

# A proposed reservoir in the Fens

Phase One Consultation  
Feedback Summary



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# Introduction

**Anglian Water, working in partnership with Cambridge Water, is proposing a new reservoir in the Fens that will secure water supply to our customers for future generations.**



The new reservoir will store more water so it's always on tap when we need it, meeting the challenges of a changing climate and a growing population.

It will mean less water is taken from sensitive sources, such as chalk streams, helping us to protect and restore the environment.

Alongside meeting these challenges, the project presents significant social, economic and environmental opportunities.

Our vision for the project goes beyond just building a reservoir. We want to create a place where water, people and nature come together. This means creating space for wildlife, such as wetlands, alongside economic and social opportunities like recreation and educational activities. It also means creating new jobs and providing opportunities for businesses and tourism to thrive.

We were pleased to share our early proposals for the reservoir with communities and stakeholders in our first consultation in autumn 2022, and we would like to say thank you to everyone that provided feedback.

It was great to talk to local people and stakeholders to understand their thoughts and comments. It is clear they see great value in the environmental and recreational benefits the reservoir could bring and are excited by what it could mean for the region. At the same time, people have shared their concerns about a wide range of topics and potential effects on local communities and roads in the area. The local community also want to know what this will mean for the people whose homes, land or business may be affected by our plans.

The project is at an early stage. We understand the effect on those impacted by our proposals including homeowners, landowners and the nearby community. We're committed to working with everyone as the project develops and want to hear all views on our emerging proposals.

Your feedback on these opportunities and challenges is really valuable to us and we've learned a lot from the consultation.

This summary shares the wide range of feedback we received and explains how we are using this feedback to inform the ongoing design of the reservoir.

# About us

## About Anglian Water

Anglian Water supplies water and waste water services to almost seven million customers in the East of England and Hartlepool. We employ around 5,000 people in the region. As a purpose-led business, we recognise we have a huge opportunity – and responsibility – to contribute to the environmental and social wellbeing of the communities we serve. As one of the largest energy users in the East of England, we’re also committed to becoming a net zero carbon business by 2030.

Anglian Water is investing heavily today to help prepare for tomorrow. We continue to lead the water sector in tackling leakage, exceeding our regulatory targets in excess of 10 years running. Work is already underway on a half-billion-pound investment to lay hundreds of kilometres of new, interconnecting pipes to bring water from the wettest areas in the north of Lincolnshire to the drier areas in the south and east of the region. We’re also installing over one million smart meters in customer homes, and delivering a multitude of abstraction reduction programmes, protecting precious chalk streams and rivers.

## About Cambridge Water

Cambridge Water is a water only company supplying high-quality drinking water to around 351,000 people in and around the city of Cambridge. Our operating area extends from Ramsey in the north to beyond Melbourn in the south, and from Gamlingay in the west to the east of Cambridge city.

We have a long history of delivering an essential public service that enables our customers to go about their daily lives. We work in partnership with our local communities, and to protect and enhance the local environment. We also run an efficient business, which is in everyone’s interests.

We’re playing our part to deliver an ambitious £600 million investment programme by 2025 – our largest ever – to deliver for our customers, communities and the environment. Both Cambridge Water and Anglian Water identified the need for a reservoir in the Fens that can store water to supply to our customers.

Since then, we have been working in partnership to progress our plans for the new reservoir. We will continue to work together now and throughout the process of delivering this reservoir.

# Why we need a new reservoir

## Making sure we continue to have a reliable supply of water takes careful planning and co-ordination.

Both Anglian Water and Cambridge Water have developed Water Resources Management Plans setting out our plans and improvements, such as: improving efficiency; addressing leakage; restoring the environment; and building new water resources.

Anglian Water’s current Water Resources Management Plan was published in draft in December, while the phase one consultation on the reservoir was taking place. This sets out what Anglian Water needs to do from 2025 to 2050.

Cambridge Water has now published its draft Water Resource Management Plan, and is consulting on it until May 2023. Both plans identify new reservoirs as a crucial solution to

meet the growing demands on water supplies in the East of England.

As a region, we face challenges that will affect how we supply and use water in the future. The new reservoir will help us meet these demands by making the most of the available resources and provide water to local communities and businesses across our region, including in Cambridgeshire.

Reservoirs provide a level of resilience, volume of water, and environmental opportunities that are not provided by other resource options such as desalination or water reuse. They take excess river water in winter, when flows are at their highest, and store it for use in dry summers, when water is more scarce. This enables us to make the most of wet weather to then service periods of dry weather. It also reduces the reliance on ground water sources, which in turn enables ground water recovery, such as to chalk streams.

It’s planned to be in supply by the late 2030s and will provide up to 87 million litres of water per day – enough for approximately 250,000 homes.



**Our region is unique, low-lying and one of the driest in the UK:**



**A 1/3 less rainfall than the UK average**

**We need to protect supplies in the face of climate change.**

**Our region is one of the fastest growing in the country:**



**175,000 new homes**

**in the next five years**



**20% population growth by 2050**

**We need more water for more people.**

**Our region’s precious landscapes and environment need water to ensure their survival:**



**the natural environment**

**relies on rivers and groundwater**

**We need to reduce the amount of water we take from these sources.**

**We need to protect and restore the environment.**

# Phase one consultation – an overview

The purpose of the phase one consultation was to gather feedback and information on our early proposals to inform ongoing design development.

During our consultation, we worked closely with stakeholders and the public to discuss our proposals, answer questions and encourage their feedback.

Your local knowledge is very valuable. It helps us to further understand any potential impacts and opportunities, and what features you'd like to see included as the design for the reservoir develops.

The 10 week consultation took place between 12 October 2022 to 21 December 2022. We held a series of consultation events around Chatteris, Doddington and

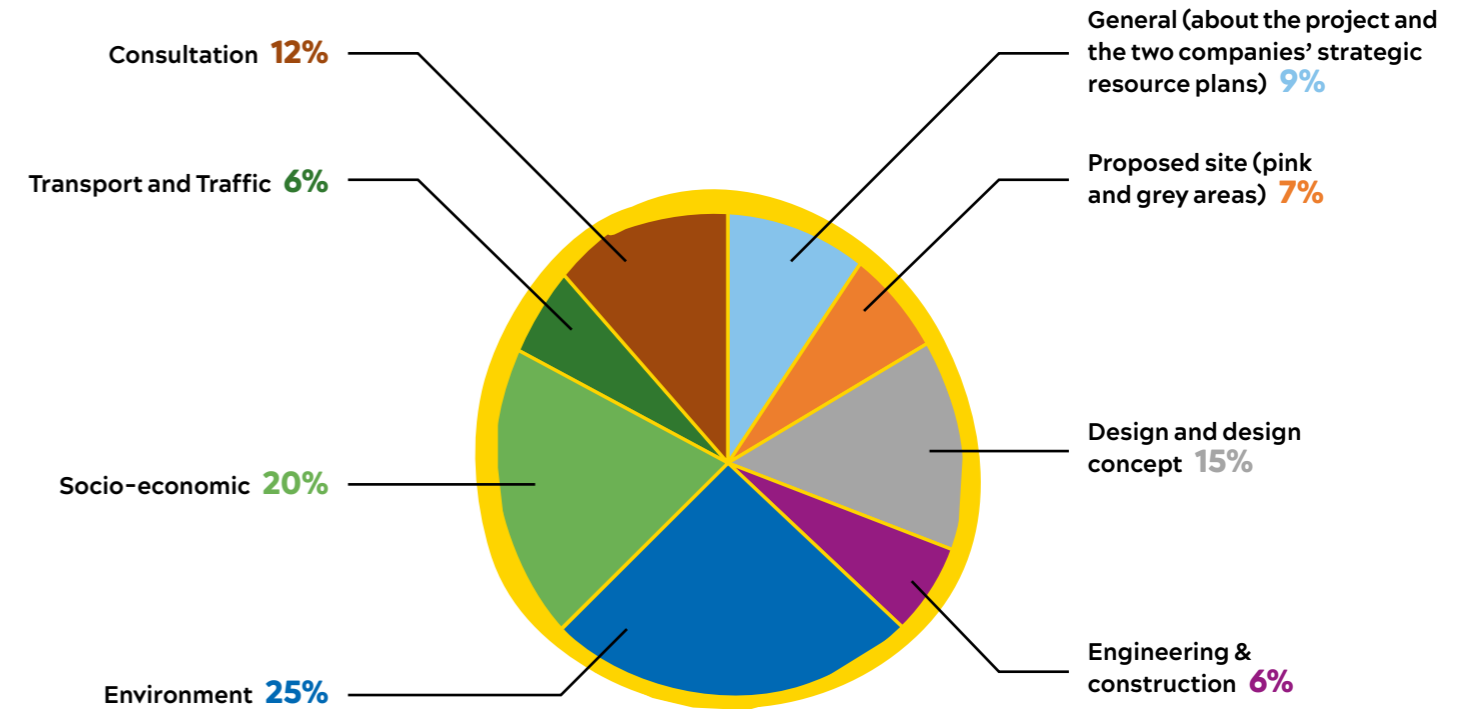
Wimblington, as well as webinars, all of which were well attended. It was great to meet local community members and was a valuable way for us to hear what people had to say.

In our autumn consultation we asked for your feedback on two key parts of our proposals – the area we had identified for the reservoir and a design concept.

We also asked you if there was anything else you considered important and for your views on the way we consulted.

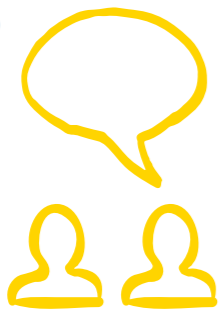
## WHAT YOU FED BACK ON

We've received really valuable feedback covering a broad range of themes and topics. The chart below shows a breakdown of the comments we received.



## HOW YOU GOT INVOLVED

Attendees to events and webinars: **552** people



Total feedback submissions: **349**



### INCLUDING:

**278** from individuals including local people, elected representatives and other members of the public.

**35** from organisations including local authorities, interest groups and specialist bodies.

**36** from affected parties including property owners and occupiers within the pink and grey areas.

Website visitors: **35,000**



“Fenland District Council are very keen to work with Anglian Water and Cambridge Water and other stakeholders to ensure that adverse effects are limited and the optimum benefits from the reservoir are realised.”

- Fenland District Council

# Your feedback on the concept design

The project presents significant social and environmental opportunities and our vision goes beyond just building a reservoir.

We want to create a place where water, people and nature come together.

That means creating space for wildlife, such as wetlands, alongside enabling new recreational and educational activities and natural places for people to explore. It also means creating new jobs and providing opportunities for local businesses and tourism.

Our very early concept design for the reservoir was part of our phase one consultation. It showed some of the potential features we hope to include in the reservoir like wildlife areas, recreation and water sports, green infrastructure like cycleways, renewable energy and others.

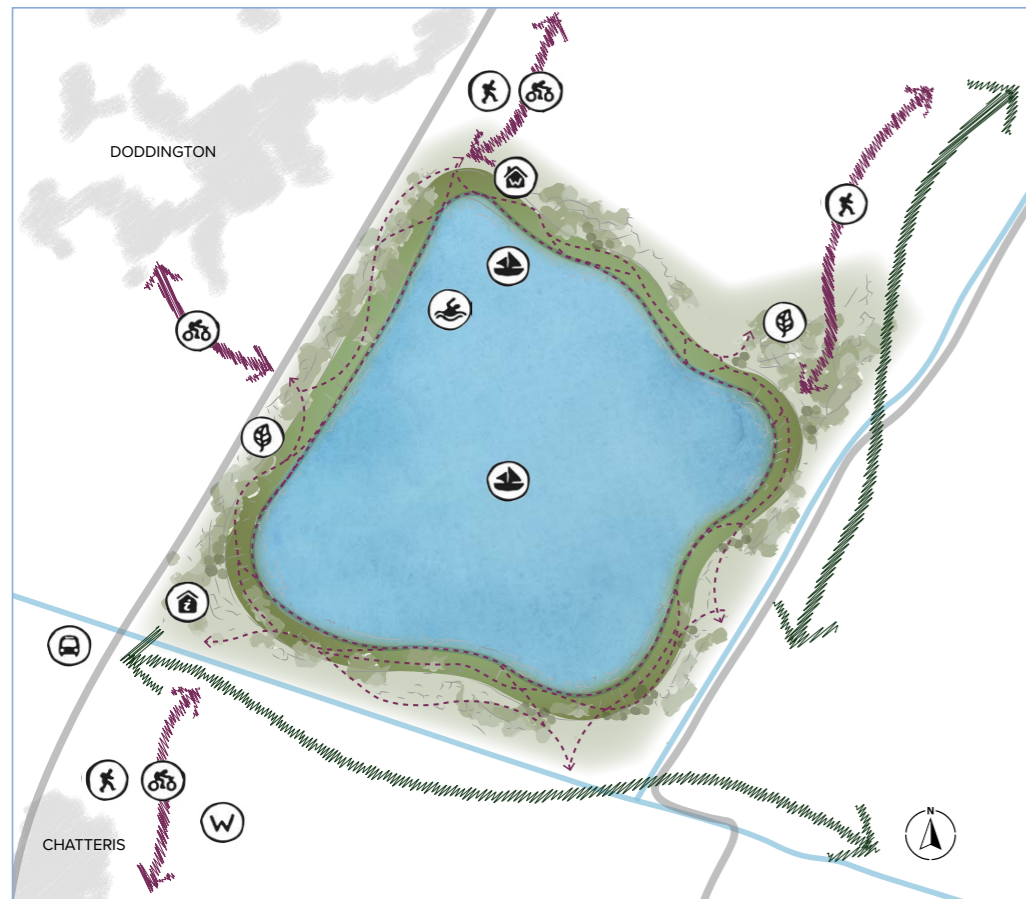
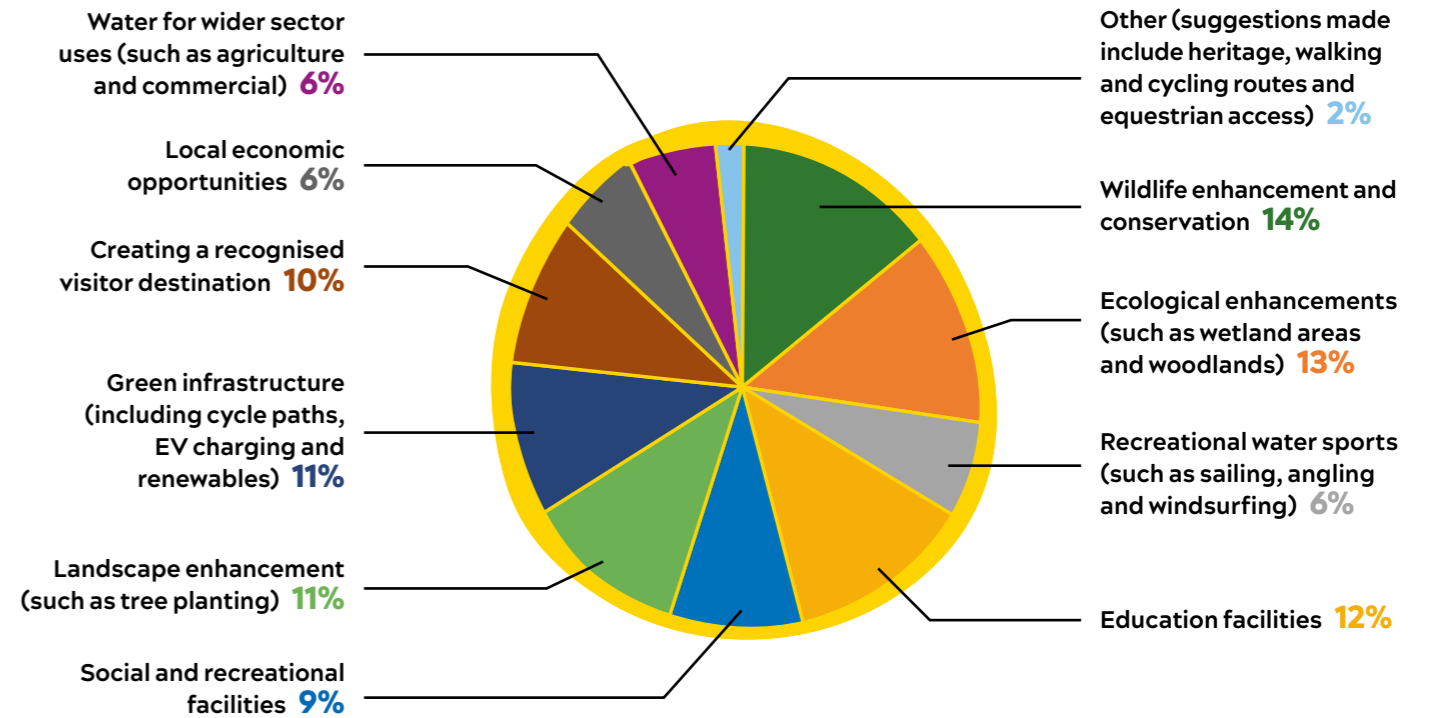
It helped stimulate thought and discussion and it was good to hear

people's thoughts and ideas around both opportunities and impacts.

It's clear people are excited by the potential of creating a place for local communities and visitors to enjoy and explore, with people telling us they often visit one of our existing reservoirs, Grafham Water.

You also told us that design of the reservoir will be very important in helping to reduce your concerns about impacts on place and community. Visual impacts of the embankments were a key theme, and you also said we should think carefully about access to the reservoir from Chatteris, Doddington, Wimblington, Manea, and other areas.

## Features you'd like to see included in the reservoir



- Key:**
- Watersports Centre
  - Visitor Centre
  - Footpath improvements
  - New cycleway provision
  - Sustainable transport opportunities
  - Sailing / watersports
  - Biodiversity opportunities
  - Swimming opportunities
  - Water treatment works
  - Multi-use recreation routes
  - Opportunities for cycle / footpath connections
  - Opportunities for green / blue infrastructure enhancement

The concept plan shown is indicative at this stage and will develop following more detailed design and in response to consultation

## What you told us about the design

You also told us the design of the reservoir will be very important in helping to reduce your concerns about impacts on place and community. Here are your key suggestions:

**CONNECTIVITY WITH NEARBY COMMUNITIES**  
Easy access to the reservoir for local communities, including by foot and bicycle

**ACCESS TO NATURE AND WATER**  
Green space and access to nature that can be enjoyed by all

**VISUAL IMPACTS INCLUDING EMBANKMENTS**  
Making sure the reservoir blends in with the landscape

**WILDLIFE AND NATURE**  
Protection for existing habitats, and creation of new habitats

**INTEGRATION WITH EXISTING FEATURES**  
Exploration of navigable waterways and wildlife corridors

**OUTDOOR RECREATION**  
Accessible routes and facilities for people of all ages

# What you told us – topics important to you

Since our consultation closed, we have been analysing the feedback to better understand your concerns and what you would like to see from our proposals.

We want to thank everyone for the feedback we've received throughout the first phase of consultation.

The more feedback we receive, the more knowledge we have of the local

area which is vital to inform our plans and design as the project progresses.

We received comments about the reservoir specifically, as well as more broadly about Anglian Water and

Cambridge Water such as water resource planning, addressing leakage and protecting the environment.

Topic	What you said	What we're doing
<b>Environment</b>	<b>You want to understand what impacts there might be on existing wildlife and habitats, particularly wading birds around the Ouse Washes nature reserve.</b>	<p>Throughout the site selection process, we have been working with environmental organisations such as the Environment Agency and Natural England.</p> <p>High-level environmental assessments were also undertaken as part of the site selection process. You can read about these in the site selection report, available on our website <a href="#">here</a>.</p> <p>Our Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will continue to be a key part of how we develop plans for the reservoir, and is central to the planning process we're following.</p> <p>Environmental surveys will begin in the coming months. The results will influence the project development and design proposals as we move towards the next phase of consultation.</p> <p>The findings of our EIA work will be consulted on as part of our Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) and presented in an Environmental Statement which will accompany our application for consent. The scope of these studies will be agreed with the Planning Inspectorate as part of the formal EIA scoping process.</p> <p>Through these processes we will investigate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project, together with how we plan to reduce or limit these impacts. The consideration of potential impacts on wading birds around the Ouse Washes will be an important part of this process.</p>

Topic	What you said	What we're doing
<b>Environment</b>	<b>You asked us to ensure that existing habitats, such as the Ouse Washes, are not affected through use of the emergency drawdown.</b>	<p>We're aware of the importance of the Ouse Washes to wildlife and how it interacts with existing watercourses.</p> <p>We're at an early stage of considering how emergency drawdown facilities might operate.</p> <p>The emergency drawdown would release water from the reservoir in the rare event that water levels in the reservoir need to be rapidly reduced. This capability is required as part of the engineering safety standards for reservoirs in the UK, which is why we must include it in our designs.</p> <p>As part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) we will thoroughly investigate the potential environmental impacts of the emergency drawdown solution that is chosen.</p>
	<b>You asked if we're considering biodiversity net gain and how this will be introduced.</b>	<p>We're committed to creating opportunities to support the environment, with a minimum target of achieving at least 10 per cent biodiversity net gain.</p> <p>Biodiversity net gain will be measured using the established Defra metric. Experienced ecologists will carry out these assessments and work with the team to develop our plans.</p> <p>The early concept design in the phase one consultation includes examples of the type of environmental opportunities we're considering. That includes space for wetlands areas, wildlife and new habitats.</p> <p>As we move into the next phase of project development, we'll consider opportunities for how design could reduce impacts and create opportunities.</p>
<b>Carbon emissions</b>	<b>Information and analysis on the carbon impacts of the project, including future carbon savings, are important to you.</b>	<p>In November 2020, water companies unveiled a groundbreaking plan to deliver an operationally net zero water supply for customers by 2030 in the world's first sector-wide commitment of its kind.</p> <p>Both Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are part of this plan.</p> <p>As purpose-led businesses, we recognise we have a huge opportunity – and responsibility – to contribute to the environmental and social wellbeing of the communities we serve. We're already on the road to net zero, and while there is a long way to go, we're fully committed.</p> <p>For the reservoir, we have conducted a provisional carbon assessment which is explained in our site selection report, available on our website. This includes both capital carbon (produced during construction) and operational carbon (produced when the reservoir is up and running).</p> <p>This assessment is based on our current plans and will be developed in the next phase of design. Opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint, including through the use of on-site renewable energy and sequester carbon, will be fully explored as our proposals develop.</p>

Topic	What you said	What we're doing
<b>Carbon emissions</b>	<b>Your feedback included suggestions to use peatland as a carbon saving feature, as well as replacing any peat that is impacted during construction.</b>	<p>Our team will continue to consider how best to reuse the existing soil and peat during construction. This includes considering the potential extent of the impact on existing habitats such as peatlands.</p> <p>Exploring the reuse of peat in peatland restoration, and the potential carbon loss from peat within the overall scheme, are environmental factors we will assess during the next phase.</p>
<b>Community and local business impacts</b>	<b>You're concerned about the potential impacts of the reservoir for those who are living or working within the project area, particularly the RSPCA centre.</b>	<p>As we continue to develop the design for the reservoir, we will be seeking to minimise any impacts on surrounding communities.</p> <p>We'll provide more details on potential impacts and opportunities at the phase two consultation, when we will share a more detailed design.</p> <p>We are in contact and having discussions with the RSPCA and their land agents throughout the process so far. Regular communications will continue to be conducted as the project develops.</p>
	<b>There were concerns about whether we had considered farming land when we selected the site.</b>	<p>Quality of agricultural land and potential impacts were considered in the site selection process. Given the size of the reservoir, all of the sites we considered had the potential to affect agricultural land.</p> <p>The site we're proposing was the best performing of all the sites we have considered – one which balances all of the factors we considered, and that also provides significant opportunities to unlock wider benefits.</p> <p>Our proposals are at an early stage. We understand the effect on those impacted by our proposals including homeowners, landowners and the nearby community. We're committed to working with everyone as the project develops and want to hear all views on our emerging proposals.</p>
	<b>You provided feedback on flooding in the area and sought assurance that the reservoir would not make flooding worse, or put the surrounding communities and properties at risk of flooding.</b>	<p>Minimising flood risk was a central part of our site selection process and will be key to the design of any new reservoir.</p> <p>Measures will be put in place to ensure the reservoir will not increase the current risk of flooding. We also believe there are potential opportunities to explore with partners for the reservoir to improve the flood risk in the area.</p> <p>We are designing the reservoir in line with the latest industry guidance and standards, and following the legislation set out in the Reservoirs Act 1975. This includes requirements for emergency planning – such as the ability to lower a reservoir's water level quickly ('drawdown') in the event of an emergency. Initial modelling has confirmed that discharge to the existing river network is a viable option for this, and this will mitigate the already low risk of flooding to the local community.</p>

Topic	What you said	What we're doing
<b>Community opportunities</b>	<b>You asked what benefits there will be for communities who will be most affected.</b>	<p>Our vision for this project goes beyond just building a reservoir. We want to create a destination where water, people and nature come together.</p> <p>This means creating space for wildlife, alongside leisure opportunities such as cycle and walking routes, and water sport activities. It also means creating new jobs during construction and into the future, providing opportunities for businesses and tourism to thrive.</p> <p>There's more information on page four about your feedback on the features you'd like to see included in the reservoir.</p>
	<b>Many of your comments stressed the importance of the reservoir being accessible from local towns and communities, particularly Chatteris and across the A141.</b>	<p>We believe the reservoir has the opportunity to be a valuable area for walking and other outdoor activities for the local area. This was reflected in your requests and feedback.</p> <p>As part of the reservoir design, our team will look at opportunities for creating improved connectivity between villages and the reservoir site, while considering the existing roads. Design plans will be part of the next phase of consultation in 2024.</p>
	<b>In addition to accessibility from towns, it is clear you would like the reservoir to be accessible for those with disabilities.</b>	<p>It is important to us that everyone is able to experience the wider benefits of the reservoir.</p> <p>Safe access for all people, including those with disabilities, will be considered as part of reservoir design.</p>
<b>Design</b>	<b>Understanding how the embankments will look in this unique, low-lying landscape is of significant importance to you.</b>	<p>The embankments will be new features in the landscape. We are looking at ways to reduce their potential prominence and be considerate of the surrounding landscape character in our proposals, and are taking landscape, ecological and stakeholder feedback into account as we develop the design.</p> <p>Our approach could include altering the shape of the reservoir edge or making the slopes less uniform, by varying the profile and gradient at different points around the reservoir. At the moment, we anticipate the reservoir will have an average slope rate of around 1 in 10. This means it would gain a metre of height for every 10 metres of length on average, which is relatively gentle.</p>
<b>Your experience of the consultation</b>	<b>You had questions about our use of images in the consultation materials.</b>	<p>We understand there are questions about our use of images of Grafham and Rutland Water in our consultation materials.</p> <p>These images were used to show some of the wider benefits, such as cycle paths and walkways that are popular at our existing reservoirs, as features we're planning to include in the Fens reservoir.</p> <p>We appreciate that people feel this isn't a fair representation of the Fens reservoir as an embankment reservoir.</p> <p>Thanks to your feedback, we will consider how pictures are represented in all our future materials.</p>

Topic	What you said	What we're doing
<b>Need for a reservoir and project funding</b>	<b>You would like to know what steps we're taking to reduce leakage and supply water before a reservoir is built.</b>	<p>We continue to lead the water sector in tackling leakage, exceeding our regulatory targets for over 10 years running. Work is already underway on a half-billion-pound investment in new pipes that will bring water from the wettest areas in the north of Lincolnshire to the drier areas in the south and east of our region.</p> <p>We're installing over one million smart meters in customer homes and are delivering a number of environmental programmes to protect our precious chalk streams and rivers.</p> <p>Even with reducing leakage, our assessments show there is still a need for a new reservoir to address the challenges of a changing climate and growing population.</p>
	<b>You wanted to know how the project will be funded.</b>	<p>The reservoir would be funded by water company customer bills, with a third party provider likely to construct and operate it.</p> <p>This funding model has been used on other projects, including the Thames Tideway tunnel, and Ofwat, the water industry regulator, is keen that we explore similar options for the Fens reservoir.</p> <p>We'll provide more detail on this as the project develops.</p>
<b>The selected site and alternative sites</b>	<b>You made alternative suggestions for sites and questioned how we came to this proposed site.</b>	<p>We completed a multi-stage site selection process that considered a wide range of factors, including geology, engineering requirements and impacts on the community.</p> <p>In total, we considered 81 potential sites around Cambridgeshire and have identified the preferred site as the best performing. It is currently the only site we're considering.</p> <p>While site location was not a specific part of the phase one consultation, any suggestions for alternative sites in consultation feedback will be reviewed against the same criteria, and to see if we have considered them already.</p>

Topic	What you said	What we're doing
<b>Transport and traffic</b>	<p><b>There are concerns around the additional pressures on local roads, particularly the A141 from increased traffic.</b></p> <p><b>These comments also asked if supporting infrastructure can help reduce the existing dangers of the road.</b></p>	<p>We do understand the concerns about increased volume of traffic on local roads. We also recognise people want assurance that construction traffic will not cause damage.</p> <p>Our engineers will be developing plans to help support road infrastructure as part of our proposals, which we'll provide at future stages of consultation.</p> <p>We'll also be working closely with the Fenland District Council and Cambridgeshire County Council to seek their input.</p>
<b>Construction</b>	<b>You had concerns about the potential impacts of construction on the local area, including noise, dust and construction traffic around Chatteris, Doddington and Wimblington.</b>	<p>We do understand people have concerns about the construction phase and we're looking at ways of keeping this as low as we can. This could include, for example, working times, agreed vehicle routes, phasing of the construction programme, and other similar measures.</p> <p>One of the factors that makes the preferred site a good option is the ground type of the area – which comprises of amphill clay. This is suitable for the construction of the reservoir embankments and means we won't need to ship large volumes of materials to and from the site. This helps minimise vehicle movements which, in turn, helps to limit the potential for noise and dust.</p> <p>Factors such as air quality, noise and vibration, transport and construction phases will be considered by our engineers in more detail as we develop a design for the reservoir, and in future consultations.</p>
	<b>The timescales of the project are something you are keen to understand in greater detail, particularly the justification for the length of time.</b>	<p>We do understand that there is a long timeline before the reservoir opens.</p> <p>However, the new reservoir is a complex project and it's important that we develop plans carefully to take account of a whole range of factors.</p> <p>It will take at least three years to develop a design, consult and gather feedback, and complete all of the environmental assessments required.</p> <p>The planning approval process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects – which the Fens reservoir is classed as – could also take up to three years.</p> <p>The longest part of our programme is the construction of the reservoir. We estimate this to be eight to ten years.</p> <p>Our project timeline on page 8 provides more detail about timings.</p> <p>We're planning to have the reservoir in supply by 2039. We'll continue to keep people up to date on timings as the project progresses.</p>



# What happens next

Your feedback on the consultation has given us lots of valuable information which will be taken into account as we develop the project.



**Working on the design of the reservoir**

Over the course of the year, the team at Anglian Water and Cambridge Water will be working together to develop the design of the reservoir.

This will involve building on the early concept design to create more detail on the features that will be included in the reservoir and how we propose to use the land in the pink and grey areas.


This includes how it will be accessed from Chatteris, Doddington, Wimblington, Manea, and other local communities.

Embankment design and height will also be a key part of this work as we look to address the points you've raised about how the reservoir will look and feature in the unique, low-lying landscape of the Fens.



**Surveys**

Throughout 2023, our environment team will be conducting wildlife and ecological surveys of the proposed site to help inform our environmental assessments. We'll be working closely with landowners to agree access for surveys and also to answer ongoing questions about what our plans mean. We are in contact and having discussions with the RSPCA and businesses.



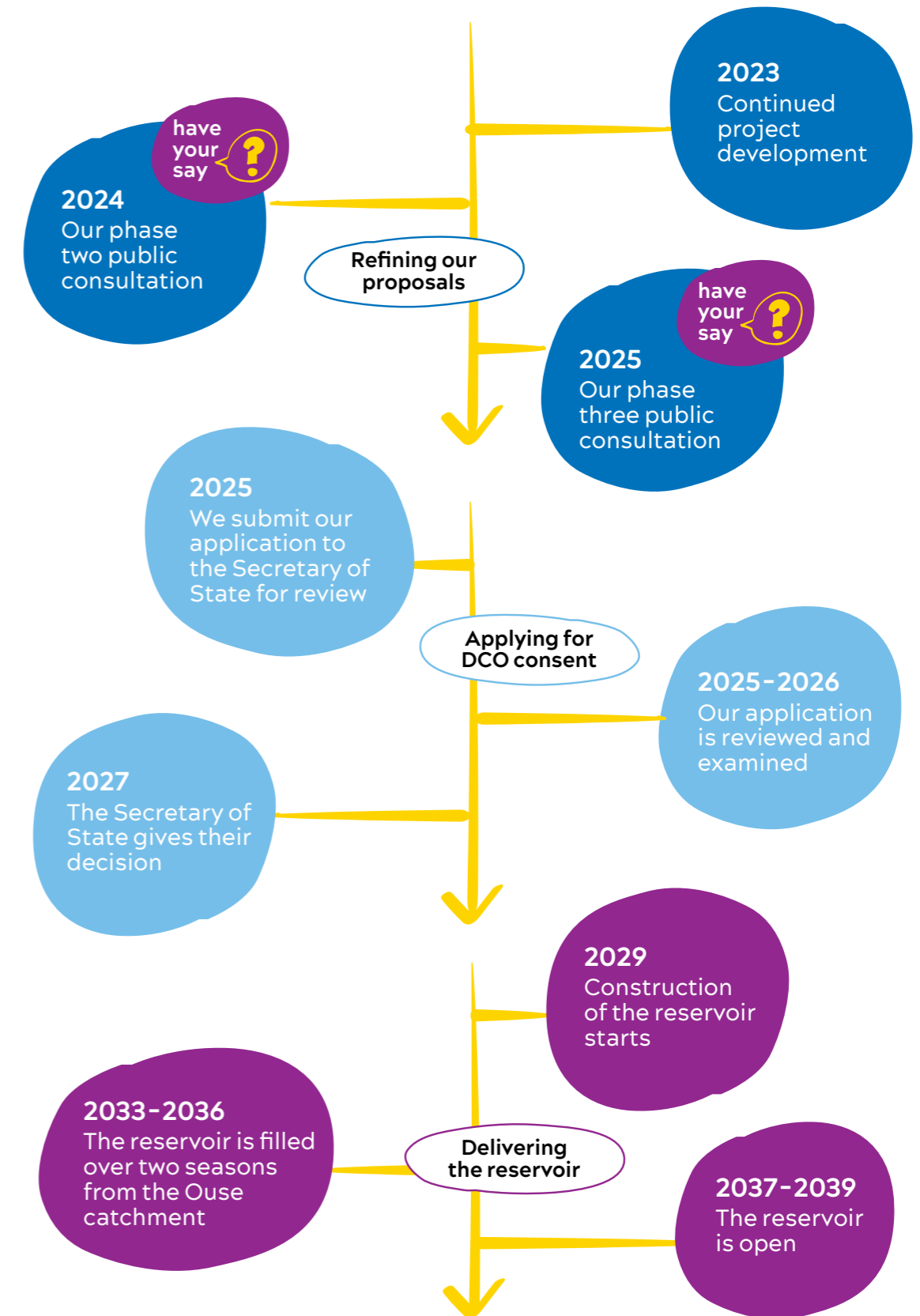
**Working with stakeholders**

We'll also continue to work closely with our stakeholders for the duration of the project.

This will involve regular updates on the project's progress, briefings and technical working groups.



## Timeline




Please note: this timeline is indicative only and may change as our proposals develop. As a result, it may differ slightly from previous timelines.

## How to get in touch

The close of our consultation doesn't mark the end of our communication with stakeholders and valued members of the community.


We encourage you to sign up for email updates to keep up to date with the latest project information. You can register for updates on our website.

Please get in touch with any questions.

 EMAIL US  
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WRITE TO US   
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