

Water Scarcity Group

Thursday 17 April 14:30 – 16:30

1. Short-Term Resource Options (WSP)

WSP provided an update on commissioned work to identify and assess small-scale supply options in the Cambridge Water Resource Zone. WSP provided an overview of their work to date, which has included identifying nine potential supply options that could either be taken forward as part of the WRMP process, or progressed outside of this process. It was noted that the next stage of work will be to produce dossiers for each supply option, to enable a thorough assessment of the feasibility, benefits and challenges of each.

2. Nature Based Solutions (WRE)

Water Resources East provided an update on their work trialling nature-based solutions in the upper-Cam catchment. The project is focused on building and monitoring runoff attenuation features (RAFs) and progress to date includes the completion of site visits, environmental assessments, ecology surveys, water quality samples and the installation of equipment. Baseline monitoring is due to begin in May, with an initial data review due to take place in July and construction of RAFs due to begin towards the end of 2025.

Action(s)

- WRE to share findings from initial modelling with the WSG.
- MHCLG to invite WRE to present at a future WSG once baseline monitoring is underway.

3. Non-Household Water Savings (MOSL)

MOSL presented their ideas for reform for the non-household water sector. This included ideas to increase smart metering of NHHs, noting that addressing wastage could save as much as 162ML/d of water across the whole market. They also shared suggestions around increased data-sharing and increasing our understanding of where businesses are using potable water for non-potable purposes. They shared ideas about possible changes to legislation, including changes to incentivise the installation of rainwater harvesting and reuse systems in non-households, the use of water levies and the requirement for all new developments to have smart meters installed.

Action(s)

- MOSL to share paper on non-household reform ideas with the WSG.

4. WSG Comms (MHCLG)

MHCLG updated the group on plans to publish comms for the WSG, noting that proposed materials to be published have been shared with the group for review. It was noted that WSG comms will be published on WRE's website in May.

MHCLG also proposed publishing an update on work to address water scarcity in Cambridge. It was agreed by WSG members that further public updates should be scoped.

Action(s)

- MHCLG to scope options for public comms and provide an update at the May WSG meeting.

5. Project Management Update (MHCLG)

MHCLG provided a project management update, including updates on the Fens Reservoir and delivery of the Water Efficiency Programme.

6. Cambridge Water Update

Cambridge Water provided an update on the retrofitting trial they are undertaking in Cambridge, noting that they are waiting for legal sign off to begin retrofitting activity. They also provided an update on their Yes We Cam campaign, with initial findings suggesting that this achieved a good level of water savings. They noted the success of addressing leaky loos within this.

7. Anglian Water Update

Anglian Water provided an update on the Fens Reservoir, noting that gate 3 has been extended beyond March, with the revised gate to be confirmed shortly. It was noted that this will not lead to an overall delay of the project. Anglian Water also provided an update on wastewater, noting that the DCO for the relocation of the existing wastewater treatment plan has been approved by the Defra Secretary of State.

8. Any Other Business

The next WSG meeting is planned for 28 May, 14:30 to 16:30.