge County Council. The new site will be designed with modern technological and process solutions that will prioritise odour prevention & mitigation.

Q: Will there be any impact on local house prices?

A: We do not believe that there will be an impact on house prices, as the site will not sit within close proximity to residential properties.

Q: Could the proposed new sites be elsewhere to avoid impacting on local communities?

A: Mitigating potential impacts to local communities, which is in part informed by consultation with those communities, is a key consideration in the site selection process.

Prior to launching this phase of consultation, we have undertaken a detailed site selection study to identify a suitable location for the relocated Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant. The aim has been to identify locations that are technically and operationally feasible, minimise environmental



and community impacts and comply with national and local legal, regulatory and planning frameworks for waste water treatment plants.

The process involves a 'sieving' approach and comprises stages to exclude areas of land where the plant could not be relocated (taking account of, for example, flood zones and proximity to protected and statutory designated sites).

We also need to consider factors such as the 'proximity principle' (a need to treat and/or dispose of wastes near to their point of generation) and potential environmental impacts of discharging of the water (how close the new waste water treatment plant would be to the source of the water and the discharge location which is located near to the existing site).

Other key factors include: the length of the tunnel to each site area from the existing waste water treatment plant (WWTP); the return pipeline or tunnel to the river; the road transport routes to access the site from the main strategic road network; and changes to the carbon impact of tunnelling and pumping waste further away.

The three sites being consulted on are the best performing in light of these considerations. We will continue to consult on and develop our proposals to further mitigate potential community impacts where possible. Information on the site selection process is available on our website if you would like to find out more.

Q: Are Anglian Water meeting with affected landowners.

A: We have commenced consultation with landowners and have a dedicated Land Team, who have been in contact with those affected both within the main site areas and the surrounding area.

Q: Have you considered other non-traffic impacts on local communities from construction of the new plant?

A: Construction impacts will be considered in detail as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and potential impacts during construction will be mitigated through implementing a Code of Construction Practice, which will put controls in place for dust, noise and other emissions.

Q: What impacts will there be from HGVs on High Ditch Road for Site area 3?

A: As part of our proposals, we will be undertaking a detailed traffic and transport assessment and consulting with the local highways authorities and Highways England to identify and agree any necessary measures to minimise traffic disruption on the road network and local communities.

We will then prepare a detailed Traffic Management Plan to manage traffic flows and construction traffic for both the site and associated tunnel and pipeline corridor construction.



We will also consult the public and other stakeholders on our Traffic Management Plan before submitting it to the Planning Inspectorate to be examined as part of our final Development Consent Order (DCO) application for our proposals.

Q: What would be done to preserve the existing buffer of farmland between Impington and the nearby landfill if Site area 2 is chosen?

A: A landscape design will be developed that respects the local landscape character, whilst minimising visual impact of the scheme. This will be primarily informed by a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). A Landscape Management Plan will be prepared for submission with the DCO application to achieve landscape objectives and describe the approach to delivery, maintenance, management and monitoring.

The landscape design would typically include tree or hedgerow planting to provide screening with more concentrated planting to provide denser screening in areas most exposed to visual receptors. Tree-planting stands would be a minimum 20m depth in order to provide effective visual screening in winter. Planting boundaries will follow existing field patterns to help blend-in with the landscape, and planting areas will also be selected to fill any small, severed fragments of fields to enhance landscape quality.

Tunnelling and operation

Q: Can Anglian Water guarantee that mitigation for contamination of water bodies is guaranteed?

A: The new tunnels will be designed to ensure that contamination does not occur.

Q: What will make the new project 'low carbon'?

A: We are looking at a more efficient treatment processes, including technology of processing the sludge to create energy for the plant, as well as minimizing the carbon produced through construction of the site.

The new plant, along with waste water treatment, will store and treat storm flows and treat sludge to produce renewable energy via anaerobic digestion. The energy produced will be used to power the site. This powers around 40% of the current site. The sludge treatment process also produces biofertilizer, used by farmers to provide essential soil nutrients.

Q: Is it practical/possible to aim for zero carbon for the whole plant?

A: Anglian Water has ambitious targets of becoming net-zero by 2030, and it is no different for this project. Anglian Water has exceeded its ambitious 2020 carbon goals, delivering a 61% reduction in capital carbon emissions and a 34% reduction in operational carbon emissions.



In collaboration with our integrated supply chain, we have created a strong 'reduce carbon' culture. This approach has delivered innovation through the reuse of assets, low-carbon materials, off-site build, low-carbon standard products and advanced 3D design tools.

A commitment to sustainability is woven throughout our business. We hold the Queen's Award for Enterprise: Sustainable Development 2020-2025.

Further project specific details of this will be also be provided as part of our phase two consultation.

Q: Are you planning to generate solar power on the selected site?

A: The renewable energy proposals will be a more integral part of the second phase of consultation.

Q: How much waste slurry will be produced per day, how will it be transported away from the site and to where?

A: There is actually very little waste from the plant as the sludge treatment process produces biofertilizer, used by farmers to provide essential soil nutrients. We will also be consulting on details of the transport of waste later in the consultation process.

Q: How will storm water be dealt with?

A: the storm requirements will be set by the Environment Agency, and there is also the potential for greater capacity for storm water in the new proposals.

Q: Will there be an impact from placing the tunnels/pipes and how will these cross the river?

A: Tunnel boring machines would be used for transfer tunnels between the old and new plant, so the only points of access would be at either end of the tunnel at the existing site and new site. Pipes from Waterbeach would be pumped, and sit in 2 metre trenches, as would pipes for the treated effluent return water to the River Cam. The bored tunnel only crosses the river once during transfer, and the Waterbeach tunnel crossing would cross underneath the river. The tunnel will be routed away from properties, and there will be no risk to residential properties. There will be reinstatement works occurring following the pipes being installed.

Q: With regards to the new tunnels & pipelines needed. What impact will the tunnels and pipelines need have on the areas they pass through?

A: Tunnel corridors have been designed to prevent impact on built up land, and there will not be impacts on wildlife for example, after completion.

Q: Which site would require the least amount of tunnelling?

A: The least amount of tunnelling required would be to Site area 3.

Q: Will there be any impacts from the need to pump from the old to the new site?

A: One of the factors of the site selection is the carbon impact of the site, so pumping between the two sites will be minimal.

Q: What levels of traffic might be generated by the operation of the site?

A: As part of the development there will be a detailed Traffic Management Plan, including for both tankers and operational vehicles, as there will be a mixture between tankers and staff and visitor vehicles. However, once built the site will require fewer staff and have lower visitor numbers than the current plant, and therefore generate fewer vehicles overall. Tanker volume will be similar as those at the current site, and we can confirm this is currently around 70 per day.

Q: What will the thickness of the pipe be when laid and is there any risk of leakage into underwater springs?

A: We cannot specify the exact thickness of the lining at this stage, but there will be a concrete lining and another outer lining in order to prevent any migration/ingress of ground water.

Q: Does DEFRA's Magic Map identify any risk of contamination at any of the three site areas?

A: In reference to the groundwater vulnerability map (England) on Magic – it does show Site 3 as higher risk and Sites 1 and 2 as medium-lower risk or unproductive. The aquifer designation maps on Magic concur with the descriptions in the Stage 3 site selection report. There is a difference between the Site 3 (which is principal aquifer) and Sites 1 and 2 (which are Secondary A aquifers). Honey Hill at Site 3 is the base of the chalk and our Stage 3 site selection report notes that permeability is likely to be low due to the nature of the formation (Grey Chalk Subgroup). Anglian Water will also take every measure necessary to contain the materials treated at the site.

Q: How tall will the new plant be relative to the existing plant?

A: As a point of reference in terms of overall height, the existing waste water treatment plant (WWTP) on Cowley Road is 23m at the tallest point. The exact height of the new plant will be determined as the design process is progressed, and as such we cannot specify exact heights, and associated mitigations for visual impacts, for this at this stage. However, as part of our Stage 3 – Fine Screening assessment, a conservative anaerobic digester tank height of 26m has been assumed



(anaerobic digesters would be the highest structures on the WWTP), to understand potential visual impacts. Detailed design options will be consulted on in phase 2.