

Water Scarcity Group

Wednesday 22 April 09:30-11:30

1. Chair's introduction

The Chair welcomed members and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

2. Water efficiency programmes Phase 1 social housing retrofits

The supplier for this project, alongside Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS), provided an update on the roll-out and pre-engagement for the retrofit works in Greater Cambridge social housing stock. There has been an initial high take-up, and they are working alongside the councils to continue and increase this trend. Group members welcomed the project and asked to be kept updated on progress at a future meeting.

Action(s):

- Supplier and Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) to provide an update on the progress of this project in Autumn 2026.

3. WSG comms paper update

MHCLG provided an update on plans for a progress report to be published in the coming months to highlight the progress that has been made on addressing the short and medium term water challenges in Cambridge. Group members welcomed progress to date and discussed options to use this work to provide greater certainty on progress towards infrastructure upgrades to support the Local Plan.

Action(s):

- Follow-up discussion between GCSP, MHCLG, Defra and the EA on Local Plan requirements.
- WSG members to send any comments to MHCLG with a more detailed version to be shared ahead of the next meeting in June.

4. Non-household sector wholesome/ non wholesome study update

DEFRA and the consultants working with them on this project outlined the emerging findings following a research project with the Environment Agency to better understand wholesome and non-wholesome water demand in the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. This included research to quantify current non-domestic

water use across key sectors, identify safe and proportionate treatment requirements for non-wholesome applications, and assess how much existing wholesome demand could feasibly be met through recycled or reused water sources. WSG members welcomed the work to date and considered how the findings could be best used to inform other projects.

5. Deep dive into Grafham pipeline transfer next steps

Cambridge Water provided an update on the current progress of the Grafham pipeline and how it was being aligned to the work on the Fens reservoir, with an option for a single pipeline being considered. The work is due to complete by 2032. WSG members discussed the pros and cons of a single pipeline solution.

Action(s):

- Cambridge Water to meet with interested WSG members to discuss the options/ alternatives raised within the meeting.

6. Programme Management Office (PMO) update

MHCLG provided a project management update including the successful launch of the Water Efficiency Cambridgeshire ([web](#)) fund by MOSL on 14 April which is due to close on 1 May. WSG members discussed the current risk for wastewater and potential next steps.

Action(s):

- MHCLG and DEFRA to hold follow up meetings with relevant parties to consider the issues on wastewater raised within the meeting.

7. Any other business

The Chair noted that the next meeting is on 9 June, 14:30 - 16:30.