



Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
FAO Mr Richard Walton
Seacole Building
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

22 April 2025

Dear Richard,

Fens Reservoir – Section 35 Planning Act 2008 Direction Requests

Anglian Water is developing two new reservoirs in the east of England, known as the Fens Reservoir (proposed to be located in Cambridgeshire, in partnership with Cambridge Water) (“FR”) and the Lincolnshire Reservoir (proposed to be located in Lincolnshire) (“LR” and together with FR “the Projects”).

Anglian Water supplies water and wastewater services to almost 7 million customers in the east of England and Hartlepool and is the largest water company in England by geographic area. However, the current pressures on water resources from climate change, a growing population and increasing drought risk, as well as protecting the environment, means it is essential that new water resources are delivered across its region.

The Projects are two ‘Strategic Resource Options’ being developed by Anglian Water and each will play a critical role in securing water supply long into the future. Each will store approximately 50 million cubic metres of water abstracted from existing watercourses and, when needed, that water would be treated to a potable quality and transferred via pipelines to connection points within the existing supply system. The Projects are necessary to ensure ongoing compliance with Anglian Water’s statutory water supply obligations, as both are identified in Anglian Water’s Water Resources Management Plan 2024.

Reservoirs are one of the categories of water resources infrastructure that can automatically qualify as a nationally significant infrastructure project (“NSIP”) under the Planning Act 2008. However, because of the delivery model identified for each of the Projects (as confirmed by Ofwat), namely through an Infrastructure Provider (“IP”) under the Water Industry (Specified Infrastructure Projects) (English Undertakers) Regulations 2013, the Projects would not be constructed by a “water undertaker” as defined in the Act. As a result, neither of the Projects would meet all the criteria under section 27 of the Planning Act 2008 to qualify as a NSIP. As such, Directions from the Secretary of State are required to enable each of the Projects to be consented by way of a (separate) Development Consent Order (“DCO”).



The DCO process would provide the most effective consenting route for securing delivery of each of the Projects and would provide the most efficient mechanism for securing the extensive range of statutory powers, permissions, consents and licences required. The alternative route of seeking planning permission under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, coupled with a multitude of other separate licences, power and consents, carries a risk of substantial delay to the delivery of these pieces of critical national infrastructure.

Anglian Water therefore requests that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs gives two (one in respect of each of the Projects) Directions under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended) for the 'principal'¹ elements of each of the Projects to be treated as development for which development consent is required.

This letter is accompanied by the FR qualifying request, the first of the two 'qualifying requests' (one in respect of FR and one in respect of LR) under section 35 of the Planning Act 2008 for the Projects, which are being made in writing and specify the development to which they relate.

The information within each of the qualifying requests explains why the conditions in section 35(2)(a) and (b) of the Planning Act 2008 are met in relation to each of the Projects, and why the relevant 'principal development' is considered to be a project of national significance. Each of the qualifying requests therefore meet the requirements within the meaning of section 35ZA(11) of the Planning Act 2008 to enable the Secretary of State to give a Direction for each of the Projects under section 35(1).

Yours sincerely,



Karen Barclay

DCO Development Director

Anglian Water Services Limited.