

Response to Anglian Water consultation on the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project – Phase One Consultation

This response is made on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council and represents the Council's response, at this first informal stage of consultation, to the proposals and details published on the Project website on 7th July 2020.

Officers from the Council have previously engaged with the Anglian Water project team as the consultation proposals were prepared. The Council also previously commissioned Arup's, at an early stage of the project, to comment on the site search area for the project but has not undertaken any independent technical assessments of the proposals, or the technical reports, at this stage. In addition, the Council has not undertaken any formal or informal consultation with its communities on the basis of the materials published.

For that reason, at this informal consultation stage, SCDC does not feel that it is in a position to express a preference for any of the three proposed sites.

The District Council and Cambridge City Council are currently engaged in the preparation of a Joint Development Document to provide a framework for the comprehensive re-development of North East Cambridge. This includes the existing Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Works. In 2019, the Council also granted outline planning permission for the development of new homes at Waterbeach in accordance with the adopted Local Plan. This proposal requires additional water treatment capacity to be provided at Waterbeach or elsewhere.

Whilst the promotion of a new water Treatment Works for Waterbeach and Cambridge is a matter for Anglian Water, SCDC and Cambridge City Councils are progressing in parallel, proposals for the delivery of new homes, employment and the associated place infrastructure to meet future need for the Greater Cambridge area. The Council supported the initial "Housing Infrastructure Fund" bid which has

secured the funding to enable relocation and through its current work programme, also supports the principle of providing a combined new treatment facility, at a location which would facilitate effective delivery of its emerging policy objectives at Waterbeach and at North East Cambridge.

The technical and non-technical reports prepared and published as part of the consultation outline a methodology that has been followed to identify a number of potential suitable sites, and a process for their assessment against specific ranked criteria. Whilst the Council has not undertaken its own independent assessment of the evidence published, the methodology followed appears to include the key considerations appropriate for this stage of the assessment process. The Council has not, at this stage, sought its own independent appraisal of the site selection and assessment criteria used but notes that for a number of the assessment criteria, judgement, as opposed to technical specifications have been applied to the assessment of the “impacts” used to inform the development of the options. As this project progresses, and working with Anglian Water’s team, the Council would expect to explore more fully, the basis for these judgements, in order that it can consider whether it agrees with the conclusions reached. The commitment to full engagement with the Councils officers through to the site selection stage and further consultation is accordingly welcomed. This is particularly important as the project team seek to understand and apply the relevant policies of the Local Plan alongside the County Council Waste Local Plan.

Notwithstanding the best efforts of the project team, the consultation materials include a number of substantial technical reports to underpin the conclusions contained in the site selection technical summary. The commencement and conclusion of the informal consultation phase through the summer holiday period has led to some Parish Councils contacting this Council expressing a concern about their ability to respond to this array of technical information within the time specified. The extension of the deadline for submissions to 14th September was for that reason welcomed. It will be important however to ensure that through to the next stage of the project, engagement with Parish Councils and local communities continues.

Having enjoyed a constructive dialogue with the Project team to date, the District Council and its officers therefore look forward to early understanding of the range of responses and views expressed about the proposals by the local community and continued positive engagement with the project team on this important infrastructure project.

Yours sincerely

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Lead Member for Planning (on behalf of SCDC)