

Dear Councillor

**CABINET - TUESDAY, 16 JULY 2024**

I am now able to enclose for consideration at the above meeting the following reports that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

**Agenda Item  
No.**

- 3. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME SUMMER UPDATE**(Pages 3 - 4)  
The Market Towns Programme Summer Update Report is to be presented to the Cabinet.

Executive                      Councillor:                      S                      Wakeford

- 4. LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND ROUND 3**(Pages 5 - 6)  
The Cabinet is to consider a report on Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3.

Executive                      Councillor:                      S                      Wakeford

- 5. PRODUCTIVITY PLANS**(Pages 7 - 8)  
The Cabinet is to consider the Productivity Plans Report.

Executive                      Councillor:                      S                      J                      Conboy

- 6. FENS AND LINGS RESERVOIRS**(Pages 9 - 16)  
To consider a report on Fens and Lincs Reservoirs.

Executive                      Councillor:                      T                      Sanderson

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## MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME SUMMER UPDATE

- 10.2 The Panel discussed the Market Towns Programme Summer Update Report at its meeting on 10th July 2024.
- 10.3 In response to a question from Councillor Pickering, the Panel heard that in relation to St Neots, only a small number of the shop front grants had been successful, this was due to the remaining applications not fulfilling the criteria for the scheme. The recommendation was that the scheme is expanded to include areas outside of the market towns and previously unsuccessful applications would have the opportunity to reapply.
- 10.4 Following requests for clarification from Councillor Cawley and Councillor Gardener over the proposed purchase of an additional location for the Cromwell Museum and the long term ownership of that property, the Panel were assured that whilst the ownership would sit with Huntingdon Town Council, grant agreement documents would have clauses built in to protect this asset and clarify the use of funds from any future sale.
- 10.5 The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Pickering, that the gas boiler at the Priority Centre was in good working order and it was not planned to replace this until necessary. In addition it was noted that the current timescales for the project were based upon industry standard assumptions but that it was hoped that additional efficiencies could be established once a contractor was appointed.
- 10.6 Councillor Catmur enquired whether any further hidden risks were anticipated within the St Neots market square project, following the discovery of a previously unidentified pipe through the project, following which, the Panel were advised that all the interrogation into the ground works was now complete, therefore no other unexpected discoveries were anticipated. The Panel were further assured that tolerances had been built into the project timescales and that this was not expected to impact the overall project timescales.
- 10.7 In response to a question from Councillor Martin, the Panel heard that the objections received for the Priory Centre application were no unexpected and that the team were working through those comments. The Panel were also advised that 80% of the anticipated works were internal works and that the external works were looking to bring a more vibrant visual impact for the centre. Work was continuing with the team liaising with planning consultants, conservation team and English Heritage to provide the best solution for all.
- 10.8 Councillor Martin praised the overall plans for the Ramsey project but expressed concern that the proposed pop up shops may affect the street scene and visibility for existing and established businesses. The team were assured that retail champions had been employed to ensure that the scheme would benefit all residents and business owners. The Panel was also assured, following an enquiry from Councillor Catmur, that the popup shops and

pedestrianisation of the area were being developed to be accessibility compliant.

- 10.9 Following a question from Councillor Gardener regarding the location of sensors on the Great Ouse River, the Panel heard that detail on this would be sought and brought back to the Panel.
- 10.10 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND ROUND 3**

- 4.2 The Panel discussed the Local Authority Housing Fund Round 3 Report at its meeting on 11th July 2024.
- 4.3 Councillor Shaw expressed his support for the scheme and enquired whether the appropriate volunteer groups had capacity to support these residents. In response to which, the Panel were assured that there was constant communication with volunteer groups who are in place to ensure support is provided.
- 4.4 Following an enquiry from Councillor Alban, it was clarified to the Panel that Temporary Accommodation was transitory short term accommodation and that Permanent Accommodation was a permanent tenancy agreement. It was further clarified that these accommodations were part funded by grants and partly by the Housing Associations, and that Huntingdonshire's investment in the project was limited to Officer time and resource.
- 4.5 In response to a question from Councillor Tevlin, it was confirmed that the plan contained within the report was fully scoped and funded and that as Home Office funding had already been utilised for other parts of the scheme, there was no reason to suggest that this would change with the continuation of the programme.
- 4.6 The Panel heard, in response to a question from Councillor McAdam, that the permanent accommodation properties secured for the scheme would be under ten years old. The Panel further heard that this round of the programme was a two year programme and would be very similar to the first round.
- 4.7 Following a question from Councillor Shaw, the Panel were advised that the Housing Associations had not requested additional funding from the Council to implement this programme but that any such requests would be assessed on a case by case basis.
- 4.8 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

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## PRODUCTIVITY PLANS

### Corrections to text within the report.

Point 1.3 of the Productivity Plan to read;

A programme has been scoped and resourced to review and improve the strategic approach to managing and improving customer contact, and ensuring contact is systematically addressed in the correct location at the minimum possible cost. Project mandate details are here. This will be monitored as part of our standard public quarterly performance reporting. Metric/KPI – financial impact, channel shift and customer satisfaction.

Section 3 of the Productivity Plan to read;

3) Ways to reduce wasteful spend within systems, including specific consideration of expenditure on consultants and contracted staff, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion programmes – this does not include programmes designed to promote integration and civic pride, and counter extremism.

### 6.0 Overview and Scrutiny Comments

- 6.1 The Panel discussed the Productivity Plans Report at its meeting on 10th July 2024.
- 6.2 In response to a comment from Councillor Martin, the Panel were assured that regular benchmarking against industry standards and other neighbouring authorities took place, and that the proposed increase in productivity would not be at the expense of quality. Following a further question from Councillor Martin, the Panel heard that the plans would be embedded within the organisation through key metrics and the Corporate Plan. By using strategic engagement and reporting across the organisation, best practice could be employed for all. It was also noted that the Workforce Strategy would address the required skills and capabilities going forward which would allow for key actions and best practice to be embedded within the culture.
- 6.3 Following a concern raised by Councillor Blackwell regarding the lack of numerical targets, the Panel were assured that metrics and KPIs would be used to measure in each area but that these were already being captured in the performance reports which are regularly brought through the democratic cycle and were therefore not duplicated within this report.

- 6.4 Councillor Pickering observed that there was an issue with some of the links contained within the document, this was noted and the correct documents will be circulated to the Panel following the meeting.
- 6.5 In response to a question from Councillor Wells regarding the 4 day working week model used at South Cambs District Council, the Panel heard that the Council was constantly monitoring best practice and evidence of what works, and continually review opportunities to be more effective.
- 6.6 Following a question from Councillor Cawley, the Panel were advised that the aim was not to reduce residents abilities to contact the Council but to reduce the need to contact, by working harder there should be less need to contact the Council. In response to a further question from Councillor Cawley, the Panel heard that AI opportunities were being investigated where they could provide benefit to the Council, with the example of note and minute taking being given as an opportunity currently being explored.
- 6.7 Following the discussion, the Panel were informed that their comments would be added to the Cabinet report in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.



**Public**  
**Key Decision – Yes**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Fens & Lincs Reservoirs
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Cabinet – 16th July 2024
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing
<b>Report by:</b>	Chief Planning Officer
<b>Wards affected:</b>	Lincolnshire Reservoir: Stilton, Folksworth & Washingley (Stibbington, Sibson and Chesterton parishes) Fens Reservoir: Somersham and Holywell-cum-Needingworth (Bluntisham and Earith parishes)

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### **Executive Summary:**

Anglian Water, in partnership with Cambridge Water, is in the pre application stage of Development Consent Orders for Fens Reservoir and the Lincs Reservoir respectively, both with associated infrastructure requirements. Recognising the East of England as an area of high growth the reservoirs aim to secure a reliable supply of water for the future and create new opportunities for the region to thrive and grow.

In late 2022 a first phase of consultation on the sites identified was held and early concept designs.

The second phase of non-statutory consultation opened on 30th May and will close on 9th August 2024. This consultation outlines the preferred location of the associated water infrastructure needed for both reservoirs in order to fill them, treat the water and distribute the water to our homes and businesses.

Following this consultation there will be at least one further statutory consultation, likely mid- 2025, in line with the requirements of the Planning Act 2008, on the proposals prior to submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

The Council has been collaborating with a number of partners under the Fens Water Partnership in order to consider the potential development of the Fens Reservoir with an aim of creating a sustainable water resource for the area and future growth, whilst also enhancing the environment and wider social-economic opportunities for local communities.

During the current round of consultation, a number of events have been held as identified on their website ( link in background papers)

Due to the statutory timings required, a short window of time is given in order for the consultation documentation to be considered and responded to by specialists across the council. As such it is not possible to prepare a draft response on this now or for a later Cabinet meeting. With that in mind, the proposal in this report is to seek authorisation for a response to be prepared with officers and authorisation to be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, to prepare and submit formal comments on the current second non statutory consultation on the Fens and Lincs reservoirs and associated infrastructure proposals.

Delegation is further sought on the next stages of work due to the statutory time constraints to respond to DCO matters incorporating a range of specialist support.

### **Recommendations:**

The Cabinet is

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. to authorise the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Leader and Executive Councillor for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, to prepare and submit formal comments on the current second non statutory consultation on the Fens and Lincs reservoirs and associated infrastructure proposals; and
2. to delegate authority to the Chief Planning Officer to take all associated action necessary in the interests of the efficient and timely conduct of the Council's compliance with the Fens Reservoir and the Lincs Reservoir DCO procedures including but not limited to:
  - a) prepare the Council's responses to any written questions from Examining Authority during the DCO Examinations and to submit those to the Examining Authority;
  - b) settle the content of and submit any Written Representations to the Examining Authority;
  - c) to negotiate, settle and complete any legal agreements relevant to secure the granting of a DCO pursuant to the applications;
  - d) settling and the submission of the Statement of Common Ground to the Examining Authority;
  - e) the instruction of witnesses and legal advisors throughout the Examination process if required; and
  - f) the discharge of DCO requirements made under any development consent order granted by Secretary of State.

## **1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 This report provides an outline of the details set out in the second non-statutory consultation on the Fens and Lincs reservoirs proposal and associated infrastructure. It sets out the background to these proposals at this stage, which is part of the pre-app stage prior to the submission of the projects as separate Development Consent Order (DCO) applications. Due to the timing of the consultation, delegation is sought to enable the Council response to be submitted within the statutory, short timeline.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Fens and Lincs reservoirs projects are recognised as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). They are both major investment proposals to secure a reliable supply of water for current and future communities and businesses across Huntingdonshire and the wider region. They will enable extra water to be stored, providing a level of resilience, volume of water and environmental opportunities that are not provided by other resource options such as desalination or water reuse.
- 2.2 Following the National Framework for Water Resources in 2020 the way water companies planned for the future changed. They are required to collaborate across boundaries to develop regional plans. Huntingdonshire sits within the Water Resources East. From these plans, the water companies then develop their Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). This sets the plans and investments for the company such as building new water resources. Both the Anglian Water and the Cambridge Water WRMPs identify the proposals as crucial to meet the growing demands on water supplies and to protect the environment.
- 2.3 The Council has been collaborating with a number of partners under the Fens Water Partnership in order to consider the potential development of the Fens Reservoir with an aim of creating a sustainable water resource for the area and future growth, whilst also enhancing the environment and wider social-economic opportunities for local communities.
- 2.4 Through early engagement key priorities for the Parishes, residents and businesses of Huntingdonshire can be shared with Anglian Water. These include (but not limited to) ensuring key objectives of the Councils Corporate Plan and Place Strategy can be shared and included as part of the delivery strategy to deliver new water-related infrastructure. This includes matters such as maximising opportunities for active travel, enhancing the visitor economy of Huntingdonshire and ensuring skills opportunities in the delivery of the new reservoirs are made available to local residents.

## **3. RESERVOIR PROPOSALS**

- 3.1 The proposed reservoirs have an important role to play in the future growth aspirations for Huntingdonshire and the wider region. The reservoirs themselves will sit outside of Huntingdonshire and will have a water surface areas of approximately 5km<sup>2</sup> - around the size of Grafham Water

- and hold up to 55 million cubic metres of water each. They will have the potential to supply up to 250 million litres of water a day between them for over half a million homes, as well as protecting the environment by enabling a reduction in the amount of water taken from rivers and underground aquifers elsewhere in the region. The associated infrastructure will be regional including within the district. The points relevant to Huntingdonshire District Council are:

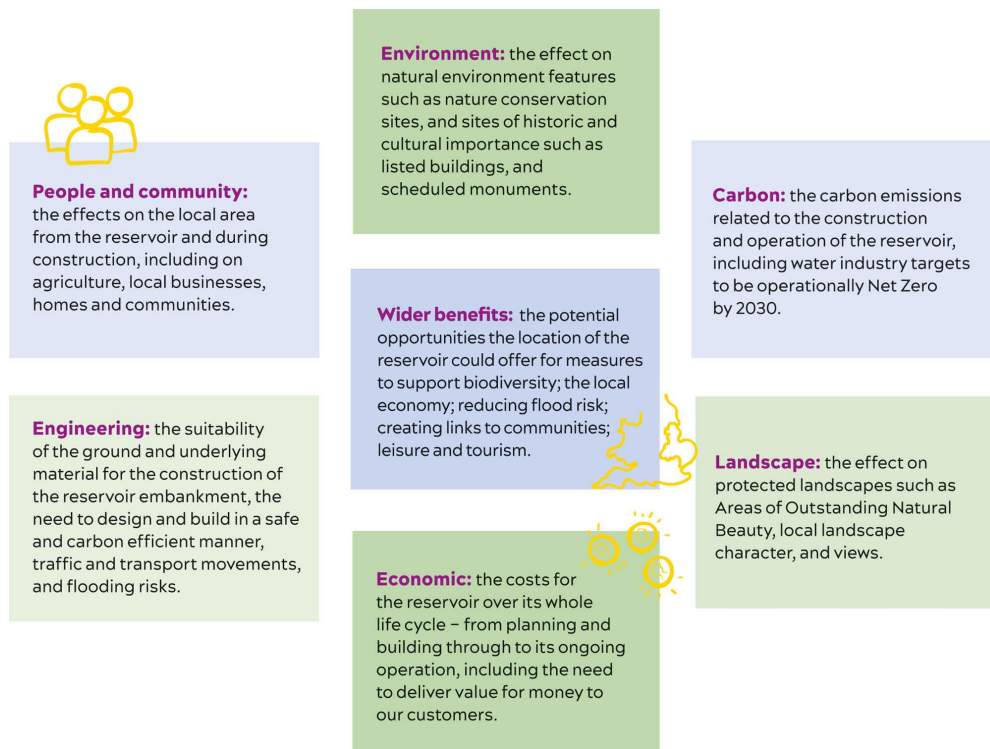
#### Fens Reservoir

- Upstream infrastructure options remaining to transport water from Great Ouse (Earith) Source to the reservoir
- Emergency drawdown, in the very unlikely event this is required, excess flows would be disposed of via the Sixteen Foot Drain
- Downstream infrastructure options remaining to transport potable water into Cambridge supply at Bluntisham, and Madingley incorporating a pipeline spur to Bluntisham including a service reservoir and one piped option to Madingley.

#### Lincs Reservoir

- Downstream infrastructure options remaining for treating water and passing into supply at one of three connections points, including a piped option Wilsthorpe to Chesterton. This would include a service reservoir to the east of Elton Furze Golf Club.

3.2 A range of factors have been assessed in considering the project and associated infrastructure as set out below.



3.3 The current non statutory consultation details can be found on the [Fens Reservoir Website](#) and [Lincs Reservoir Website](#). The consultations will

run until from 30 May for 8 weeks. A number of drop-in events, pop-up events and online events will be held .

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

4.1 The current non statutory consultation details can be found on the [Fens Reservoir Website](#) and [Lincs Reservoir Website](#). The consultations will run until from 30 May to the 9<sup>th</sup> August. A number of drop-in events, pop-up events and online events are being held to ensure opportunities for local residents, businesses and Parishes to engage with Anglian Water. Details are available on Anglian Water's website

4.2 The consultation documents will be reviewed by specialist technical officers at the Council and comments provided. Key areas for consideration could include:

- Air quality
- Land contamination
- Vibration effects
- Noise
- Landscape and Visual impacts
- Ecology and Biodiversity
- Cultural Heritage
- Health Impacts including walking/cycling opportunities
- Climate change

#### **5. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY**

5.1 Comments are to be submitted by the 9th August 2024. Given the tight turn around, agreement has been sought by the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny (Performance & Growth) to present this directly to Cabinet recognising there will be a further non-statutory consultation in spring/summer 2025.

#### **6. KEY IMPACTS / RISKS**

6.1 The key impact from not carefully considering these two reservoir and associated infrastructure proposals could be that views of Huntingdonshire communities and businesses are not heard. The level of future growth within the district needs to be considered as part of these proposals to ensure there is sufficient water supply to meet our future needs.

6.2 In the event of tight timescales that do not allow for the formal cycle of meetings delegations are sought now to ensure prompt responses to future consultations.

#### **7. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

7.1 Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations in this report, the Council response to this second non-statutory consultation will be submitted by the deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> August 2024.

7.2 Following this non-statutory consultation, Environmental Impact Assessment report and opinion will be undertaken by Anglian Water in consultation with statutory stakeholders. The next statutory consultation is expected in the Spring/summer of next year. Following this the DCO application will be submitted.

## **8. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND/OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

*(See Corporate Plan)*

8.1 This will help to deliver across a range of the Council's Corporate Plan priorities specifically Creating a better Huntingdonshire for future generations by:

- Improved housing - 27. Maintain the level of new housing delivery, which meets the needs of Huntingdonshire residents, including the type of home and tenure (open market and social housing).
- Forward-thinking economic growth – 32. Continue to update the Local plan.
- Forward-thinking economic growth - 36. Influence delivery of infrastructure including East West Rail, A428, A141 Strategic Outline Business Case and future Transport Strategies

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None currently for the Council as this is a non-statutory consultation response. Part 6 of the Planning Act 2008 sets out the legal requirements regarding Development Consent Order applications.

## **10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. A number of specialist officers across the Council are engaging in this process. As Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs) this resource is considered necessary and is programmed and monitored within Planning Services and the wider Council.

10.2 Specialist officer input will increase as the NSIPs progress through the pre-application stage and into the DCO examination. Resource will need to be carefully planned for and balanced against other areas of statutory work including the determination of planning application and progress of the Local Plan.

10.3 There may be future budget implications for resource and or legal support through the formal DCO process.

## **11. HEALTH, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 As the Fens and Lincs Reservoir NSIPs progress, specialist officers will consider all appropriate implications for our current and future communities and businesses in responding appropriately and proportionately to the applications.

11.2 Through the consultation process Anglian Water will be strongly encouraged to maximise opportunities for environmental enhancements, to maximise biodiversity net gain and inclusion of active travel which will contribute to environmental and ecology improvements while improving health and wellbeing of residents.

## **12. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

12.1 Due to the time constraints, outside of the control of the Council, the response for the second non-statutory consultation will not fit within programmed Cabinet cycle. Delegation is recommended to meet the requirements for responses to this and future areas of work for expediency.

## **13. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

None

## **14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Planning Act 2008 Chapter 29 Part 6

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/pdfs/ukpga\\_20080029\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/29/pdfs/ukpga_20080029_en.pdf)

Fens Reservoir project website

<https://www.fensreservoir.co.uk/>

Lincs Reservoir project website

<https://www.lincsreservoir.co.uk/>

Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: Advice Notes

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-infrastructure-planning-advice-notes#advice-for-local-authorities>

Advice Note Two: The role of local authorities in the development consent process

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects-advice-note-two-the-role-of-local-authorities-in-the-development-consent-process/advice-note-two-the-role-of-local-authorities-in-the-development-consent-process>

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Name/Job Title: Claire Burton, Implementation Team Leader

Tel No: 01480 388274

Email: [claire.burton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:claire.burton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

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