

CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
Record of Executive Decision

CAMBRIDGE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT RELOCATION PHASE 3 CONSULTATION RESPONSE
--

Decision of: Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport

Reference: 22/URGENCY/P&T/04

Date of decision: 25 April 2022 **Published:** 11 May 2022

Decision Type: Non Key

Matter for Decision: The purpose of this decision is to confirm and approve the Council's representation to Anglian Water's forthcoming public consultation on the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant Relocation (ReCWWTP) Phase 3 Consultation and the Development Consent Order (DCO) timeline.
The consultation response has been prepared jointly with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Why the decision had to be made (and any alternative options): The submission of the consultation response is required by 27 April and the Consultation response letter should be agreed as soon as is possible.

The Executive Councillor's decision(s): That the Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Transport agrees to:

Approve the Council's representation to Anglian Water's forthcoming public consultation on the Cambridge Wastewater Treatment Plant Relocation (ReCWWTP) Phase 3 Consultation and the DCO timeline. As outlined in the Draft Consultation Response.

Reasons for the decision: Anglian Water commenced their third consultation on the proposal between the 24th of February and the 27th of April 2022. This is the last of their statutory consultations prior to submission of a Development Consent Order application to the Secretary of State in September 2022.

The recommendation is to support in principle the proposed works within South Cambridgeshire. There are however concerns raised about elements of the proposal, including traffic on local roads, the design approach, landscape mitigations, technological solution, potential odour impact, and connectivity to enable sustainable means of transport. The decommissioning of the existing plant also requires consideration.

This Officer recommendation is based on an assessment of the site constraints and characteristics and ongoing consultation with relevant technical officers.

**Scrutiny
consideration:**

The Chair and Spokesperson of Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee were consulted prior to the action being authorised.

The Chair of the Committee (Councillor D Baigent) asked the following points which were addressed by the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development:

- 1 Could the response be delayed until after the upcoming election?
2. Is there any purpose that the escaping gasses from the vents can be put to?

The Green and Independent Opposition Spokes (Cllr S Davies) made the following comments based firmly on the agreed Group principles of promoting environmental and social justice (the comments were received after the five-day consultation period)

- 1 There is no operational need to relocate the plant. Anglian Water have confirmed that the present plant was refurbished in 2014 to a level sufficient to meet the city's needs until 2050
- 2 The proposed new site is green belt and near to a site of Special Scientific Interest.
- 3 The reason for the relocation is therefore not intrinsic to the operation of WWTP but rather driven by the ambition to develop commercial and residential buildings on the vacated site.
- 4 Due to low levels of unemployment in Cambridge and the surrounding area, the jobs created will pull new residents in to the city rather than creating jobs for existing residents. It is proposed that more jobs will be created on the redeveloped site than housing capacity, thus exacerbating housing pressures in the city.
- 5 The resource implications of the relocation and subsequent redevelopment of the site are extremely concerning:
 - the carbon emissions from the relocation cannot yet be quantified but will clearly be substantial
 - Cambridge City Council's own research demonstrates that the area's water resources are insufficient to support the proposed new development
 - although the new buildings on the vacated site are described as being sustainable, they will still generate additional carbon emissions and water use. It is irrelevant that the carbon emissions and water use may be less than the city's average. The carbon emissions and water use will still be additional to the city's current figures.

In conclusion, we are aware that this project has been an ambition of the city council for nearly 20 years. However, over that time, our understanding and awareness of the climate emergency has evolved considerably. We cannot go on ignoring the limitations on our resources. For these reasons, we cannot support the proposed relocation of the WWTP.

Report:

The draft consultation response can be found at the link below:
<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD1612&ID=1612&RPID=76358189>

Conflicts of interest:

None known.