

PORTFOLIO HOLDER DECISION RECORD

Portfolio Holder: Councillor D Laws, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Flooding, IDBs and Building Control	Service: Planning Policy
CMT Officer: Carol Pilson, Corporate Director and Monitoring Officer	Delegated Power Being Exercised: Non-executive decision
Subject of Decision: Fens Reservoir Phase 3 Consultation Response	

Decision Taken:

Endorsement of Fenland District Councils response to the Fens Reservoir Phase 3 Consultation as set out in Appendix 1.

Reason for the Decision:

Fenland District Council (FDC) is a statutory consultee in the development of the proposed Fens Reservoir, a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project led by Anglian Water. As the local planning authority, FDC has a central role in scrutinising the emerging proposals, ensuring that local communities, the economy and the environment are fully considered, and influencing the development of the scheme prior to statutory consultation and the later Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

Scope of Anglian Water's Phase Three Consultation

In this third phase of non-statutory consultation, Anglian Water has presented its most up-to-date proposals for the project. The material includes:

- updated design proposals for the main reservoir site, including landscape illustrations, community connections and potential features for people and nature
- information on proposed water sources and the associated transfer, treatment and supply infrastructure
- early thinking on project delivery, including construction phasing and transport options
- Anglian Water's approach to environmental assessment, outlining potential impacts identified so far and possible mitigation during construction and operation
- initial proposals for powering the reservoir, including renewable technology options

This information provides the basis on which FDC has assessed the emerging scheme and prepared its consultation response.

Overview of FDC's Key Comments

FDC is broadly supportive of the ambition behind the Fens Reservoir and recognises the significant opportunity it presents to deliver long-term water security while also addressing some of the district's deep-rooted socio-economic challenges. However, the Council has identified several areas requiring further development, clarification or commitment. Key themes from FDC's response include:

- Placemaking as a guiding principle – FDC welcomes the placemaking focus but emphasises that it must shape the whole masterplan to ensure the reservoir becomes a high-quality, inclusive and engaging place for residents and visitors.
- Strong connections to nearby communities – Clearer commitments are needed to active travel

and public transport links, with Manea, March, Chatteris, Doddington and Wimblington all treated as key access points.

- Landscape, habitat and ecological design – A more diverse habitat mosaic, early habitat creation, robust peat management and long-term ecological stewardship are essential to realising the project's nature recovery potential.
- Recreation, community benefit and visitor economy – FDC supports a vibrant, year-round destination and seeks assurances that key elements—such as the primary and secondary visitor centres—will be secured. A balanced mix of free and paid-for activities is required to ensure equitable access.
- Movement and transport – A coherent, future-facing movement strategy is needed. FDC raises concerns about current internal road alignments and expects a stronger emphasis on safe, direct and attractive active travel routes.
- Hydrology and water quality – FDC highlights the need for detailed assessment of groundwater, drainage and water transfer impacts, as well as a robust water quality management plan for the reservoir and lagoon.

Overall, FDC's response is constructive and focused on maximising the lasting social, environmental and economic benefits of the project. The Council remains committed to working collaboratively with Anglian Water and partner organisations to shape a reservoir that delivers genuine long-term value for Fenland and the wider region.

Alternative Options Considered (if appropriate):

N/A

Background/Reports/Information considered

<https://fensreservoir.co.uk/documents/>

Portfolio Holder Signature:

Councillor D Laws, Portfolio Holder for Building Control, Flooding, IDBs and Planning

Date:

4 December 2025

Please forward to Democratic Services upon completion

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(if not called-in)
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of decision)**

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