

Water Scarcity Group

Tuesday 16th December 14:30 – 16:00

Actions:

- DEFRA to consider points raised by WSG members on the OxCam wholesome/ non-wholesome study.
- WSG comms: MHCLG to share a more detailed plan of action with WSG members in early 2026 and co-ordinate updates with wider WRE and CGC work.

1. Updates on Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) workstream and Smart Agricultural-Abstraction trial

Water Resource East (WRE) gave an update on the current status of both the NBS workstream and Smart Agricultural-Abstraction trial. On NBS, this included how for run-off attenuation features (RAFs) sites were identified and screened as suitable, alongside an update on delivery and next steps. On the smart agricultural-abstraction trial, WRE updated on the purpose of the trial, alongside how it will be conducted. Further information was provided on how WRE expect abstraction management governance and guidance to operate.

2. OxCam wholesome/non-wholesome study (DEFRA)

DEFRA provided an update on the OxCam wholesome/ non-wholesome study they will be undertaking in early 2026, outlining the scope, research methods and timelines for this research piece. This research piece aims to identify specific water demand across selected sectors, with a view of informing future policy decisions. DEFRA outlined the outputs for the research, which includes a presentation to a future WSG group on findings. DEFRA to consider points raised by members of the WSG.

3. Update on Fens Reservoir deep-dive carried out by RAPID and DEFRA next steps (DEFRA)

DEFRA provided an update on next steps from the Department in responding to the Fens Reservoir deep-dive carried out by RAPID. More information to be provided to the WSG on this in due course.

4. Eddington next steps (DEFRA)

DEFRA provided an update on the Eddington reuse project, noting this project is still in its early stages. This included current status of the project, and what next steps can be taken to enable progress for the Eddington reuse system to be switched on. A further update to be provided to the group in due course.

5. Update on Wastewater treatment capacity (Anglian Water)

Anglian Water gave an update on the progress of actions commissioned by DEFRA's Ministerial Water Delivery Taskforce. Anglian Water is due to present on this progress to the Taskforce in January 2026.

6. Project Management Update (MHCLG, Cambridge Water, Anglian Water)

MHCLG provided a project management update, including updates on the Water Efficiency programme. On the plan to take forward a comms report on the work of the WSG – MHCLG to share a more detailed plan of action with WSG members in early 2026 and co-ordinate updates with wider WRE and CGC work.

Cambridge Water also provided an update on progress to deliver short-term demand management interventions, also noting wider work underway on water efficiency.

Anglian Water to provide an update at the next WSG.