

Water Scarcity Group

Thursday 14 November 14:30 – 16:30

1. MHCLG update

MHCLG provided an update on the work of the department, sharing an overview of Autumn Budget 2024, which included £10 million of new funding for the Cambridge Growth Company. It was noted that this funding will be used to develop an ambitious plan for housing, transport, and wider infrastructure, and for the water needed to support sustainable growth.

MHCLG also provided progress updates on comms for the Water Scarcity Group and the retrofitting programme.

2. Environment Agency update

The EA provided an update on their assessment of implications of recent planning decisions in the Cambridge area, as well as work they are undertaking to better understand the role of assuring and operating a water credits scheme.

Action(s)

- The EA to provide an update to the WSG on the outputs of their work looking at assurance of and operating a water credits scheme in January 2025.

3. WSG supply-demand update

MHCLG provided an update on the ongoing work of the WSG subgroup to assess the supply-demand balance in the Cambridge Water Resource Zone between now and 2041. It was noted that the next phase of this work should focus on refining the data further, working with Cambridge Water to do so.

Action(s)

- Cambridge Water to provide an update on the proposal for a non-household advisory demand limit in their draft WRMP at the December WSG meeting.
- WSG subgroup to provide an update on the supply-demand balance work at the December WSG meeting.

4. PMO update

MHCLG provided a project management update, including updates to Nature-Based Solutions and Agriculture programmes, which are both progressing, and the Grafham Pipeline Transfer, which is currently progressing to agreed timelines.

5. Affinity Water update

Affinity Water presented on the Grand Union Canal scheme, which is a dependency project for the Grafham Pipeline Transfer. Affinity Water highlighted that the scheme is currently on track for delivery in 2032, but there are some risks that need to be monitored to ensure the project remains on track. Affinity Water are working closely with key partners to assure the delivery of the scheme.

Action(s)

- Defra, the EA and Affinity Water to join up outside of the WSG to further discuss risk mitigation strategies for the Grand Union Canal scheme.
- Affinity Water to present an update on the Grand Union Canal scheme at the January 2025 meeting.

6. Cambridge Water update

Cambridge Water provided an update on their behavioural change campaign, as well as anticipated timelines for publication of their WRMP and the final determination for their business plan. They also provided an overview of their proposed trial to install flow regulators in households in Cambridge to understand water savings that can be achieved in the region.

Action(s)

- Cambridge Water to provide an update on their flow regulator trial at the December WSG meeting.
- Cambridge Water to present the findings of their 'Yes We Cam' campaign to the WSG in early 2025.

7. Anglian Water update

Anglian Water provided an update on the Fens Reservoir, highlighting ongoing discussions with Ofwat on the price review, timings for the DCO process, land assembly and interactions with the Habitats Regulations.

Actions(s)

- The EA and Anglian Water to join up outside of the WSG to further discuss the Habitats Regulations in relation to the Fens Reservoir.

8. Any Other Business

The chair noted that the next meeting of the WSG is due to take place on 14 December, 14:30 to 16:30.