

Proposals for South Lincolnshire & Fens Reservoirs: Information for Landowners & Occupiers

Introduction

Anglian Water is exploring the possible development of two new reservoirs to help provide resilience to future droughts and climate change. We are also working in partnership with Affinity Water and Cambridge Water to explore new infrastructure to transfer water to their supply areas.

Proposals for these reservoirs are at a very early stage. We are engaging with a range of stakeholders as we look to achieve joined up strategic solutions to water management that we hope will deliver multi-sector benefits.

We don't yet know where the proposed reservoirs will be located or what they might look like, as key details on their concept design and site selection are still being worked through.

This communication is to provide information to landowners and occupiers explaining where we are in the process, where you can find out more, and our next steps in developing our proposals. This includes how we will be engaging with you and the point at which we will know which areas of land we may be exploring for locating the reservoirs.

Finding out more information

While we are at an early stage in developing our proposals, we do recognise that you may have questions and comments on these options.

We have a dedicated page on our website, which will be kept updated with the latest information on these projects: <https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/water-resources-management-plan/wrmp-strategic-solutions/>

We also encourage any further questions or comments to be submitted to our team using the email addresses below:

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

Reservoir Farming Group

A Reservoir Farming Group has been established to inform the projects, providing inputs and representing views from an agricultural perspective. The group first met in November 2021.

The group will inform the development of project proposals by advising on the priorities, opportunities, and risks of the proposed reservoirs to farmers and landowners. They will also advise on how best to engage farmers in the process of developing the proposals, and provide relevant insights to inform discussions on the possible wider multi-sector benefits the reservoirs could deliver.

Planning for resilience

Anglian Water is the largest water company in England by geographic area. We serve almost seven million customers in one of the UK's fastest growing regions, projected to grow by 175,000 homes by 2025. In terms of water, our region can be characterised by low rainfall and being home to a significant proportion of wetland sites of conservation interest. We are committed to making the east of England resilient to the risks of drought and flooding while working with others to achieve significant improvement in ecological quality.

Every five years, Anglian Water is required to produce a Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) setting out how we will manage water supplies over a minimum of the next 25 years. The current WRMP was published in 2019. This plan considers the key challenges we face – such as climate change, environmental protection, population growth and the risk of drought – in ensuring a resilient future supply of water for our region.

Our 2019 WRMP adopted a twin track approach of managing demand and recognising the need for new supply options, with a focus on managing demand through rolling out smart meters, further reducing leakage, and promoting water efficiency. WRMP19 also recognised that at some point significant new infrastructure may be required to ensure we continue to supply enough water to meet the needs of all users including agriculture, energy, the environment, and our customers.

The scale and complexity of this potential new infrastructure means that long lead-in times would be required before it could be built. We have to be planning for these solutions ahead of time, for them to be 'construction ready' should they be needed. This forward-looking approach to uncertain requirements is referred to as adaptive planning. We are now planning for schemes that may be required for delivery between 2025 and 2035.

Strategic options

As part of this adaptive planning process, our 2019 WRMP identified a number of strategic solutions that could significantly increase future supply. These solutions include:

- **The South Lincolnshire Reservoir:** a proposed new reservoir expected to be located in Lincolnshire, which could provide benefit both to customers of Anglian Water and Affinity Water. When river flows allow, water would be sourced from the River Witham supported by a transfer from the River Trent. Water could be transferred to the reservoir either by a pipeline or an open water transfer. Local flows from the South Forty Foot Drain will also be incorporated into the design where possible.
- **The Fens Reservoir:** a proposed new reservoir in the Fens, either to the east or west of the Ouse Washes, which could benefit customers of Anglian Water and Cambridge Water. When river flows allow, water would be sourced from the River Ely-Ouse at Denver, with potential additional water sources from the River Bedford-Ouse at Earith, Middle Level Drain at St Germans, and the Ouse Washes being assessed. It is expected that water would be transferred to the reservoir via pipelines, although open water transfers will also be considered.
- **The Anglian to Affinity Transfer:** a proposed new piece of infrastructure that would transfer water from the Anglian Water region to supply Affinity Water customers. The transfer would

source water from a new supply to be developed in the Anglian Water region, which could be the South Lincolnshire Reservoir, the Fens Reservoir or a new source from the River Trent.

Both proposed reservoirs would also include adjacent works to treat water before it is piped to existing service reservoirs.

Designs for the reservoirs will explore opportunities for them to support wider systems and deliver multi-sector benefits, in addition to the core need of providing water supply resilience for water companies, farmers and the food industry. This isn't linked to the existing licensing system and will not impact current irrigation rights.

RAPID

To support the progression of strategic options, the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID) has been established to help accelerate the development of new water infrastructure. It seeks to improve regulation and remove barriers to help the water sector respond to long-term water resources challenges. RAPID is comprised of representatives from Ofwat, the Environment Agency and the Drinking Water Inspectorate.

Development funding is available to water companies progressing strategic solutions through RAPID. A gated process has been designed to ensure the funds are spent on time and to quality standards. Water companies exploring agreed strategic solutions need to submit deliverables at each gate to demonstrate their progress. This is in addition to any planning consents.

Gate one reports and concept designs

The first gate of the RAPID process was in July 2021, for which Anglian Water submitted papers for both reservoir projects, as well as the Anglian to Affinity Transfer. All of these papers are publicly available and hosted on [Anglian Water's website](#).

To pass gate one of the process, Anglian Water had to demonstrate viability and progress for each strategic option. This involved setting out plans for delivering the proposed reservoirs, including early conceptual outline designs. These illustrative concept design options were overlayed onto mapping to show the type of landscape the reservoirs could potentially sit within. As details included within the gate one reports are conceptual for the purposes of demonstrating the options are viable, rather than for confirming designs and locations for development, these visuals were purely indicative of where the reservoirs may be located. Specific locations had not been identified.

Identifying potential sites

We are currently reviewing a long list of potentially feasible sites for the reservoirs. This is a multi-stage, iterative process. In the early stages we appraise sites from a technical feasibility perspective.

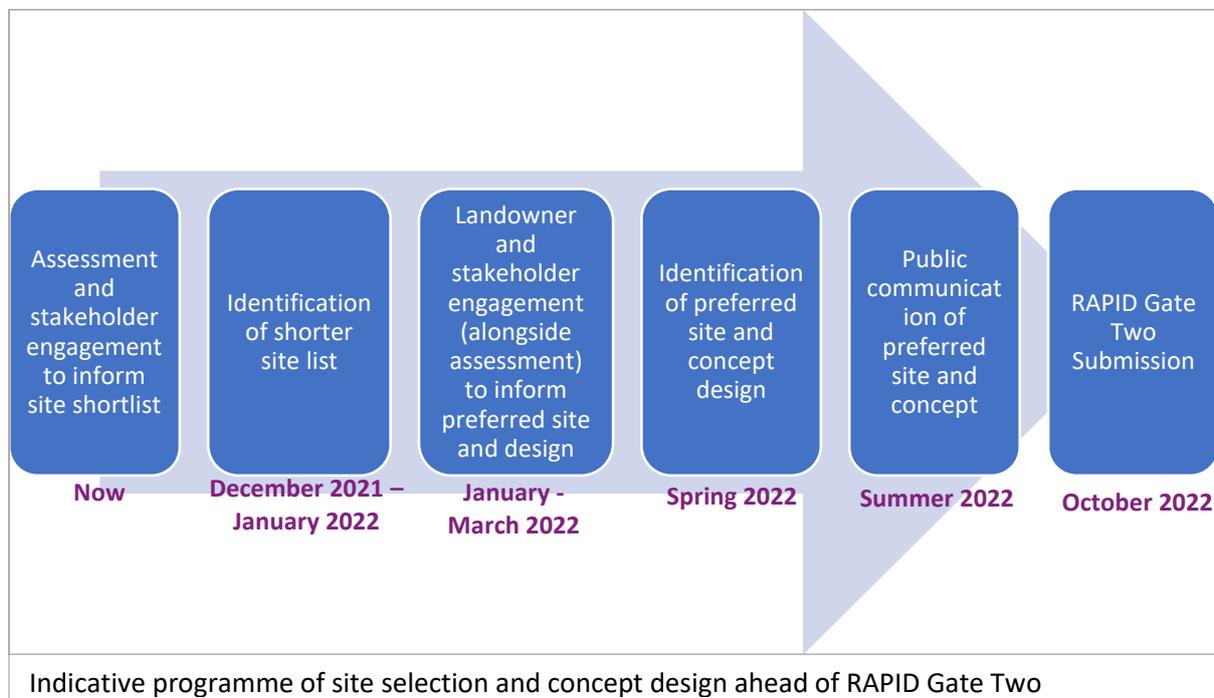
The site selection process also involves engaging with key regional stakeholders, such as the South Lincolnshire Water Partnership and Fens Water Partnership. These partnerships bring together a wide range of water-management stakeholders who are working to build integrated approaches to water management in the region. They are crucial in helping Anglian Water develop the design proposals for the reservoirs and provide input and insight into the site selection process.

The project team is now working with these groups to develop a shorter list of potential reservoir locations, which we anticipate confirming in the coming months.

Once this shorter list of sites has been identified, Anglian Water will be engaging with relevant landowners and occupiers to discuss this and inform the process of further site screening. This will help us to identify the most suitable sites for our proposals. We hope that we can select a final short list site and develop a concept design with the engagement of the land owners to deliver mutual benefits to farming and local communities.

Developing our proposals

The next milestone in the RAPID gated process is gate two in October 2022. Before then, we will be working to develop more detail on each option, including confirming the location of each reservoir.



The regional plan, a draft of which will be published for consultation by Water Resources East in 2022, will provide more details on whether and when these strategic options are expected to be required.

Given the volume of water stored and the deployable output of the schemes, we expect these projects to meet the thresholds to be Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). As a result, we would seek permission to develop them through a Development Consent Order (DCO). Following gate two, we will develop our proposals by commencing a programme of pre-planning activities, including comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement, and assessing the potential environmental impacts of each scheme.

We look forward to further exploring these strategic solutions to support a continued resilient supply of water in our region.