

Proposals for Fens and Lincolnshire Reservoirs:

Information for landowners and occupiers

Overview

Anglian Water is developing proposals for two new reservoirs – one in the Fens and another in Lincolnshire.

As the region changes and the population increases, so do demands on water resources. These two reservoirs will play an important role in providing public water supply long into the future. They will help to ensure water security for the region, while protecting the environment from the effects of climate change. We are working in partnership with Affinity Water and Cambridge Water to develop the proposals and explore options to transfer water to their supply areas.

We provided a note with an overview of the projects for National Farmers Union members in May 2022. This included information on why the reservoirs are needed, the regulatory framework we operate in, and how we are working with stakeholders.

This note provides an update on the project and what you can expect comes next.

Identifying locations for the reservoirs

We are continuing to make progress to identify a location for each of the reservoirs. A detailed site selection study is underway which takes into account a wide range of factors to consider what the benefits and impacts of the reservoirs could be for place and people.

Many of our existing reservoirs provide wider benefits beyond public water supply. That includes leisure activities, local employment, ecological and wildlife conservation, education initiatives and many other benefits. We are aiming to achieve many of the same benefits with these new reservoirs, which has an influence on where the reservoirs are located. There are many technical needs to meet too: engineering requirements, the environment, landscape, proximity to people and communities, existing water courses, and others.

At this early stage, we are working closely with local partners to seek advice and guidance as we develop our plans. Alongside the NFU, these partners include local authorities and specialist statutory and environmental bodies.

This detailed work takes time and it's important we get it right and have confidence in the proposals we will move forwards with.

How are we considering the agricultural community?

Anglian Water fully recognises the critical role agriculture plays in our region, economically, culturally and environmentally. We are already working with farmers across East Anglia to ensure that we maintain healthy water quality, as well as healthy crops and a healthy rural economy.

If you'd like to find out more about how we're working with farmers in our existing operations, there's [more information on our website](#). That includes details of how we're partnering with other businesses and farmers to offer support and protect water resources.

Our commitment to work with the agricultural community, alongside our other stakeholders, is key to the development of the new reservoirs too.

We are working with the NFU and the Water Farming Reservoir Group, which was established to provide advice and guidance on the needs for agriculture.

Impacts on local businesses, land use and agricultural land quality are among the factors we are considering to identify sites for the new reservoirs.

By creating these new reservoirs it will, in time, reduce our need to abstract water. This will place fewer demands on existing water sources that are currently supporting public supply, agriculture and important ecological needs.

In our early engagement with agricultural partners, they also are encouraging us to think about multi-sector benefits. That includes whether the reservoirs can be a catalyst to create new resources to support agriculture.

At this time, those conversations are at a very early stage, but we are keen to explore ways in which the reservoirs can support the wider region in the future. As more becomes known about the location of the two reservoirs, we can begin to have more detailed discussions on how those multi-sector benefits, including for agriculture, are developed and funded.

When will we be able to provide details of where the reservoirs are?

We recognise that there is a desire among landowners and occupiers to know the site for each reservoir, and that this may be creating uncertainty and anxiety.

That is not our intention and we encourage anyone who may have concerns or questions about the reservoirs to get in touch directly with Anglian Water.

We anticipate being able to confirm the location of the preferred sites in the early autumn. We can commit that affected landowners will hear directly from us before we share details of the sites with the wider public.

At this time we'll be available to talk with people about what this means for them. We do understand these could be sensitive conversations and will have a team committed to working closely with landowners to support them.

After we have informed affected landowners and residents, there will be a consultation on the preferred sites as part of the planning and development process we follow for large projects like these.

What happens next?

We have already been working closely with many stakeholders in our early work, and provided notes like this through our partners. We are now keen to share more about the projects with members of the public, who are our customers and who will take a keen interest in the progress of these projects.

This summer we will therefore be delivering a programme of communications about the reservoirs. This will not be the detail of the sites. It will be to raise awareness about why the new reservoirs are needed, the benefits and impacts they could create, and the work we have undertaken to date. A new website will go live, and we'll be working with local media. While this is intended broadly for members of the public, we hope it's useful for everyone who's interested in the reservoirs.

In the autumn, we will be holding a public consultation for each reservoir for everyone to provide their feedback on the key themes they want us to consider as we develop the projects.

We'll be inviting everyone to get involved and have their say. That includes landowners, regional stakeholders such as the local authorities, and specialist groups responsible for areas such as the environment, landscape, wildlife, heritage, local economy, and other important factors.

The consultation will take place once affected landowners and residents have been informed.

We'll provide more information on the consultation later in the year.

If you have any further questions, please contact the project teams:

- Fens Reservoir: info@fensreservoir.co.uk
- Lincolnshire Reservoir: info@southlincsreservoir.co.uk

Or call Adam Speed, Stakeholder Engagement Lead at Anglian Water, on 07890 306201

Our overarching timeline

External milestones explained

DCO: Due to the size of the projects, they are classified as Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). NSIP projects use a planning process which requires the developer to submit a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS).

For the application to be accepted, we need to show that we've carried out pre-application consultation in line with the relevant legislation (in this case, the Planning Act 2008). You can find out more about the process at: <https://infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/>

RAPID: RAPID (The Regulatory Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure) was developed to accelerate the development of new water infrastructure. It's made up of representatives from Ofwat, the Environment Agency and the Drinking Water Inspectorate. These proposed reservoirs are currently part of the RAPID process.

RAPID has its own timeline of development. At gate one, we provided our proposed solutions to new water infrastructure. We are currently working towards gate two, when we will provide more details on those solutions. You can find out more about RAPID here: <https://ofwat.gov.uk/regulated-companies/rapid/>

The DCO timeline

