



24/04859/FUL - The Paddocks, 347 Cherry Hinton Road, Cambridge, CB1 8DH

Application details

Report to: Planning Committee

Lead Officer: Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Ward/parish: Coleridge

Proposal: Hybrid planning application comprising:

- a) Full application for Phase 1, to include the demolition of existing buildings and structures, and erection of building (Use Class E(g)) with associated site infrastructure, landscaping, car and cycle parking provision and access, including changes to the existing access road off Cherry Hinton Road.
- b) Outline application for Phases 2a, 2b, 3, 4 and 5 (with all matters reserved), to include the demolition of existing buildings and structures, and erection of buildings (Use Class E(g))

Applicant: Columbia Threadneedle Investments Ltd.

Presenting officer: Karen Pell-Coggins

Reason presented to committee: Departure application

Member site visit date: N/A

Key issues: 1. Foul water

Recommendation: Approve subject to conditions and S106

1. Update Report

1.1 This hybrid application was reported to the Planning Committee meetings on 5 June 2025 and 23 July 2025 (please see Appendix 1 for a copy of the reports). It was granted approval at the July meeting subject to conditions and the completion of a Section 106 agreement by 16 October 2025.

1.2 On 1 September 2025, a new consultation response on the application was received from Anglian Water revising its position.

1.3 The Anglian Water response considered at the Planning Committee meeting on 23 July 2025 raised no objections subject to a condition worded as follows: -

Prior to occupation of each relevant phase of development, written confirmation from Anglian Water that there is sufficient headroom at the water recycling centre to accommodate the foul flows from the development site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To protect water quality, prevent pollution and secure sustainable development having regard to paragraphs 7/8 and 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.4 The new Anglian Water response raises a holding objection to the application on the grounds of insufficient wastewater treatment capacity at the existing Cambridge Water Recycling Centre (WRC). It comments that any connection into the foul network from the proposed development will contribute to pollution and deterioration of the watercourse via the WRC as it cannot accommodate additional flows.

1.5 Anglian Water further comments that the funding from the Housing Infrastructure Fund previously allocated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) for the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project, intended to deliver a new, modern WRC to serve Cambridge and support future sustainable growth in the north east of the city, has now been withdrawn. This decision has significant implications for our ability to accommodate additional development within the Cambridge WRC catchment. In light of this, Anglian Water is undertaking a comprehensive feasibility review of all available options to determine how future growth can be supported at the existing Cambridge WRC. This assessment is ongoing and is expected to conclude by June 2026. Until this work is complete, AW advise that they

are issuing holding objections to all new planning applications that propose a connection to the public wastewater network within the Cambridge WRC catchment.

- 1.6 In response to the consultee comments, the applicants have submitted a Water Consumption Study Technical Note. This sets out the potable water demand and foul water discharge from the development when compared to the existing site. It replicates information submitted at the application stage.
- 1.7 Phase 1 of the existing site has a portable water usage and foul water discharge of 628,321 litres per annum. Phase 1 of the development is predicted to lead to a portable water usage of 255,320 litres per annum and a foul water discharge of 561,704 litres per annum. The whole site has a portable water usage and foul water discharge of 4,424,797 litres per annum. The whole development is predicted to lead to a portable water usage of 1,791,920 litres per annum and a foul water discharge of 3,942,224 litres per annum. These figures are based on the assumptions that there are no water recycling facilities on the existing site and of a build out of 75% of the mezzanines within the development and 70% of the staff on site on a typical day.
- 1.8 Phase 1 of the development is considered to result in a c59% betterment in portable water use and a c10.6% betterment in foul water discharge. The whole development is considered to result in a c60% betterment in portable water use and a c10.9% betterment in foul water discharge. This shows that the development would have less portable water use and foul water discharge than the existing development on the site.
- 1.9 Anglian Water has been consulted on this information and maintains its objection. It comments that the applicant's statement and accompanying calculations are acknowledged, however proposals which lack planning consent are treated as new connections and are not interchangeable with any existing flow volume. The Cambridge Water Recycling Centre currently lacks the capacity to accommodate additional flows, and Anglian Water cannot reserve capacity for sites which lack planning consent.
- 1.10 Anglian Water has provided evidence in relation to application 24/04575/FUL to substantiate its position. It has advised that until an improvement plan has been delivered at Cambridge WRC, all development requiring new connections to the mains sewer will increase volumes to the Cambridge WRC and levels of phosphate discharges to the receiving water body beyond what is allowed by permit.

- 1.11 Policy 31 of the Local Plan requires developments to have appropriate sustainable foul and surface water drainage systems.
- 1.12 Under Section 106 of the Water Industry Act 1991, all Water and Sewerage Companies have a legal obligation to provide developers with the right to connect to a public sewer. The duty imposed by section 94 of the 1991 Act requires these companies to deal with any discharge that is made into their sewers.
- 1.13 It is noted that Anglian Water does not have the statutory power to issue a 'holding direction' or directly prevent the local planning authority from determining the planning application.
- 1.14 Policies 31 and 32 of the Local Plan require developments to have appropriate sustainable foul and surface water drainage systems.
- 1.15 The availability of treatment capacity at Cambridge WRC, and any environmental or amenity harm caused by increased discharges from storm overflows associated with the application proposals is a material planning consideration in the assessment of this planning application. The weight to be attached to this matter is for the decision maker.
- 1.16 However, it is not considered reasonable to withhold the consideration of this planning application until the conclusion of Anglian Water's feasibility review to determine how future growth can be supported at the Cambridge WRC (expected by June 2026).
- 1.17 Whilst Anglian Water's comments are acknowledged, officers consider that the existing foul water discharge from the development needs to be taken into account in the determination of the application notwithstanding that this is an existing connection.
- 1.18 The information submitted shows that the development would lead to a betterment in foul water discharge in Phase 1 and the whole site by at least c10%. This is not considered to have a significant impact upon the capacity of the Cambridge WRC and result in pollution to the water environment taking into account the net decrease in foul water usage and subject to a new condition in relation to a scheme for the provision of foul drainage infrastructure and connection to the network.
- 1.19 Condition 38 of the full and outline applications as set out in the report to 23 July 2025 Planning Committee is no longer considered reasonable or necessary so is recommended to be deleted.

- 1.20 The proposal is compliant with Policies 31 and 32 of the Local Plan.

Summary

- 1.21 The net estimated position on potable water use and foul water flows put forward by the applicants is accepted by officers. Anglian Water's holding objection is entirely unreasonable in the circumstances and, if followed by the Local Planning Authority, would almost certainly lead to an appeal against non-determination and an application for a substantial award of costs against the Council. The position taken by Anglian Water could not be substantiated on appeal. Whilst the lack of treatment capacity at Cambridge WRC and the circumstances around this are a material consideration, Anglian Water have wholly failed to evidence that they have considered existing potable water usage and foul discharge from the site against commitments from the applicants to improve net potable water use and foul flows which would be secured through the planning permission. The net position proposed by the applicants suggests that, in fact, the application should be supportable, or indeed encouraged, from the perspective of the statutory sewerage operator in lessening demand on Cambridge WRC, but this is not the case.
- 1.22 The S106 drafting is settled, and the objection from Anglian Water including their failure to consider the net position, has already led to a delay in the determination of the application, which is a high-quality mid-tech proposal on a brownfield site in Cambridge that would regenerate the existing site in the long-term and provide on-going employment opportunity. Officers recommend, that whilst Anglian Water's holding objection is noted, that without delay, the application is approved in accordance with the below recommendation.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **Approve** subject to:

-The new condition set out below and deletion of condition 38 of the full and outline applications in the 23 July 2025 report, with minor amendments to the conditions as drafted delegated to officers.

Prior to the commencement of the development, excluding works for demolition, full details of a scheme for the provision of foul drainage for the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include: the design of all on and off-site foul sewerage infrastructure (excluding off-site waste water treatment facilities); the diameters of proposed pipes and the capacity of any on-site

storage; and a timetable and programme for the provision of the foul sewerage infrastructure. The scheme shall demonstrate that, where connection to a public sewer is proposed, the foul sewerage discharge can be accommodated within the piped public sewer system without significantly increasing the risk of flooding or backing up of the existing system on the site or elsewhere. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and the approved timetable and programme.

Reason: To reduce the risk of pollution to the water environment and to ensure a satisfactory method of foul water drainage (Cambridge Local Plan 2018, policies 31 and 32).

-Satisfactory completion of a Section 106 Agreement which includes the Heads of Terms (HoT's) as set out in the report with minor amendments to the Heads of Terms as set out delegated to officers.

Background papers:

The following list contains links to the documents on the Council's website and / or an indication as to where hard copies can be inspected.

- Cambridge City Local Plan 201

