

FOI Ref

11084

Response sent

16 Jun 2022

(CCC) Relocation of Cambridge Waste Recycling Centre (CWRC)

Cambridge City Council has formally stated that it is not a requirement of the Council for the CWRC to relocate and that Anglian Water has made its own decisions. Yet a number of Anglian Water publications clearly state that the only reason they are relocating is because of the requirement to develop North East Cambridge. The HIF fund application Business Case clearly states in multiple places that there is no operational need to move the CWRC and hence why Anglian Water cannot raise funds from its own sources. Furthermore, why would Anglian Water seek to relocate an operational facility? Under the Freedom of Information Act please provide; 1) Copies of the defining correspondence between Anglian Water and Cambridge City Council leading to the application for HIF Funding, including the correspondence in which: a) Anglian Water has requested the relocation, and b) sought the support of Cambridge City Council in applying for grant funding. 2) Dates and weblinks for the corresponding Council Agenda and minutes addressing the Anglian Water request to relocate.

Response:

Thank you for your request for information above, which we have dealt with under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

I hope the information below will answer your query.

There may be some misunderstanding about the basis of the proposal for relocation of the CWWTP and the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid. The HIF programme provides funding for infrastructure to unlock development of new homes, without which the development of new homes is not viable due to the abnormal cost of the required infrastructure (the gap known as market failure). Strategically, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council, as the local planning authority, have, for many years, acknowledged the planning benefits that would be achieved through the development of a new low-carbon city district on Cambridge's last major brownfield site, known as North East Cambridge, in a highly sustainable location. Both Councils have a long held ambition to realise this opportunity. The adopted 2018 Local Plans both include policies supporting the principle of a mixed use, employment-led redevelopment at North East Cambridge, with amount, capacity, viability, timescales and phasing of development to be established via a joint Area Action Plan for the area. Given the unresolved (at the time) position on relocating the CWWTP, the adopted plans did not rely on any development on the North East Cambridge site to meet development needs up to 2031.

Without the relocation of the waste water treatment plant, North East Cambridge, one of the most sustainable sites in Greater Cambridge, could not come forward for major regeneration, owing to the location of the current plant at the heart of the area and the impact of the odour zone on development of housing.

The announcement of the Housing Infrastructure Fund in 2017 therefore provided the first real potential opportunity in this case to address the strategic market

failure arising from the fact that redevelopment was not possible without grant funding due to the cost of relocation of the waste water treatment plant. There was no operational requirement to move the plant because there was sufficient capacity at the time on that site, which meant that Anglian Water was not able to fund such a move under its regulatory provisions.

However, the strategic opportunity potentially created by the HIF programme announcement enabled an expression of interest bid to be developed in partnership, and prioritised and submitted by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority in September 2017. Homes England requirements at the business case stage included the request for a more formal delivery partnership, and Cambridge City Council and Anglian Water formed a joint venture partnership in 2018 to support the business case, which proposed the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant in order to enable over 5000 homes to be developed on the area known as the Core Site, on land owned by Anglian Water and the City Council. The Councils have prepared the emerging North East Cambridge Area Action Plan that proposes 8350 homes and 15,000 new jobs in total across the wider plan area, enabled by the relocation of the CWWTP. The relocation project and the site proposed, subject to DCO determination, also allows for the new plant to serve new Waterbeach development as well, therefore requiring only one, rather than two separate plants.

There was no specific request, in its own right, from either party for the relocation to occur as such, and therefore there has been no defining correspondence between the City Council and Anglian Water on that particular point. The plan has developed to help meet future strategic needs for homes and jobs across Greater Cambridge, and the opportunity provided by the HIF fund to finally realise the potential of the development of a new low-carbon city district on Cambridge's last major brownfield site. The City Council and Anglian Water with support from the Combined Authority, therefore progressed the HIF funding bid to support the project to relocate the CWWTP, and established the joint venture partnership as required by Homes England as part of the bid process, to enable subsequent development on the Core site, subject to the DCO determination and relevant planning permissions .

The emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals identifies a need for 44,400 homes and 58,500 jobs between 2020 and 2041 and the NEC site has been identified (assuming a positive DCO process) as a preferred strategic site at the heart of the development strategy in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals by the Local Planning Authority. Evidence supporting the GCLP is clear that the North East Cambridge site ('the NEC') is one of the most sustainable locations for development in the area. A critical finding in the climate change evidence (page 12) that was important in determining the proposed development strategy is that location is the biggest factor in impacts on carbon emissions. The preferred strategy therefore focuses growth at a range of the best performing locations in terms of minimising trips by car as demonstrated by the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Transport Evidence. In terms of non-car mode shares and car trips per dwelling, our transport evidence concludes that development at NEC is the best performing location considered (page xviii, and section 14.3).

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We aim to provide a quality service to you and hope that you are satisfied with this response, however if you have any questions, please contact us.

Further queries on this matter should be directed to foi@cambridge.gov.uk