

A proposed reservoir in the Fens

A guide to our proposals
and phase two consultation



May 2024

Contents

Our shared ambition	3
About Anglian Water / About Cambridge Water	4
Planning future water resources	5
Why the reservoir is needed	6
A new reservoir in the Fens	7
Our vision and plans for a new reservoir	8
Help shape our proposals	10
Our latest proposals	12
The proposed project area	14
Wider opportunities	16
What we're consulting on	18
Have your say	19
Find out more	20
Consenting process and next steps	22



Find out more

This booklet is one of several documents about our latest proposals.

Together, the documents explain our proposed new reservoir in the Fens and the associated water infrastructure we need to get water to and from the reservoir. It also explains how to take part in our phase two consultation.

This booklet is about why we need the project and how you can have your say. You can find out more information about the other phase two consultation documents available on **page 20**.

Our shared ambition

“Water is vital to the health, wellbeing and economic prosperity of the East of England, and to maintaining a thriving natural environment that we can all enjoy.

Yet we are managing water resources with a set of unique demands. Not only are we the driest area in the UK, we're also experiencing population growth, with the region set for a 20 per cent increase in population by 2050.

At the same time, to help protect and restore nature, we cannot continue to take as much water from precious sources, such as aquifers and chalk streams.

The effects of a changing climate are adding to these demands. Drought is expected to become more common amid drier summers, and intense rainfall could become more frequent. In the time that we've been developing this project, we've seen one of the hottest summers on record and one of the wettest winters. It's a timely reminder of how our region is changing and why we need to take action to prepare for the future.

The proposed new reservoir in the Fens is a key part of our plans to meet these challenges. Together with its associated water infrastructure, the reservoir will create a much-needed new water resource. The reservoir will draw available water that would otherwise drain to the sea, and store it for when it's needed for public supply.

The reservoir also presents significant social, economic and environmental opportunities. We're planning to include features that local communities would value and use. Together, we'll identify opportunities to deliver ecological benefits and promote sustainability, and we'll explore ways to contribute to the health and economy of the area.

This is an opportunity to create a place that everyone values while crucially keeping taps running – and that's why you have such an important role to play.

Your feedback can shape our proposals for the reservoir and its associated water infrastructure. Through this consultation you can help inform the decisions we make so that the project can best support the region.

We look forward to receiving your comments.



Geoff Darch
Head of Supply and Demand Strategy
Anglian Water



Natalie Akroyd
Director of Quality and Environment
Cambridge Water





About Anglian Water

Anglian Water supplies water and wastewater services to almost seven million customers in the East of England and Hartlepool, employing 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 are 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 for over 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 our region.

We are also installing over one million smart meters in customer homes, and delivering a multitude of abstraction reduction programmes, protecting precious chalk streams and rivers.



Planning future water resources

In 2020, the National Framework for Water Resources transformed the way we plan future water supplies in England.

This requires water companies and other large water users to collaborate across boundaries and develop plans that consider water needs at a regional level. This joined-up approach makes sure that regional plans fit together to provide a national solution.

There are five regional water resource groups. In our region, the **Water Resources East (WRE)** Regional plans set out more detail about water supplies for the region, including the needs of the environment.

Water companies develop a **Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP)** setting out their plans and investments,

such as: improving efficiency; addressing leakage; restoring the environment; and building new water resources.

Anglian Water's and Cambridge Water's 2024 draft WRMPs explain how we will ensure a sustainable and secure supply of clean drinking water for our customers from 2025 to 2050.

We're already taking action. Anglian Water is constructing a strategic pipeline in the region that will help us manage demand and supply. Together, Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are also cutting down on leakage and working with our customers to use water more efficiently.

However, we still require new water supplies to provide for the future. To meet this need, we've evaluated many options including desalination, water recycling, aquifer storage, and water recovery.

Both Anglian Water's and Cambridge Water's latest WRMPs identify the new reservoir in the Fens as a crucial investment needed to meet the growing demands on water supplies in the East of England.

Reservoirs provide a level of resilience, volume of water, environmental and socio-economic opportunities that other resource options do not.

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 provided an essential service to customers since 1853, when we were founded in the interests of public welfare to supply clean water. Our small size and strong local focus mean we are firmly embedded in the communities we serve.

As well as putting customers' needs at the heart of all our decision-making, we actively work in partnership with our local communities. We also act as the guardians of our assets, building resilience with regular investment.

And we run an efficient business that is in everyone's interests.

We are currently delivering our largest-ever investment programme. Over the five years between 2020 and 2025 we are investing £600 million in services that are important for our customers and communities, while at the same time protecting and enhancing the environment that we all rely on and enjoy.



Find out more

Following consultation (a separate process from the consultation on our reservoir proposals) we have published revised drafts of our WRMPs. We expect these plans to be finalised later in 2024.

- **Read Anglian Water's latest WRMP here:** www.anglianwater.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/water-resources-management-plan/
- **Read Cambridge Water's latest WRMP here:** www.cambridge-water.co.uk/about-us/our-strategies-and-plans/our-water-resources-management-plan

Why the reservoir is needed

Water is vital to health and wellbeing, to the economic prosperity of the East of England, and to maintaining a thriving natural environment that we can all enjoy.

Yet we face growing challenges to supply. Our region is low-lying, one of the driest in the UK, and especially vulnerable to a changing climate. Drought is set to become more common amid hotter, drier summers, and intense rainfall events more frequent.

To meet these challenges, we all have to play our part in balancing the needs of society, business, and the environment to enable a sustainable future.

We're already working on new strategic pipelines to move water from wetter to drier parts of our region, installing smart meters in customers' homes, and driving down leakage.

While all the investments we're making today will help to keep taps running, the available supply will fall well below the demand for water unless we plan for future resources now.



A new reservoir in the Fens



The proposed new reservoir in the Fens has been identified as a large-scale investment in new water resources that we need and will play a critical role in securing water supply long into the future.

Reservoirs provide a level of resilience, volume of water, environmental and socio-economic opportunities that other sources such as desalination or water reuse do not.

Reservoirs are sustainable ways of producing resilient, safe drinking water supplies because they take from river catchments which have surplus water. They mean we can make the most of wet weather for public water supply, capturing river water that would otherwise drain to the sea and storing it so it's on tap when needed.

When we looked at where we might best build reservoirs across our broader region, we identified rivers in both Lincolnshire and the Fens areas as having enough water available.

Providing two large new reservoirs, one in each area, would give sufficient water supply to enable resilience to future droughts, while protecting our most sensitive environments.

Together, the two reservoirs will make the most of the available resources and provide water to local communities and businesses across our region, including in Cambridgeshire.



Please note: this is an indicative image and the design may change as our proposals develop.



Our vision and plans for a new reservoir

i See **page 16** for how the project could contribute to our separate, wider plans for the region.

Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are proposing a new reservoir in the Fens to help meet the growing demands on water supply in the East of England.

The new reservoir is at the heart of a whole new water supply project. Together with the associated water infrastructure we need to transfer water to the reservoir, treat the water, and supply it to homes and businesses, it will secure a reliable water supply for generations to come.

When there is available water in rivers that would otherwise drain to the sea, we would draw that water and transfer it to the reservoir using new and existing infrastructure and waterways. The reservoir will store the water for when it's needed.

Having this new water resource will reduce demands on sensitive sources such as chalk streams, helping us to protect and restore the environment. It will make us more resilient to a changing climate, reducing the impact of droughts while helping to manage river levels in wetter periods.

The proposed reservoir is located between Chatteris and March, near to Doddington, Wimblington and Manea. Before our phase one consultation, we completed a thorough site selection process for the reservoir and are continuing

to work hard to develop our plans for the chosen site.

Our latest proposals include:

- An emerging design for the reservoir including opportunities for recreation, wildlife, nature and other features.
- The infrastructure we need to transfer available water from sources to the reservoir, treat the water, and then supply it to homes and businesses.

Our vision for the project goes beyond simply creating a new public water supply. This is a significant investment in England's water infrastructure and a once-in-a-generation opportunity to deliver lasting benefits for people, place and the environment.

Where possible, we will consider ways to include features that local communities would value and use. We will explore opportunities that could deliver ecological benefits and promote sustainability.

We will also consider what new opportunities there are to teach future generations about how water shapes our lives and the environment.

Through our engagement with regional partners and stakeholders, it's clear that others also want us to

think about how the reservoir and its associated water infrastructure could help enable separate, wider opportunities beyond those we hope to create from the reservoir itself.

We're exploring exactly that, through working together with others that share our ambition to boost environmental, social and economic prosperity in our unique region.

Help shape our proposals

We understand that our proposals will have an effect on landowners, homeowners, and communities. We're committed to working with these groups as we develop our plans and want to hear all views on our emerging proposals.

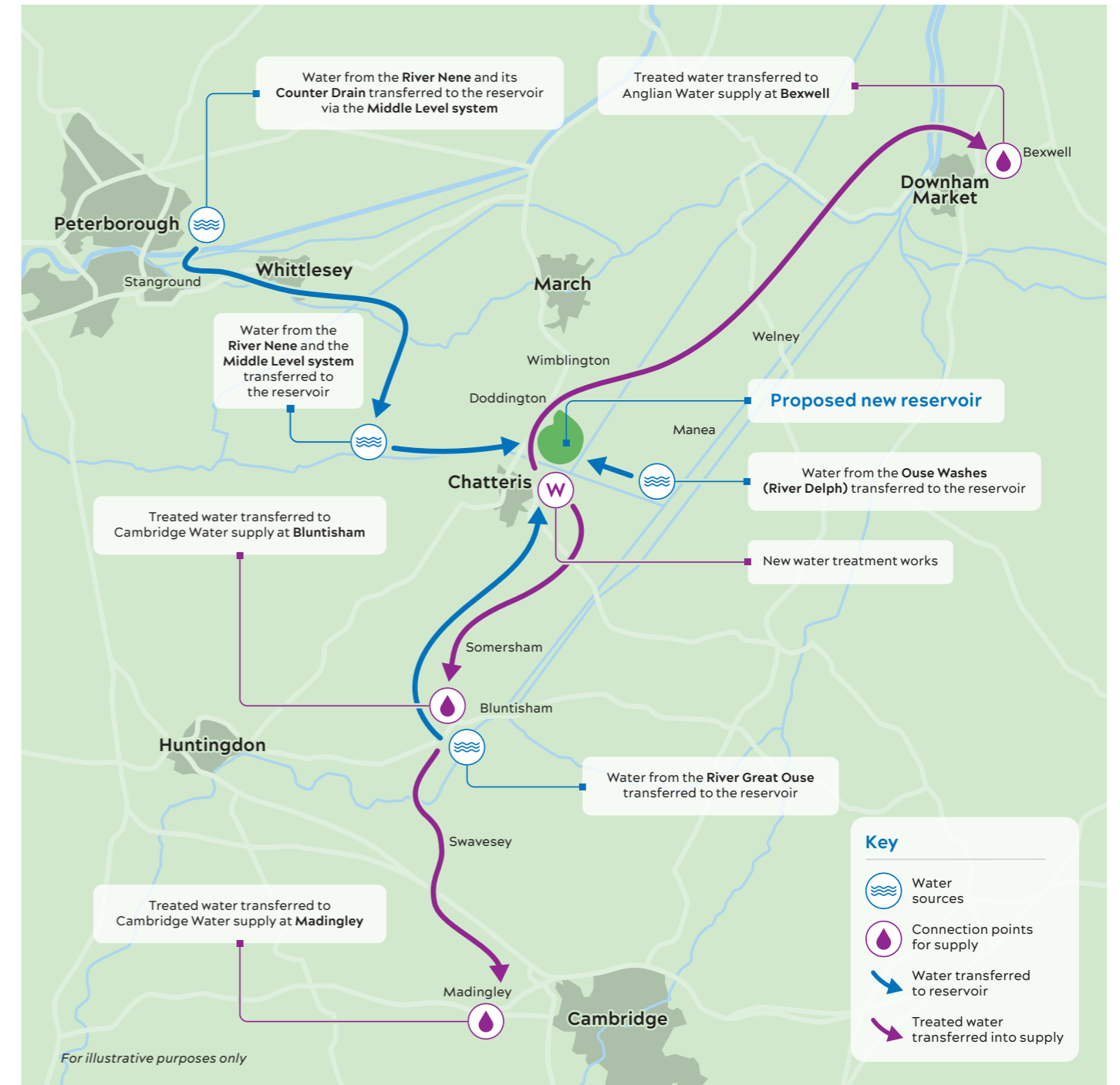
During our phase one consultation in 2022, we asked people for their comments on the proposed site we had identified for the reservoir and the features they would like to see included.

We have since been developing our proposals for the reservoir site to give everyone a better idea of what it could look like and what it could deliver, taking on board the feedback we received.

We've also been developing our plans for the associated water infrastructure that we need to fill the reservoir with water, treat it, and supply it to homes and businesses.



This illustrative map shows the sources where water is being transferred from to the reservoir, and then where the treated water is being sent into supply.



Have your say

Our consultation is open from 30 May 2024 until 9 August 2024.

See **page 19** for how to provide your feedback. We look forward to receiving your comments.

Our latest proposals

Our latest proposals for the project include:

- **The main reservoir site** – our latest proposals for the site on which the reservoir would be located (referred to as the main site), including opportunities for the features it could include, and how it is likely to operate. Our proposals for the main site will continue to evolve as we refine our proposals further, based on more detailed studies, engagement, and feedback.
- **The associated water infrastructure** – options we've identified for drawing water from sources when it's available, transferring it to the reservoir, treating the water and supplying the treated water to homes and businesses across the region. This includes the broad areas of land we've identified at this stage for the infrastructure needed. Our proposals will continue to develop based on further assessments and feedback received.



Find out more

Our **associated water infrastructure brochure** explains everything shown in **blue** and **purple**. Scan the code with your phone's camera to read it.

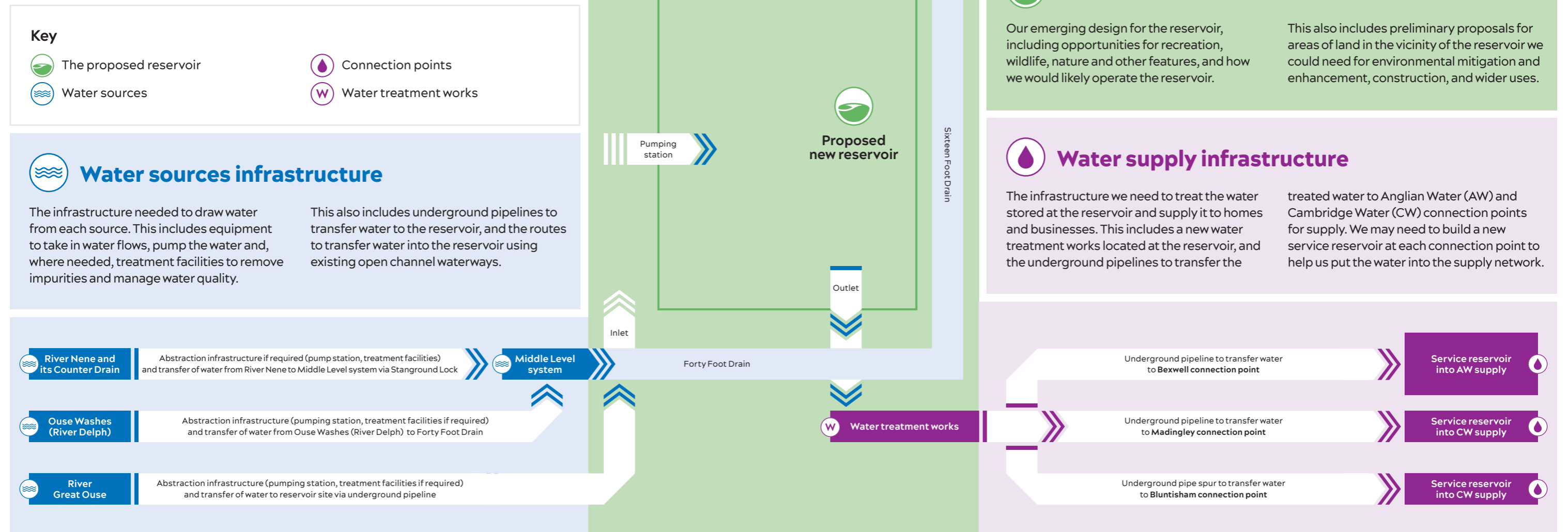


Our **main site design brochure** explains everything shown in **green**. Scan the code with your phone's camera to read it.



Both documents are available on our website document library at www.fensreservoir.co.uk/documents. Hard copies are available on request or to pick up at community events. Find out more on **page 20**.

This diagram shows what our proposals for each part include at this stage.



The proposed project area

This map shows the indicative project boundary for our phase two proposals, based on all the work we've done to date. The area is subject to further change as we develop our proposals further, based on ongoing assessments and the feedback we receive.

The indicative project boundary includes:

- **Associated water infrastructure** – areas of land we've identified for the **water sources infrastructure** needed to draw water from sources when it's available and transfer it to the reservoir and the **water supply infrastructure** needed to treat the water stored at the reservoir and then supply it to homes and businesses.

We've carried out lots of assessments to identify the areas included, which you can find out more about by reading our **associated water infrastructure brochure**.

- **The reservoir site** – the site on which the reservoir would be located (main site) for which we've developed an **emerging design** including opportunities for the features we could include, and how the reservoir would likely operate.

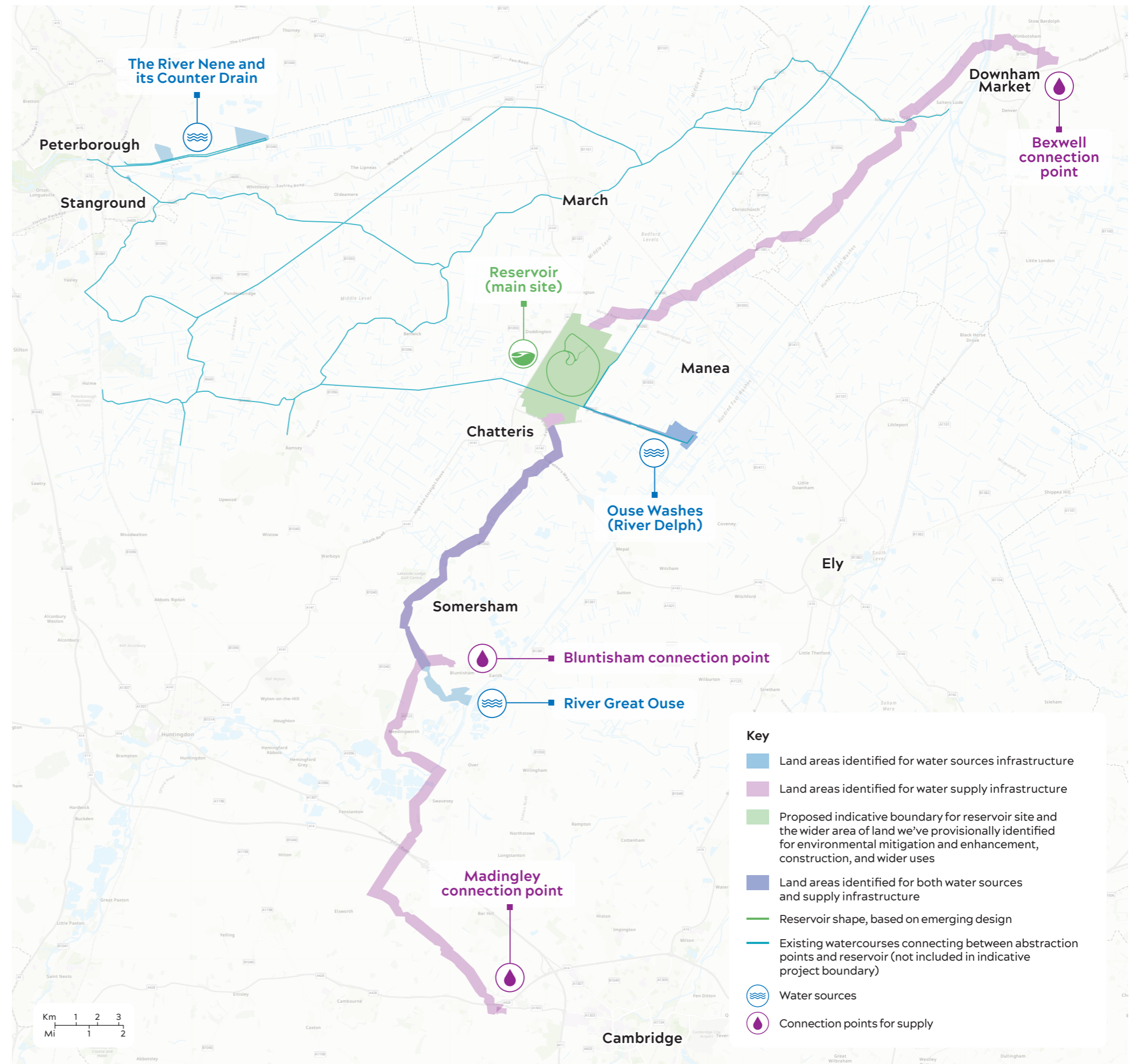
This **emerging design** has been developed following good practice design guidance, considering many factors such as the local area, the feedback we've received and operational requirements. Read more about this in our **main site design brochure**.

- **Other areas of land near the main site** – **areas of land to the north and south of the reservoir site** that we could need for environmental mitigation and enhancement, construction, and wider uses, based on our early stage work. This is based on known constraints around the reservoir and the potential extent of land we think we'll need based on the size of the reservoir and its embankments.

Our proposals for these areas are at an early stage and subject to further assessment and consultation. Whether that land is needed on a permanent or temporary basis is still to be assessed and confirmed. Find out more in our **main site design brochure**.

Have your say

You can view our proposals in more detail using our interactive map, available online at projectmap.fensreservoir.co.uk



Wider opportunities

This project represents a significant investment in England’s water infrastructure, and has the potential to contribute to lasting, wider benefits for the East of England.

Our vision for the reservoir is to create a place that would bring water, people and nature together. Our intention is to design a reservoir that local communities can be proud of, and that will encourage people to visit and enjoy its surroundings.

Many of Anglian Water’s existing reservoirs, such as Rutland Water and Grafham Water, are great places to explore, a haven for wildlife, and provide opportunities to learn and get closer to nature. Our hope is that the new reservoir can deliver benefits just like these.

Through our engagement with regional partners and stakeholders, it’s clear that others also want us to think about how the reservoir could help enable separate, wider

opportunities beyond those we hope to create from the reservoir itself.

We’re exploring exactly that, through working together with

others that share our ambition to boost environmental, social and economic prosperity in our unique region.



Working with others

Anglian Water, Cambridge Water, the Environment Agency and Water Resources East are working with many others to protect The Fens from the impacts of climate change.

The **Future Fens: Adapted Integration** project is formed to show how collaboration can change the way we think about managing water in our communities, enabling communities to take control, adapting and becoming climate resilient.

The benefits could include:

- Building resilience to drought by creating new water sources, including our proposed reservoirs in the Fens and Lincolnshire.
- Building resilience to flooding, with a new flood risk strategy and line of defence that will absorb flood water and help prevent flooding and the impacts this has on people, agriculture, livestock and food production.

- Unlock wider benefits for the region and UK by supporting economic growth, new housing and improved transport links, as well as benefitting nature and enhancing tourism opportunities.

We’ve been exploring how the reservoir can play a part in delivering this vision, alongside the work being done by many other organisations.

Wider benefits through collaborative water management

We’re involved in a range of different studies to explore how the reservoir could work with the existing system in a way that unlocks opportunities that other organisations could help to deliver.

The reservoirs are located within a wider network of internal drainage board waterways and rivers.

When there is available water in rivers that would otherwise drain to the sea, we would draw that water and transfer it to the reservoir using new and existing infrastructure and waterways.

Through our integrated water management study, we’re exploring how this movement of water could also help manage the risk of flooding

and provide opportunities to share water with others, such as farmers.

As our plans for the reservoir and its associated water infrastructure develop, so too will the opportunities for the wider system.

Potential benefits that these separate, wider opportunities could bring include:

Storing carbon



Removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by creating woodlands and restoring peatlands

Flood management



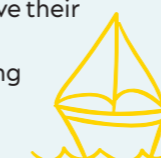
Potential for reservoirs to help manage the risk of flooding

Biodiversity net gain



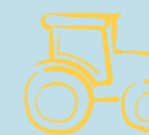
Creating habitats for our region’s wildlife

Public amenity



Providing facilities for people to improve their physical and mental well-being

Multi-beneficiary



Working with other sectors such as agriculture to maximise benefit

Community benefits



Providing socio-economic benefits to the local community

This thinking is still evolving and no decisions have been made on exactly what plans could be brought forward, the planning permissions we might need, or how these wider opportunities could be funded. To realise the vision will require leadership and funding from many other organisations, as well as Anglian Water and Cambridge Water.

While this isn’t part of the consultation or our proposals for the project itself, we’re continuing to explore how we can develop our plans for the reservoir in a way that supports these wider initiatives. We’ll continue our studies and discussions with stakeholders as we develop the proposals.



To find out more about the **Future Fens: Adapted Integration** project, visit: www.anglianwater.co.uk/your-local-area/community-projects/wisbech-regeneration/future-fens/



What we're consulting on

Your knowledge is very valuable to us and we welcome any feedback you have on our proposals. It will help us to further understand any potential impacts and opportunities arising from the project.

This is our second phase of consultation, and we plan to hold at least one more phase of consultation as the proposals develop. Find out more about the national infrastructure development consent process we are required to follow, and a timeline showing next steps, on **page 22**.

For this consultation we are asking for your feedback on:

- Our **emerging design** for the reservoir (main site). This shows opportunities for recreation, wildlife, nature and other features.
- Our early-stage proposals for **wider areas of land in the vicinity of the reservoir** we could need for environmental mitigation and enhancement, construction, or wider uses.

- Areas we've identified for the **water sources infrastructure** needed to transfer water from sources to the reservoir, and the **water supply infrastructure** needed to treat the water stored at the reservoir, and supply it to homes and businesses.
- Supporting information about our approach to a range of topics explained in our **project fact sheets**.

There are some aspects that are not open to consultation. That's because they cannot be shaped by feedback for technical reasons, such as safety and engineering requirements, or because they have been and continue to be consulted on through the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) process.

This includes:

- The question of **whether the project is needed**.
- The **capacity** of the reservoir.
- The **sources identified** as having enough water available to fill the reservoir.
- The locations for connecting the project to the **existing supply network**.



See **page 5** for details of Anglian Water and Cambridge Water's Water Resources Management Plans.

Have your say

The phase two consultation is open from 30 May until 9 August 2024.

All feedback you share will be reviewed, recorded, and carefully considered as we develop our proposals.

We are committed to working with local people as the project develops and want to hear all views on our emerging proposals.

Submitting your comments

You can submit feedback to us in several different ways:

- On our website using our online form: www.fensreservoir.co.uk
- Sending written feedback to us at our freepost address: **Freepost Fens Reservoir**
- Sending an email to: info@fensreservoir.co.uk



Please make sure you submit your feedback to us by 23:59 on Friday 9 August 2024.

Find out more

Supporting documents


We have published a series of documents for the consultation. All of these can be viewed online at www.fensreservoir.co.uk/documents

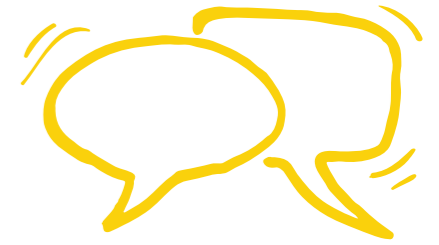


SUPPORTING INFORMATION	
DOCUMENT NAME	DETAIL
A guide to our proposals and phase two consultation	This booklet – An overview of our phase two consultation, with more information about what we’re consulting on, where to find out more about our proposals and how you can have your say.
Project fact sheets	Supporting information about our approach to a range of topics and themes that we know are important.
RESERVOIR	
DOCUMENT NAME	DETAIL
Phase two consultation – main site design brochure	Information on the emerging design for the main reservoir site and the factors we considered to reach this point. This provides information about the initial opportunities for the features it could include, and how it is likely to operate.
Main site design report	An explanation of the emerging design for the reservoir site, and how this was developed.
ASSOCIATED WATER INFRASTRUCTURE	
DOCUMENT NAME	DETAIL
Phase two consultation – associated water infrastructure proposals	Information about our proposals for drawing available water from the sources we’ve identified, transferring the water to the reservoir, treating it, and supplying it to customers. This explains the infrastructure we may need, and the preferred options we’ve identified at this stage.
Options appraisal report	An overview of the options appraisal process that we have been through to identify the preferred options and sites for the associated water infrastructure. This explains the four stages (stages A to D) of our appraisal process, how the options that were progressed for detailed assessment compared to one another, and the different combinations we assessed to identify the proposals we’re taking forward at this stage.

Reference copies of the reports will be at our events.
Brochures can be picked up at our events or you can contact our team to request copies.

i **Find out more**
Scan the QR code with your phone’s camera to access the documents online.





In your community

You can also find out more about the project and meet the team at our consultation events:

COMMUNITY EVENTS		
LOCATION	DATE	TIME
Bluntisham Village Hall, PE28 3LR	Monday 10 June	10am-3pm
Swavesey Community Pavilion, CB24 4RN	Tuesday 11 June	2pm-7pm
Coton Village Hall, CB23 7PL	Wednesday 12 June	2pm-7pm
The Skoulding Suite, March, PE15 9JF	Thursday 13 June	10am-3pm
Wimblington Parish Hall, PE15 0QT	Friday 14 June	2pm-7pm
Doddington Village Hall, PE15 0TG	Saturday 15 June	11am-4pm
King Edward Centre, Chatteris, PE16 6NG	Monday 17 June	11am-4pm
Manea Village Hall, PE15 0JN	Tuesday 18 June	2pm-7pm
The Norfolk Venue, Peterborough, PE1 2NP	Monday 8 July	2pm-7pm
The Bricstan Hall, Chatteris, PE16 6BE	Wednesday 10 July	12pm-5pm
Denver Village Hall, Downham Market, PE38 0DY	Saturday 13 July	11am-4pm

We’re also holding two webinars so that people can learn more and ask questions. If you’d like to attend a webinar, please register by visiting www.fensreservoir.co.uk where you’ll find instructions on the homepage.

COMMUNITY WEBINARS	DATE	TIME
Register to attend on our website: www.fensreservoir.co.uk	Monday 10 June	6pm-7pm
Register to attend on our website: www.fensreservoir.co.uk	Tuesday 16 July	6pm-7pm

Consenting process and next steps

This is the second phase of consultation – your feedback will help us to develop our proposals further.

This reservoir is recognised as being a strategic regional asset. The volume of water it can hold means it is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and is treated separately from local authority planning processes.

The government agency responsible for examining NSIPs is the Planning Inspectorate. We will work with them as we prepare our application and submit it for acceptance. Once accepted by the Planning Inspectorate, a panel of inspectors will be appointed who will then examine the application before making a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) as to whether the project should be

granted development consent. It is the Secretary of State that makes the final decision.

Our application for development consent will include the area of land we would require, either permanently or temporarily, to build the project. We'll continue to refine and consult on our proposed project boundary before submitting the application. Ultimately, this will include the land needed for the reservoir and its associated water infrastructure, and wider areas of land required for construction, environmental mitigation and enhancement, and other enabling works needed to build the reservoir. Supporting information will also form

part of our application, including our assessments of any impacts and plans for mitigating them.

Local people and stakeholders have an important role to play to help inform how the project is developed and designed. During this pre-application phase, we will be gathering your feedback to help shape our proposals before we submit the application to the Planning Inspectorate.

Our summer 2024 consultation is the second phase in a multi-phase consultation approach – at least one more consultation will follow.



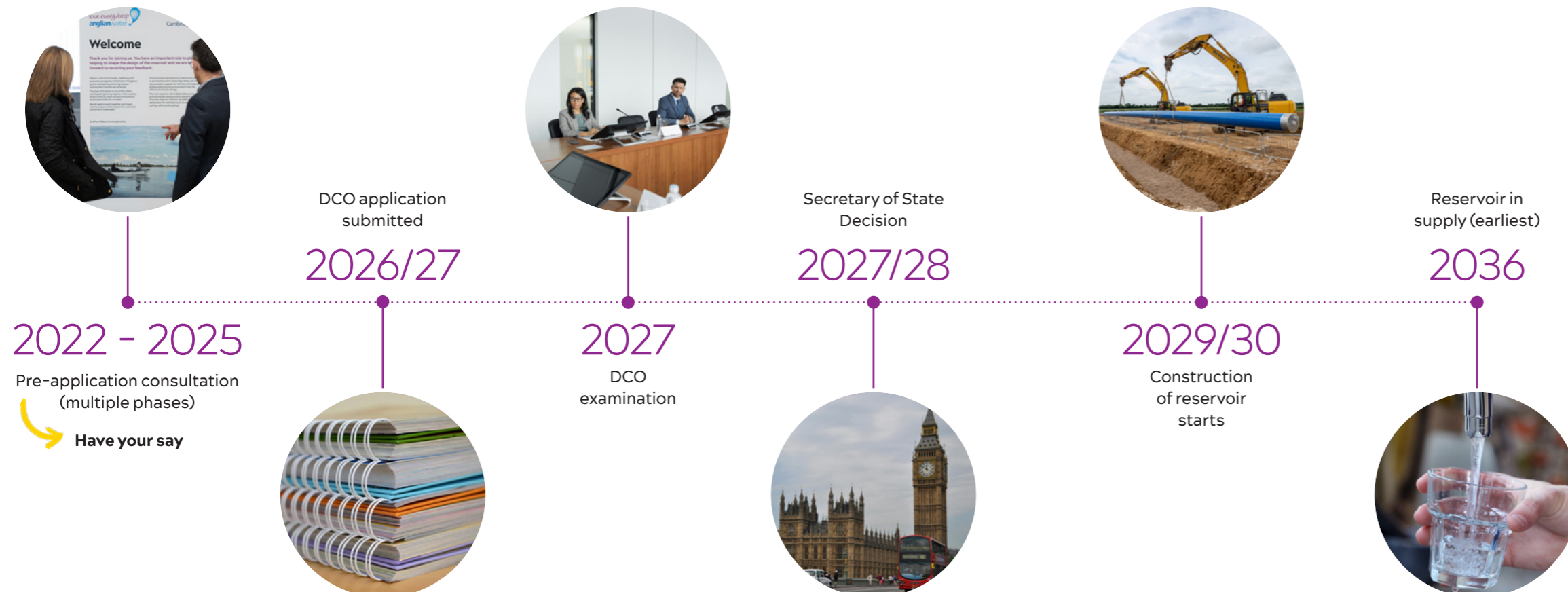
Delivering the reservoir

The reservoir would ultimately be funded through water company customer bills, with a regulated third party entity likely to finance and construct it and Anglian Water likely to operate it.

This funding model has been used on other projects and Ofwat, the water industry regulator, is keen that we explore similar options for the Fens reservoir.

We'll provide more detail on this as the project develops.

You can see where you will have the chance to comment on our proposals on this timeline



Please note: this timeline is indicative only and may change as our proposals develop

i You can find out more about the National Infrastructure Development Consent process here: infrastructure.planninginspectorate.gov.uk/application-process/the-process/

i We'll be able to give you more information about our plans to mitigate any effects of the reservoir during construction and operation following further studies that will inform our Preliminary Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). You can find out more about this process by reading our **approach to the environment fact sheet:**



Get in touch

You can contact the project team by:

 Email info@fensreservoir.co.uk

 Freephone **0800 915 2492**

 Write **Freepost Fens Reservoir**

 Website www.fensreservoir.co.uk