

Water Scarcity Group

Thursday 5th February 15:00-16:30

1. Chair's introduction

The chair led an introduction and welcomed attendees.

2. Environment Agency update on Water and Data Centres (Environment Agency)

The Environment Agency gave an update on the water and data centres workshop held in December 2025. This update highlighted the main water resource issues related to data centres, alongside the next steps in taking forward outputs from the workshop. DEFRA also noted ongoing policy work on data centres being taken forward by the department.

3. Discussion paper on long-term water strategy for Greater Cambridge (MHCLG)

MHCLG presented a paper summarising Water Scarcity Group efforts to address Greater Cambridge's water challenges from 2040 onward. The aim of this discussion was to review whether ongoing work is sufficient to address future water challenges, identify any gaps, and agree a forward look for the next year to develop a long-term strategy.

Action(s):

- MHCLG agreed to progress a long-term water strategy paper for discussion at a future WSG.

4. 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 provided a written update on progress to the Taskforce in February 2026.

5. Update on DEFRA LRO fund (DEFRA)

DEFRA provided an update on the Greater Cambridge Agriculture Local Resource Option (LRO) fund. This programme will provide funding to Cambridge County Council to work with a delivery partner, to engage farmers and provide grant funding for water efficient interventions. This will deliver water savings through the installation of rainwater harvesting water storage and improved irrigation equipment in the Cambridgeshire area.

6. WSG Comms report update (MHCLG)

MHCLG provided an update on a proposal to publish a report on the progress of the WSG's work. This update covered the purpose of the report, the format it will take and the proposed timelines for review and publication.

Action(s):

- MHCLG to consider comments from WSG members on how to expand messaging on the work of the WSG alongside the current proposal to publish a report on progress of the group.

7. Project Management Update (MHCLG)

MHCLG provided a project management update, including updates on the Water Efficiency programme.

8. Any Other Business

The chair noted the next meeting of the WSG is due to take place on 11th March.