

Alison Dyson  
The Planning Inspectorate  
Temple Quay House  
2 The Square  
Bristol  
BS1 6PN

**Date:** 23 May 2023

**Your ref:** APP/W0530/W/23/3315611

**LPA ref:** 22/02771/OUT

By email: [Alison.Dyson@planninginspectorate.gov.uk](mailto:Alison.Dyson@planninginspectorate.gov.uk)

Dear Alison

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990**

**Appeal by Brookgate Land Limited on behalf of the Chesterton Partnership**

**Site address: Land to the north of Cambridge North Station, Cambridge, CB4 0AE**

**Further comments from the Environment Agency**

**Introduction**

The Environment Agency (the Agency) was notified of the above planning appeal by Greater Cambridge Planning Partnership and issued an objection to the planning application on 27 February 2023. The Agency provided an interested party letter on 23 March 2023 setting out our position and reason for objecting to the planning application. This letter is the Agency's final statement for this planning appeal and it aims to provide additional information in support of the organisations' position for the benefit of the Planning Inspector and the main parties. This letter includes:

- A summary of the Agency's representation to Cambridge Water's draft 2024 Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP24).
- A summary of the recent discussions and scope of further assessment work being progressed by Cambridge Water Company (CWC) and Greater Cambridge Planning (GCP), following key meetings that were held on 19 and 21 April 2023 with those organisations.
- The Agency's position in response to the appellant's Quantitative Assessment (dated 12 April 2023) and Proof of Evidence (dated 9 May 2023).
- A summary of the baseline evidence with regards to risk of deterioration to the ecology of water bodies within the CWC supply area (with more detailed technical evidence attached as Appendix 1).

The Agency looks forward to receiving further information as soon as it becomes available, particularly with a view to the timetable for the inquiry and roundtable discussion on water resources.

The Agency's position remains that it objects to the planning application on the grounds that it may individually, and/or in combination with other proposed development in Greater Cambridge, increase abstraction and risk deterioration to water bodies in the Greater Cambridge area, because of the additional demand for potable water use.

The planning application does not demonstrate that the potential impact on water resources and Water Framework Directive (WFD) environmental objectives have been assessed, nor appropriate mitigation considered. Therefore, it remains the Agency's view that the proposed development is contrary to Policy CC/7 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018), where it specifies that proposals must demonstrate that; there is adequate (public water) supply to serve the whole development, and that the quality of groundwater or surface water bodies will not be harmed.

### **1. The Agency's representation to Cambridge Water's draft WRMP24**

The Agency's previous letter to the Planning Inspectorate dated 24 March 2023, stated that its formal representation on the draft WRMP24 was not yet available for the appeal deadline. In this letter the Agency explained that this formal representation on draft WRMP24 will provide the Agency's expert opinion on whether the draft WRMP24 demonstrates CWC can supply new developments without relying on abstractions that risk deterioration of waterbodies.

The Agency's formal representation was issued to CWC on 27 March 2023 (Appendix 3). In summary the Agency's view is that there are concerns regarding CWC's ability to meet the demand for water in its area without increasing the risk of deterioration in the status of water bodies. The representation highlights the short-term reliance on demand management and drought measures to prevent its abstraction from increasing and preventing deterioration in the status of water bodies. However, the Agency remain very concerned that it will not deliver the reductions in demand stated in the plan, based on the company's track record of not achieving forecast demand savings and the lack of evidence in the plan that the demand management measures will succeed. It is also not sufficiently evident how CWC will monitor its progress and act quickly if the assumed demand savings are not achieved, and the plans lack of a robust alternative course of action in case it cannot deliver its forecast demand reductions.

The Agency's formal representation also highlights concerns with regards to the deliverability of the supply schemes (transfer from Anglian Water 2030 and proposed Fens reservoir 2036/7) and no alternative plan if these schemes are delayed or cannot be delivered. This presents an unacceptable risk to security of supply and the environment. The Agency's conclusion is that there remains ongoing significant concerns with the company's ability to

deliver the supply options and demand management measures in its plan, and that there is an expectation by the Agency for it to be presented with a substantially improved plan which demonstrates how Cambridge Water is planning to safeguard the environment while having enough supplies to allow growth in its area. Please see Appendix 3 for further detail.

The Agency issued a revised representation to CWC on the 17 May 2023 (Appendix 4). It included an additional recommendation (11) on the Strategic Environmental Report (SEA), this replaces an improvement (8) in Version 1 in which we committed to provide feedback on the SEA. The Agency are concerned that the SEA does consider alternative plans such as the least cost programme and a best environment and society programme. It is the Agency's view that the company should also address other shortcomings in its SEA, for example providing certainty that all significant effects have been captured.

CWC will now review the Agency's and other customer/stakeholder representations and produce a Statement of Response (SoR) by the end of August 2023. The SoR together with a revised draft plan should outline how CWC has considered representations made on its draft plan and what changes it has made to the WRMP in response to consultation responses received. The Agency will then take 10 weeks to assess CWC's SoR and revised WRMP24 to determine how well the company has addressed the issues raised and if it has demonstrated the changes needed.

Following the above assessment the Agency will produce advice for Defra, who then advise the Secretary of State. CWC will be directed to do one of the following:

- Publish its final plan
- Include specific information in its final plan
- Provide further information to address more significant issues
- Decide that an examination in public, public hearing or inquiry is required to address unresolved issues.

## **2. Update on further discussions and proposed assessment work**

The Agency created a draft external briefing note for applicants with proposals accompanied by Environmental Impact Assessments entitled 'Greater Cambridge external guidance note for planning applications - Drafted by Environment Agency, March 2023' (see Appendix 2). GCP suggested we create such a guidance note so that consistent advice could be shared on how water resources is to be assessed as part of the Environmental Statement and advice on mitigation.

Originally it was envisaged by the Agency that applicants could then apply the advice to their proposals and undertake assessments of impact of water demands on risk of deterioration to water bodies (individually and cumulatively) on a case-by-case basis, and contact the relevant authorities to obtain the baseline data required. The second paragraph under the sub-heading 'EIA advice' in appendix 2, states that to complete a cumulative assessment the applicant will need the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to provide information about how much growth is planned versus delivery of sustainable water supply by CWC. To do this CWC needs to state the amount of water available to support growth up to the capped

abstraction licence levels and the timing for sustainable alternative water supplies to be in place (for example bulk water transfer or a new reservoir).

Further to receiving feedback from GCP, whilst the Agency were drafting the guidance note, it became evident that it would be necessary for both CWC and GCP to supply the information required for applicants to undertake the water resources assessment (including cumulative) as part of their ES. It is the Agency's view that co-operation from both organisations is required prior to formal publication of the guidance note. Therefore, contact was made with CWC on 23 March 2023 to share the briefing note and ask if they were able to provide the information required within and for their feedback. A meeting was arranged with CWC on the 21 April 2023.

During the meetings held 19 and 21 April, it was agreed between the main parties (EA, GCP, CWC) that for consistency, it would make sense if the cumulative impact assessment was undertaken once as a strategic piece of work, rather than individual applicants undertaking this on a case-by-case basis. CWC has agreed to undertake some initial assessment work. This work will seek to answer the following initial questions:

- 1) How much water supply is available up to the capped abstraction licence levels so GCP can understand how much growth can be sustainably supplied until alternative supplies can be secured?
- 2) If CWC can't supply growth from within the capped abstraction licences, what are the environmental risks of abstracting at the required rate to meet the growth needs of development in Greater Cambridge?

To understand the answer to Question 1, CWC have agreed to produce a scenarios paper, which provides a yearly breakdown of supplies and forecast demands for growth, based on four scenarios (best case, 2 mid-case and worst case). To understand the answer to Question 2, CWC have agreed to commission groundwater modelling to ascertain what level of deterioration risk exists at the proposed level of abstraction up to the point of new supplies being available. CWC are currently working up the potential timescales for this work and will share this as soon as they can with the Agency and GCP.

The Agency will consider CWC's evidence of which scenario is the most likely to occur, taking into account the likely effectiveness of demand management and our concerns regarding the reliability of the options (e.g., Grafham transfer), and advise GCP accordingly. If the results from Question 1 (and 2) indicate that water supply at the capped level is unlikely to meet anticipated growth, which presents a risk of deterioration, GCP needs to understand and decide (with support from CWC and the Agency) what this means for planning applications and planned growth. This will need to ascertain whether mitigation such as water efficiency, reuse, offsetting and phasing can be used to free up sufficient supply until sustainable supplies come online and what level of mitigation would be required from planning applications. The results from CWC's work will need to be understood and interpreted. The Agency's understanding is that GCP have agreed to undertake further strategic assessment work such as the cumulative impact assessment and identify the mitigation measures and standards required.

The Agency are minded to advise that the results from the work CWC and GCP will undertake will not be available for the Planning Inquiry. CWC is scoping the work and the timelines will be finalised and agreed shortly.

### **3. Quantitative Water Demand Assessment**

The appellant's provided the Agency with the draft Quantitative Assessment (completed by Alison Caldwell of PJA) on 12 April 2023, and both parties attended a meeting on 19 April 2023 to share views and feedback. The final version has been appended to the appellant's Proof of Evidence as Appendix C dated 3 May 2023. In section 3.5.3, the appellant states that this provides a site-specific assessment of the potential water demand the development will have and proposes onsite mitigation to ensure strong water efficiency and conservation measures are delivered to minimise the potential harm to water bodies until alternative supplies are available or CWC can demonstrate that there is sufficient sustainable water available to supply all planned growth up to 2030. The appellant proposes that residential buildings are built to the Home Quality Mark (HQM) standard in terms of installing water efficient components and appliances. The assessment demonstrates that on average (and with a greywater recycling system) this reduces domestic water consumption rates from 141 litres per head per day (l/h/d) to 89 l/h/d, which exceeds Cambridge Water's target of 110 l/h/d in their draft 2024 Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP) but also South Cambridgeshire's Local Plan Policy CC/4 minimum water efficiency requirement of 110 l/h/d. For the commercial development the appellant goes on to propose full BREEAM credits for the WAT 01 category, and with greywater recycling, calculates that this means on average the water consumption rate has been improved by 62%.

The appellant also provides detail of the phasing schedule of the development (Table 12). This states the potential full occupation date of the phases of the development span from 2026 to 2029. The appellant states (section 4.4.3) that it is anticipated that CWC will also start to implement its demand management measures as set out in its 2024 WRMP which will start to offset the demand for water further. Once the development is complete and fully occupied the appellant states that Cambridge Water's supply side options, including new imports from Anglian Water and the construction of a regional winter storage reservoir, will be near completion. The Agency's view is that it is only the import from Anglian Water that is currently forecast to be completed by the time that the development is fully populated (2030) notwithstanding the Agency's concerns about the feasibility of that transfer option. The storage reservoir is not forecast to be completed until 2036 at the earliest.

The Agency's position on the Quantitative Assessment is that it recognises the efforts made by the appellant to propose a much-improved water efficiency and reuse scheme than that proposed in the original planning application submission. The Agency acknowledge that when the water efficiency measures and greywater recycling are combined, they propose a water use standard that exceeds the requirements of current planning policy, e.g. South Cambridgeshire's Local Plan Policy CC/4.

However, the Agency are unable to withdraw their objection based on the proposals in the Quantitative Assessment, because we do not currently have confidence that the development does not pose a risk of deterioration to water bodies, nor (at time of writing) is there a consistent and confirmed benchmark of mitigation to judge the appellants mitigation

proposals against. This would need to identify and assess as to; the availability of water up to the capped abstraction licence levels, the potential risk to water bodies from increasing abstraction by CWC, and the level of mitigation planning applications would be expected to offer to free up sufficient supplies until alternative supplies come online. In summary the Agency require more detail on these matters from CWC and GCP.

During the meeting on 19 April 2023 to discuss the Quantitative Assessment with the appellants, the Agency highlighted that they have raised significant concerns that CWC will not be able to deliver its ambitious demand management measures. The appellant anticipates (4.4.3) that CWC will start to implement its demand management measures at the same time as the development is completed, as set out in its 2024 WRMP which will begin to offset the development's demand for water. These measures include the rollout of universal smart metering (2025-2030), 50% reduction in leakage by 2050, achieving a per capita consumption rate of 110 litres per person per day by 2050, and reductions in non-household consumption of 9% by 2037. However, the Agency currently does not have clarity as to how water savings that are made from these measures will offset the demand from the appellant's scheme or other developments. To fully understand the scale of this issue, an assessment would need to compare the savings from CWC's demand management measures to the percentage increase in growth of this development and all other developments in the same time period.

Further, the Agency's representation to the draft WRMP24 raised concerns that the proposed supply options are not developed sufficiently to have confidence in their deliverability. Nor is there an alternative solution should the bulk transfer from Anglian Water and/or the Fens Reservoir scheme be unfeasible or delayed. It has yet to be demonstrated that the bulk transfer to CWC from Anglian Water is feasible, and if it is not, the best case scenario for the Fens reservoir is to supply water 2036/37, nearly 10 years after the full completion of this development.

Section 3.4.11 states that CWC has confirmed that the proposed development has been accounted for as planned growth within the 2019 WRMP and draft 2024 WRMP as per the site's allocation, and that CWC is confident that a sustainable water supply can be provided to the development without causing deterioration to the environment. The Agency's position is that whilst it may be the case that the development is included in draft WRMP24, it does not yet have confidence that the growth can be supplied sustainably. The work CWC (and GCP) have agreed to undertake and commission to ascertain the available supply, risks and mitigation standards will help to answer these important questions. In addition, the issues raised in the Agency's representation to the draft WRMP24 will continue to be discussed as part of the statutory WRMP process.

#### **4. Appellant's Proof of Evidence**

In section 3.1.1 the appellant states this is a highly complex, strategic matter encompassing many parties and regulatory and legislative processes and refers to paragraph 20(b) of the NPPF confirming that water supply is a strategic matter to be addressed through development plans. The Agency acknowledges paragraph 20 (b) and its implication that it is through development plans that these matters are normally addressed.

However, the Agency strongly advocates that an unusual set of circumstances have occurred simultaneously. In November 2021 the Agency had taken action to prevent deterioration by informing water companies of sustainability reductions to their abstraction licences to prevent deterioration to water bodies in accordance with its duties under the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) Regulations 2017. Concerns about the availability of sustainable water supplies to serve development in Greater Cambridge have arisen in the time-period between an adopted Local Plan (2018) and an emerging Local Plan (latest version: Greater Cambridge Local Plan – First Proposals 2021). The water that was thought to be available at the time of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan and Cambridgeshire City Local Plan being adopted in 2018 (based on the current WRMP19), is now not something that can be relied upon, and that is not a matter the Agency or the Local Planning Authority can ignore or postpone, i.e. to consider only as part of the emerging Local Plan, especially given the potential risk of harm to the ecology of water bodies. Local Planning Authorities and the Agency have a legal duty to have regard to River Basin management Plans in exercising their public duties under Regulation 33 of the Water Environment (WFD) Regulations (2017).

The Planning Practice Guidance does offer more contextual advice on this issue in Paragraph: 016 Reference ID: 34-016-20140306 'Water supply, wastewater and water quality considerations for planning applications.' This reinforces the premise that planning for the necessary water supply would normally be addressed through authorities' strategic policies, which can be reflected in water companies' water resources management plans. It goes on to state 'water supply is therefore unlikely to be a consideration for most planning applications' and lists some exceptions. One of those exceptions is 'where a plan requires enhanced water efficiency in new developments as part of a strategy to manage water demand locally and help deliver new development.' The Agency's view is that this exception does apply to the situation in Greater Cambridge. The Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study (Outline Water Cycle Study) dated August 2021 concludes in paragraph 9.1.3 states the following:

'For water supply, currently permitted abstraction of the Chalk aquifer is having a detrimental impact on environmental conditions, particularly during dry years. Even without any further growth, significant environmental improvements are unlikely to be achievable until major new water supply infrastructure is operational, which is unlikely to occur before the mid-2030s. To prevent any increase in abstraction and its associated detrimental environmental impact before the 2030s, short term mitigation measures will be necessary. All stakeholders agree this should include ambitious targets for water efficiency in new development but there are also options to deliver new water locally which will be set out in the detailed study.'

GCP are proposing a draft policy direction (Policy CC/WE) of 80 litres per head per day for residential developments in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan First Proposals (2021). It is the Agency's view that the draft proposed policy CC/WE is a response of proposed action by GCP to the evidence within its Outline Water Cycle Study, which demonstrates the pressures from abstraction on the water environment, and risks of deterioration to water bodies. The Agency would ask the Planning Inspectorate to consider that; the situation in Greater Cambridge suggests that an exception to the general rule of water supply being purely a development plan matter, is necessary. Ensuring that planning applications are acceptable and sustainable water supplies can be provided, is now imperative to reduce the risk of deterioration to water bodies, including chalk streams, in

Greater Cambridge. Further assessment work (as mentioned in Section 2) can also help inform the emerging Local Plan when work on this plan progresses.

The Agency's role as a consultee in the planning process is to provide advice to the decision-maker on the acceptability of planning proposals in relation to environment. The Agency advise Local Planning Authorities of the potential risks to the environment and identify where they are not appropriately assessed or mitigated for. In relation to this matter the Agency have advised the LPA (in their letter of objection dated 27 February 2023) that the proposed development may, through the additional demand for potable water use, increase abstraction and risk deterioration to water bodies in the Greater Cambridge area.

Of importance to this case, is the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2008(6) which states 'If regard is to be had to the development plan for the purpose of any determination to be made under the planning acts, the determination must be made in accordance with the plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.' As outlined above the Agency considers the change in circumstances with regard to available and sustainable water supplies, is a material consideration which the planning decision-maker should be made aware of.

Section 3.1.7 states the WRMPs are supported by SEA which assesses the likely significant environmental effects (including cumulative effects) of the existing development and planned growth, along with the proposed demand management and supply side options. The Agency's view is that caution should be given to avoid conflating the purpose of the WRMP and the SEA. The purpose of the WRMP is to consider the existing water demand, projected demand and to assess the water available and what is needed, whilst the WRMP SEA's purpose is to assess the environmental effects of the WRMP and to consider the cumulative effects with other programmes, plans, policies and strategic projects looking forwards.

Section 3.1.8 states that the development proposals were allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan in Policy SS/4 and subject to Integrated SA and SEA. Section 3.1.9 states the development was also allowed for within CWC's WRMP19 and draft WRMP24. The Agency acknowledge that the proposed development forms part of a strategic site allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (Policy SS/4) (which was subject to Integrated SA and SEA), however, the evidence on which the site had been allocated will have been based on the current WRMP19 which as previously stated is no longer appropriate to based decisions upon. This due to sustainability reductions to abstraction licences, which were introduced to prevent deterioration of water bodies, and the resultant significant reduction or removal of the headroom that had previously been available under WRMP19.

GCP did query the Agency's objection to other major planning applications which had been allocated in the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018). GCP raised a concern that the Agency's objections on water resources for planning applications, which were already allocated in the 2018 Local Plans, would undermine the status of the development plan for the area. The Agency has not taken this position lightly and has sought extensive advice from legal advisors on this point. The Agency's legal team advised that although it is right to highlight the primacy of these sites, the facts and evidence in these cases continually evolve, and that in this case specifically the material considerations upon which it is based have changed and therefore the planning authority may wish to review those changes. The



potential risk to water bodies posed by the water demands from a development, apply whether a planning application is allocated or not. To assist the Planning Inspectorate on this point, the Agency have appended our email advice dated 6 January 2023 to GCP Planning Director, Stephen Kelly (Appendix 5).

Section 3.2.2 states that the development proposes a water efficiency strategy, to ensure the development's water footprint is minimised and the potential impact on sensitive water bodies is mitigated, in line with the requirements of Local Policies CC/4 and CC/7. The Agency accepts that the water efficiency strategy has proposed mitigation which goes beyond the standards required in Policy CC/4, and that this represents a positive step towards reducing its impact on sensitive water bodies. However, the Agency believes it would be premature to state that the water efficiency strategy has mitigated the potential impact on sensitive water bodies within the GC area, in line with Policy CC/7, particularly part (b) where it states, 'the quality of ground, surface or water bodies will not be harmed.' The reason this is a premature conclusion is that there is no conclusive evidence to support this statement of fact, which would enable the Agency to conclusively assess resulting risk of deterioration (or otherwise) on water bodies sensitive to abstraction.

In line with our draft advice in Appendix 2, the planning application has not provided a cumulative assessment of the impact of this proposed development in combination with other developments that CWC is expected to supply. The Agency are sympathetic to the concerns raised by the appellant during earlier discussions that this seems a significant and burdensome task given the strategic nature of the issue, however, it's nonetheless a requirement for planning applications to assess the risks where accompanied by Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) including in-combination and cumulative effects.

As explained in the Agency's update (section 1) above, to expedite solutions and reduce the burdens on applicants, CWC have agreed to provide an assessment, via scenario testing, of water availability up to the capped levels/strategic options. CWC, in addition, will undertake groundwater modelling to assess the risk of deterioration from continued abstraction. GCP have agreed to progress this work, looking at the cumulative impacts of growth and the levels of mitigation required to prevent deterioration of water bodies. Given the significance of the concerns regarding water supply, it is the Agency's view that these organisations (CWC and GCP) are best placed to undertake the cumulative assessment as a strategic exercise, to ease burdens on applicants and ensure consistency of methodology and outputs. It should be noted that this does not detract from the fact there are requirements for planning applications accompanied by EIA to ensure cumulative and in-combination effects are considered.

Section 3.3.13 of the appellants proof of evidence, refers to the calculated water demand of the development proposals, stating that the development comprises less than 0.22% of the total current (2022/2023) water demand of the proposed (2049/2050) total water demand as set out in CWC's draft WRMP24. It goes further to outline that its demand represents less than 0.25% of the total current (2022/2023) water demand and less than 0.23% of the proposed (2044/2045) total water demand as set out in the WRMP19. The appellant then claims (3.3.15) that the development proposals comprise a negligible proportion of the overall water demand from CWC, and that it considers the development proposals are therefore unlikely to have any significant environmental impacts in terms of water resources.

Whilst the individual demand forecast required for this development represents a small percentage of CWC's overall demand, the Agency's position remains that it has not been demonstrated that the water demands aren't significant locally at the point of abstraction, from where that demand is serviced. One of the considerations when determining the sustainability of increases in groundwater abstractions associated with servicing growth, is an assessment of how they relate to the existing and current situation. Increases in abstraction under some circumstances may, in isolation, change the compliance of a surface and/or groundwater bodies sustainability, however due to the in-combination effects of multiple groundwater abstractions there will also be a more general impact on associated rivers and watercourses.

The Agency's principal concern is with the cumulative effects from combined growth in Greater Cambridge. This principle of the in-combination effects of abstraction applies to the flow in rivers, where the main impact is associated with large quantities abstracted under some licences (i.e. Public Water Supply) to meet existing demands. The Agency's assessment cannot be limited to the impact of the appellant's development on its own but needs to consider how the proposal will contribute to the existing problems caused by the in-combination effects of groundwater abstraction from the aquifer. Any increase in demand, over and above current levels required to meet existing and current customers, will result in a net increase in the cumulative impact of CWCs abstraction. The Agency's position is that it remains to be demonstrated that this overall level of abstraction can be met sustainably (this is largely the role of the cumulative assessment). Given the direct relevance to this scenario it is important to note the reference within Paragraph 5(e), Schedule 4 of the EIA regulations (2017) where it states 'the cumulation of effects with other existing and/or approved projects, taking into account any existing environmental problems relating to areas of particular environmental importance likely to be affected or the use of natural resources.'

At the time of writing the appellants POE section 3.2.5 states that the Agency has not published the evidence on which it relies to substantiate or quantify the risk to water bodies. The Agency makes reference in section 5 below to Appendix 1 which provides a summary of the baseline evidence with regard to risk of deterioration to water bodies from abstraction.

## **5. Baseline evidence of risk of deterioration to water bodies in Greater Cambridge**

Appendix 1 'Water Resources and Ecological Evidence Summary' sets out the Agency's evidence regarding the risk of deterioration under the WFD and its relevance to this appeal. The evidence outlines the wider ecological impacts which are associated with the increased levels of abstraction. This is summarised in Section 1.0 Executive Summary and identifies the specific water bodies where abstraction is contributing to ecological pressure and/or is predicted to cause a risk of deterioration. Appended to this report is Appendix A which is the 'Hydroecology Modelling Technical Report: Greater Cambridge Area.'

In brief, waterbodies on the Rivers Cam and Granta are already impacted by abstraction and on the basis of the evidence it is predicted that any increase in abstraction (including servicing this development) will result in the increase the existing pressure and extend its impact to include abstraction from other water bodies utilised by Cambridge Water.

## **Conclusion**

The Agency recognise the appellant's efforts to propose an improved water efficiency scheme, however the Agency's position remains that the planning application is unacceptable until such time as the following is demonstrated:

- A sustainable water supply is proven to be available, and,
- Said supply can meet the planned phasing of growth of this development in combination with wider planned growth in the Cambridge Water supply zone, and / or,
- Once assessed (as section 2 of our statement explains), the risks of deterioration can be prevented or effectively managed through site-specific mitigation measures.

The Agency plan to attend the Planning Inquiry to answer any questions that the Planning Inspector or the other main parties have. If the Planning Inspectorate has any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact us.

The Agency look forward to receiving the timetable for the planning inquiry as soon as it becomes available.

Yours sincerely

Keira Murphy  
Planning Specialist, East Anglia Sustainable Places  
0203 0255560

Environment Agency, Bromholme Lane, Brampton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 4NE

## **List of Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Baseline data of risk of deterioration to water bodies from water abstraction (with Appendix A: Hydroecology Modelling Technical Report)
- Appendix 2 - Greater Cambridge external guidance note for planning applications - Drafted by Environment Agency, March 2023
- Appendix 3 - Environment Agency Representation on Cambridge Water's draft water resources management plan dated 27 March 2023 (including evidence report)
- Appendix 4 - Environment Agency's Revised Representation on Cambridge Water's draft water resources management plan dated 17 May 2023 (including evidence report)
- Appendix 5 - Email from the Environment Agency to Stephen Kelly, Planning Director, Greater Cambridge Planning 6 January 2023