

# Cambridge City Council

## Record of Executive Decision

### Response to Consultation on Cambridge Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan

Decision of: Councillor Thornburrow, Executive Councillor, Planning Policy and Infrastructure

Reference: 23/URGENCY/P&T/10

Date of decision: 10/05/23

Date Published on website: 30/05/23

Decision Type: Non-Key

Matter for Decision: To agree the response to Cambridge Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan

Why the Decision had to be made (and any alternative options): The purpose of this decision is to agree the response to Cambridge Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan (dWRMP), set out at Appendix 1 which can be viewed at the link below. This is proposed to be a joint response with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

[Document Meeting 27.06.23: ROD: Response to Consultation on Anglian Waters Draft Water Resources Management Plan - Cambridge Council](#)

Cambridge Water are carrying out consultation on their dWRMP. WRMPs identify how water supply will be managed, are produced every 5 years, and cover a 25 year period

Cambridge Water's dWRMP sets out the challenges faced in the plan period including the impacts of climate change, population growth associated with development in the area, planning for drought resilience and the requirement to leave more water in the environment by reducing abstraction from the underground aquifer which feeds the chalk streams.

The dWRMP sets out the measures Cambridge Water propose to balance supply and demand for water and is closely aligned with Water Resources East's draft Regional Water Resources Plan. The approach proposed is:

- Demand management, including reducing leakage, a commitment to reduce both household and non-household water consumption and universal smart metering
- New sources of supply including optimising sustainable licences from a gravel source, a time limited bulk water transfer from Anglian Water (a pipeline from

Grafham Water), re-use and storage from water recycling works and the development of the Fens Reservoir in partnership with Anglian Water

In the short term, until the new sources of supply become operational there is still a deficit in supply and Cambridge Water intend to:

- Apply drought measurement measures more frequently in dry years
- Accelerate the bulk transfer from Anglian Water from 2027 to 2031 – although this wasn't included in a draft decision by OFWAT in April 2023

The proposed joint response to the consultation in Appendix 1 is based upon the response the Councils previously made to the draft Regional Water Resources Plan. [Document Meeting 27.06.23: ROD: Response to Consultation on Anglian Waters Draft Water Resources Management Plan - Cambridge Council](#)

The proposed response is supportive of the overall aim of the draft WRMP in that it seeks to address the identified development needs whilst also achieving the abstraction reductions required by the Environment Agency. However, this is with the proviso that the Councils are not the responsible authorities in water resources planning and would look to the expertise of the Environment Agency to assess whether the measures proposed in the WRMP will be effective in providing a sustainable water supply

The Councils urge Cambridge Water along with the Environment Agency, DEFRA, DLUHC and OFWAT to work effectively together and in a timely manner to resolve the final WRMP and to bring forward the necessary supply and demand measures as rapidly as possible.

Officers carried out a briefing about the proposed response on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2023, to which all Councillors in Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council were invited

The alternative options are:

- Agree to submit the response in Appendix 1, with possible minor amendments
- Agree an alternative response
- Agree not to respond to the consultation

To not submit a consultation response, would miss an opportunity to put forward the Council's views to Cambridge Water in support of measures which will reduce demand for water and increase supply, enabling reductions in abstraction causing harm to the environment and to enable housing and economic development.

The Executive Councillor's decision: Agreed that the consultation response set out in Appendix 1 of this decision should be made to Cambridge Water's draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). Agreed that delegated authority is given to

the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development to agree any minor amendments to the response in order to finalise the joint response.

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Reason for the decision: To provide the views of Cambridge City Council on the draft WRMP because future water resources will be a key issue for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan

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

Report: Officer to reference any reports or associated papers. Appendix 1 (attached) Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council proposed joint response to Cambridge Water's Draft Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) 2024

Conflict of interest: None.

Comments: Comments were received from Councillors T Bick and Cllr S Davies which were addressed by the Principal Planning Policy Officer and Appendix 1 updated accordingly.

To view Appendix 1, click on the link below:

[Document Meeting 27.06.23: ROD: Response to Consultation on Anglian Waters Draft Water Resources Management Plan - Cambridge Council](#)