

FOI Ref

9820

Response sent

3 Nov 2021

### **(CCC) Carbon Impact of proposed WWTW**

I am writing further to the BBC article published on 13th August 2021, entitled 'Council policies 'inconsistent' with climate goals' suggesting that:

'More than a third of English councils support policies that could increase carbon emissions despite having declared a "climate emergency".'

I am to understand that Cambridge City Council declared a Climate emergency in February 2019. See here and here.

I was also interested to read the BBC article published on 24th September 2021 entitled 'Climate change: Construction companies told to stop knocking down buildings', which raises concerns regarding demolition and construction impact on the environment and promoting re-use where possible.

Having read the publications for the development of the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NECAAP) and the corresponding Net zero targets for both NECAAP and the proposed relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTW), I have been unable to locate the corresponding information quantifying the total resultant effects of capital carbon resulting from the demolition and building of the proposed new treatment plant.

I understand that it is also well recorded by both Cambridge City Council and Anglian Water Services Limited that the WWTW has no operational need to relocate, yet is currently proposed to relocate to a green belt location to permit the construction of a mixed development, including a substantial housing allocation, on what is a cist that remains fully operational and therefore does not constitute Brown Field Land.

Under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 could you please quantify the total Carbon impact of all combined activities relating to the demolition and de-contamination of the existing WWTW and the re-location and construction (including activities such as access provisions, pipework, mitigation etc.) of the proposed new WWTW.

### **Response:**

I hope the following will answer your query:

The North East Cambridge Area Action Plan (NEC AAP) is predicated on the relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) having *taken* place. Waste provision is the responsibility of the County Council as Minerals and Waste Authority, however, the WWTP relocation project is being taken forward, led by Anglian Water (AW), under the Development Control Order process, which is subject to its own environmental assessment process. The WWTP relocation project process is therefore a separate process to the NECAAP being prepared by Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council as the local

planning authorities. If the relocation does not take place the proposals contained in the draft AAP would not be able to be taken forward.

The AAP will consider the sustainability impacts of development proposed within the plans and as part of the Sustainability Appraisal supporting the AAP, the impacts of the Council's plan in combination with other plans and projects, including those prepared by other organisations, will be assessed.

As a point of clarification, the planning definition of brownfield land, described as previously developed land in the Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework, applies to land that "is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land" and therefore is the appropriate description of WWPT site (see [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework)).

The question asked is therefore a matter for AW to respond to. However, in providing a response to a recent question asked at Cambridge City Council's full Council meeting in order to assist Members, the question has been asked of AW who have provided the following response:

In regard to the relocation project itself, the need for the project was acknowledged in the Secretary of State's s.35 decision dated 18 January 2021 which identified that the project will provide a key contribution to the development of Cambridge, particularly to the North East of the city, and to the investment in waste water infrastructure, and provide waste water services to a proposed development at Waterbeach New Town.

The project is currently in design development and as such no specific carbon figures have been published. However, Anglian Water's commitment is to achieve an operationally net-zero plant through the implementation of technologies which minimise process emissions and the use of renewable energy. Details of the relocation project and its emerging design have been made public for consultation here (<https://cwwtpr.com/document-library>) – see specifically the Phase Two Consultation information.

The new plant will comply with commitments made within the Net Zero 2030 Route map published by Water UK for which Anglian Water, as a leader within the water industry, is a signatory.

It will not be possible to build the new plant and decommission the current one with no embodied (or embedded) carbon impact. However, Anglian Water's commitment is that against a theoretical 2010 baseline build, we will achieve a 70% reduction in embodied carbon at the new facility – i.e. we plan to build, decommission and reuse/recycle materials in the most environmentally friendly way, prioritising carbon reductions.

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Further details regarding Anglian Water's net zero carbon plans for the relocation project and assessment of the carbon impact will be made available as the design of the proposed development is progressed, during the statutory Phase Three Consultation, currently scheduled for spring 2022, when a greater level of design detail will be shared for public consultation, and in the subsequent full DCO application submission. We anticipate this important area being a key area of focus and scrutiny during the Development Consent Order planning examination for the project from late 2022.

The assessment of carbon associated with the preparation of the Core site for development, the associated demolition of the structures at Milton site, and any future development of the Core site, will be assessed and considered as part of the development scheme planning and design process and as part of the planning application for that development.

Further queries on this matter should be directed to [foi@cambridge.gov.uk](mailto:foi@cambridge.gov.uk)