



Report to:	Cabinet	30 July 2021
Lead Cabinet Member:	Cllr Neil Gough - Deputy Leader and Lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport and Lead Cabinet Member for Transformation and Projects	
Lead Officer:	Stephen Kelly - Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development	

Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation (WWTPR) Phase 2 Consultation Response - Development Consent Order (DCO) process

Executive Summary

1. This report seeks endorsement of the approach to South Cambridgeshire District Council's response to the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation (CWTPR) Phase 2 Consultation as part of a Development Consent Order (DCO) process.
2. Anglian Water have recently commenced their second public consultation on the proposal that closes on 18th August 2021. The statutory consultation is planned for early 2022 prior to submission of a Development Consent Order application to the Secretary of State.
3. The recommendation is to support the proposal in principle. However concerns are raised about elements of the proposal, including traffic on local roads, the landscape /design approach, technological solution, biodiversity net gain targets, potential odour impact and connectivity via sustainable forms of transport.
4. This officer recommendation is based on an assessment of the site constraints and characteristics and ongoing consultation with relevant technical officers and other stakeholders including the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel.

Key Decision

5. No.

Recommendations

6. It is recommended that Cabinet endorses the approach set out this report and gives authority to Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development in

consultation with the Deputy Leader and Lead Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Transport and Lead Cabinet Member for Transformation and Projects to amend the draft response to make reference to any additional issues that may be identified from the ongoing consultation process and to submit the response on behalf of the Council.

Reasons for Recommendations

7. Whilst the principle of the CWWTPR relocation is supported, there are some important issues that the scheme needs to address in more detail to accord with the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Local Transport Plan (2020) and other materials considerations.

Details

Background

8. Anglian Water are proposing to relocate the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) currently on Cowley Road, Cambridge.
9. The relocation of the WWTP from Cowley Road enables the redevelopment of the wider area of North East Cambridge delivering circa 8,000 homes and 20,000 jobs. The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service are in the process of developing an Area Action Plan to guide development in the area over the next 20 years.
10. A Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) award of £227m has been made to enable the relocation.
11. In the summer of 2020 Anglian Water ran a public consultation on three shortlisted site options. In January this year Anglian Water announced their preferred site, east of junction 34 of the A14.
12. Anglian Water have recently commenced their second consultation that closes on 18th August 2021. The statutory consultation is planned for early 2022 prior to submission of their DCO.
13. The red line for the development that will be subject of the DCO encompasses the existing Cambridge WWTP, the proposed WWTP, Tunnel and pipeline corridors, waste water transfer tunnel, treated effluent transfer (including River Cam Outfall) and a Waterbeach transfer pipeline
14. The core site for the proposed WWTP covers 22-hectares and is located in the Green Belt on open agricultural land south of Horningsea with the A14 on its southern boundary.
15. Anglian Water's proposals are presented as a single option and provide for a circular form of development with the building structures enclosed by an

earthwork bank/ bund. It is understood that this has been inspired by local historic structures, such as Fleam Dyke and Devil's Dyke and circular Iron Age hillforts such as the Wandlebury Ring and Belsar's Hill. Potentially with a further form of enclosure on top of the bank/bund. New habitats for wildlife are proposed, creating improved access to the countryside connecting to existing footpaths and access routes. There are extensive landscape proposals to mitigate the visual impact and a discovery centre offering education opportunities included as part of the facility.

16. There are three vehicular access options being consulted on as part of the current consultation. Option 1 is for access off Junction 34 of the A14 (Fen Ditton) which consists of two sub-options (Options 1A and 1B). Option 1A uses a "ghost" island junction whilst Option 1B involves reconfiguration to create a four arm signalised junction. Option 2 provides for access off Junction 25 (Quy) and Option 3 provides for a new junction on the north side of the A14.
17. The proposed development has been confirmed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) by virtue of a section 35 direction by the Secretary of State. In line with section 37 of the 2008 Planning Act (as amended); this will require an application to be submitted for a Development Consent Order (DCO).
18. DCO's are subject to an examination by the Planning Inspectorate followed by a final decision made by the Secretary of State.
19. A Cambridgeshire Quality Panel review was held on the 14th July 2021.
20. This report updates Members on the project, and highlights the key considerations and issues arising from the proposals which will be used by officers to shape the formal written response of the Authority to the Phase 2 Consultation.

Timeline

21. The deadline for formal responses to this stage of consultation is the 18th August 2021.
22. Following this an Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping request is anticipated to be received via the Planning Inspectorate circa the 4th October 2021. Technical discussions with the LPAs will therefore need to take place during August and September in advance of this.

Main Issues

23. This is an opportunity to provide a response to a statutory consultation regarding the proposals and selected site. Further opportunities will be available through ongoing engagement with the applicant, at the formal Phase 3 consultation and subsequently via representations to the DCO Examination.
24. At this stage the following issues are proposed to be set out in the Councils written response:

- **Principle of Development:** The Council supports the principle of the relocation of the CWWTPR. The relocation will enable the realisation of the objectives set out in the emerging AAP that is being developed by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council for the wider North East Cambridge development and which would facilitate the delivery of approximately 8,000 homes and 20,000 jobs.
- **Landscape Proposal:** The landscape led approach is supported and the scheme presents the opportunity to provide valuable green infrastructure to the east of Cambridge. The presentation of a single landscape site masterplan option as part of the current consultation does not however allow consultees to comment on alternative options that may have been developed or suitable.

The site is characterised as Fen Edge and the proposals should be explained by reference to the alternative landscape approaches considered which had regard to opportunities to respect and enhance the local character, including Quy Fen, and support the wider Wicken Fen vision, contributing positively to the Cambridge Nature Recovery Network. Typical landscape principles which should be considered include linear drainage ditches, small scale pastoral fields, sparse woodland cover with small deciduous blocks, wet and species-rich grasslands, floodplain grazing marsh and shelterbelts. The landscape should be multifunctional providing amenity, biodiversity and SuDs.

The proposal to install a structure on top of the earthwork bank is not considered to be an acceptable approach nor does it maintain the openness of the Green Belt. This issue needs to be given further consideration in the context of the single landscape solution offered referenced above.

The potential reuse of tunnel spoil within the landscape is welcomed given its potential to limit vehicle trips.

- **Vehicle Access:** The three vehicle access options have been noted and the preference of the Council is for the operational traffic to utilise a direct access from the A14 (Option 3). This will avoid the use of local roads for HGV traffic and enable active transport methods to be prioritised for local access avoiding conflicting movements. It is appreciated that further detailed discussions will be required to explore this further, including with Highways England and Cambridgeshire County Council.
- **Sustainable Access:** Further work is needed on the strategy for providing cycle and pedestrian access to the site to utilise the discovery centre, parkland and walking/cycle routes. The project presents an opportunity to enhance access to the countryside. A route along the former railway alignment should be considered further given the direct connections that this could provide. In addition, the use of Option 3 for main vehicle access would allow Low Fen Drove Way to be prioritised for pedestrian and cycle access.

- **Technological Solution:** The Council 's firm view is for an exemplary WWTP facility to be delivered utilising the best available technologies. Technology options have not been presented as part of the consultation process and the method proposed has not been suitably justified. The method chosen has implications for the size of the site, sustainability and power generation potential, odour and the scale of structures such as the digester tanks. The Council seeks further information regarding these matters and an assessment of the best technological solution.
- **Biodiversity:** The commitment to provide only 10% biodiversity net gain which is a minimum requirement being put in statute is very disappointing. In terms of delivery of an exemplar WWTP, the proposal should be making the highest possible contribution to Biodiversity Net Gain delivery and there is scope to achieve this. SCDC has pledged to Double Nature and has set an aspirational 20% Biodiversity Net Gain ambition, which it expects partners to provide, particularly with exemplar sites. The site has a unique opportunity to do this given the connectivity to a County Wildlife Site and the current intensive agricultural use.
- **Odour:** The technical information to enable a full review of the odour modelling work undertaken has not been submitted but it should be noted that clarity is required regarding the useability of the landscape and open space given potential odour conditions on the site.
- **Sustainability:** The Council supports Anglian Waters objective that the new facility will be operationally net zero and seek to reduce embedded carbon during the construction phase. Achieving this goal will for a large part be dependent on the technological solution chosen as highlighted above. The opportunity to utilise natural processes to "polish" the treated waste water within the landscape should also be investigated further to minimise the need for energy intensive processes within the plant, notwithstanding that where energy intensive processes can provide benefits that outweigh costs in terms of land-take, transportation or embedded carbon etc., these should be considered, especially in conjunction with renewable energy production. Proposals for energy generation and connectivity to local energy networks requires further detail to be provided to understand the feasibility. Opportunities for advanced treatment of sludge should be considered alongside the wider, beyond site environmental implications of sludge spreading. Expected annual HGV tonne-kms associated with AD sludge transport should be estimated and disclosed as part of the operations carbon cost.
- **Implications for the aquifer:** The opportunity should not be lost to consider how the new plant could contribute in the future to wider strategic plan to introduce greater water re-use. We would like to see multi agency

cooperation, particularly with Cambridge Water, to ensure that no opportunities are precluded that could lead to great water re-use in the future.

- **Further Details of pipeline, shafts and outfall:** Further details are required on the pipeline works and outfall structure proposed to the River Cam to be able to comment on the appropriateness of the works. The discharge chamber adjacent to the River Cam should not be in situ concrete or pre-cast concrete as this does not reflect the rural landscape characteristics.
- Noise -further discussions and assessments will be required in relation to potential noise impacts on surrounding residential communities arising from the development. These issues can be considered further under the EIA Scoping process.

Options

25. To endorse the recommended approach to the consultation, with authority given to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Strategic Planning and Transport and Lead Cabinet Member for Transformation and Projects to amend the draft consultation response to make reference to any additional issues that may be identified through the ongoing consultation process and to submit the consultation response.

26. To make amendments to the approach and consultation response.

27. To decide not to respond to the consultation.

Implications for South Cambridgeshire

28. Engagement in the DCO process via written representations and subsequent direct discussions with the application prior to the submission of the DCO application provides the opportunity to minimise the impact of the scheme on the local environment, climate and secure the best possible scheme for the residents of Cambridgeshire.

Financial

29. None

Legal

30. The Council will be a statutory consultee to EIA Scoping and the Development Consent Order Examination in due course. The Council has no statutory obligation to provide a consultation response at this time.

Staffing

31. None.

Risks/Opportunities

32. None.

Equality and Diversity

33. None.

Climate Change

34. Comments have been included on the scheme's approach to sustainability.

Health & Wellbeing

35. The new parkland provides the opportunity to enhance health and wellbeing. The technical aspects of the proposals will be reviewed in due course to ensure potential impact on environmental health is correctly controlled.

Consultation responses

36. Internal consultation was carried out with specialist officers, with responses received from a number of technical service areas. These are enclosed at Appendix A. The proposal was reported to the Cambridgeshire Quality Panel on 14 July. Their formal written response is awaited but likely to be received before the Cabinet meeting on 30 July. Their informal feedback has been incorporated into this report.

Alignment with Council Priority Areas

Growing local businesses and economies

37. The CWWTPR Project is an important project to the local, and regional economy due to the opportunity that it enables for development in North East Cambridge.

Housing that is truly affordable for everyone to live in

38. The CWWTPR Project support and enables future growth and housing delivery.

Being green to our core

39. Comments have been provided on the scheme's landscape approach as well as in relation to the sustainability strategy.

Background Papers

Relevant Representations

Appendices

Appendix A: Relevant Representations

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