



Meeting note

Project name	Fens Reservoir and Lincolnshire Reservoir
File reference	WA010004/ WA010003
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	30 July 2024
Meeting with	Anglian Water
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

PINS level of service: Expression of Interest in the new pre-application services provided by The Inspectorate

Anglian Water (the Applicant) discussed its response to the expression of interest for its preferred tier service for both projects (the Fens Reservoir and Lincolnshire Reservoir). The Applicant also explained its rationale to its response and requested some clarity from the Inspectorate on the next steps.

The Inspectorate confirmed that it would send the Applicant correspondence at the end of August 2024 to confirm the tier services available for both projects, with the tier service then taking effect from October 2024. The Inspectorate confirmed it is not intended for the decision to be made public on the National Infrastructure website.

The Applicant confirmed it is in the process of reviewing its programmes with that for the Lincolnshire Reservoir staggering behind that for the Fens Reservoir, given the differing water into supply dates. The Applicant advised it would still need to consider the Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development (RAPID) gates. The Inspectorate suggested that in future both projects be treated separately, and meetings be co-ordinated as such.

Post meeting notes

The Applicant asked the Inspectorate whether the Issues Tracker would be published and if there was any flexibility in terms of the period of two years for enhanced or standard service tiers at pre-application stage.

In response, the Inspectorate advises that the Issues Tracker would not be published under the current procedures at the pre-application stage. However, as stated in the 2024 Pre-application Prospectus, the issues tracking process would culminate in a list of Potential Main Issues for the Examination (PMIE) which would be entered into the examination as an application document. The Inspectorate also confirms that there is flexibility to the two-year period at pre-application.

Regarding the Evidence Plan Process, the Applicant queried whether it could request attendance by a topic expert from the Inspectorate to help resolve an outstanding issue at a specific Steering Group/ Expert Topic Group meeting (for example, a Water Framework Directive expert). For enhanced tier projects, the Inspectorate's Environmental Services Team and/ or an Examining Inspector would attend, dependent on the stage in the process and agenda items/ issues being discussed. For standard tier projects, this would be the Inspectorate's Environmental Services Team only. Any such requests from the

Applicant would be considered by the Inspectorate in terms of available resource at the time of the request.

The Applicant queried how many meetings the Inspectorate can attend as part of the Evidence Plan Process. The Inspectorate confirmed that for enhanced tier projects, it can attend up to eight meetings and for standard tier projects, up to five meetings. The Inspectorate's attendance at the meetings can be a mix of steering group and Expert Topic Group meetings. The stated limit of meetings is per annum, but subject to resource availability and the expectation is that advanced discussions would be held with the Applicant and relevant statutory bodies to agree which meetings it would be most valuable for the Inspectorate to attend.

The 2024 Pre-application Prospectus differentiates between multiparty meetings within the Evidence Plan Process and outside of the Evidence Plan Process and so these are addressed separately. Where multiparty meetings are held in relation to Evidence Plan matters, these would count towards the stated limit of Evidence Plan meetings (for enhanced tier projects, up to eight meetings per annum and for standard tier projects, up to five meetings per annum).

Where the Inspectorate is requested by the Applicant to attend multiparty meetings outside of the Evidence Plan process, these would count towards the limit of meetings with the Planning Inspectorate (see 'Meetings and interactions' in the Prospectus - for enhanced tier projects, up to nine meetings per annum and for standard tier projects, up to six meetings per annum).

Programme updates

The Applicant advised that as part of its programme reviews it is looking at the timing of its statutory consultation. The Applicant is also considering the need for further informal non-statutory consultation given the design maturity of some elements for consultation 2. The Applicant is anticipating submitting its Development Consent Order (DCO) for Fens Reservoir in 2026 and staggering its submission of the Lincolnshire Reservoir (DCO) application to 2027 (subject to programme review). The Applicant confirmed it will be prioritising the programme for the Fens Reservoir DCO application given the more acute need for that project.

The Applicant advised it has been regularly engaging with RAPID and it is expected to move through Gate three in March 2025 for the Fens Reservoir project, and September 2025 for the Lincolnshire Reservoir project.

The Inspectorate suggested the Applicant considers the Christmas period when determining appropriate consultation dates and DCO submission dates.

The Inspectorate requested the Applicant provides a separate programme timeline update for each project to aid resourcing.

CON2 update

The Applicant provided an overview of consultation 2 (CON2) for the Fens Reservoir project and Lincolnshire Reservoir project which was launched on 30 May 2024 and will close on 9 August 2024. The Applicant advised it had extended its consultation area to take in account the associated infrastructure and the time period to take account of the General Election. The Applicant explained that the geographical reach of the Lincolnshire Reservoir project is broader than that of the Fens Reservoir project.

In respect of the Fens Reservoir project, the Applicant held 11 in person events across the whole geographical region, held two webinars, two pop up events and one school presentation. To date the Applicant has had 38,000 website views, 286 feedback submissions, 31,000 document downloads, seven statutory responses and 18 landowner responses but expected more responses before the end of Consultation 2.

The Applicant provided an overview of key emerging themes which includes:

- Support for design, people are keen to see the project brought forward as quickly as possible, positive suggestions about how the project could support local ecology.
- Concern over the impacts on agricultural land and from traffic, but suggestions are being received on how to manage this and other construction-related impacts.

In respect of the Lincolnshire Reservoir project, the Applicant held 14 in person events, two webinars, one pop up event and two school presentations. To date the Applicant has had 24,000 website views, 3,100 doc downloads, 109 feedback submissions, five statutory responses and 16 landowner responses but expected more responses before the end of Consultation 2.

The Applicant provided an overview of key emerging themes which included:

- Support for design, people are excited about the recreational benefits, generally supportive of the proposal, potential for improving navigation on the waterways.
- Concern over flooding, impact on agricultural land, visual impact, construction and operational traffic impacts.

The Applicant was positive about the feedback and engagement during the consultation. The Inspectorate advised that based on the numbers/views of those attending the in-person events, the Applicant may wish to consider looking at venues that are suitable/available for future events should the projects be accepted into Examination.

Scoping update

The Applicant provided the Inspectorate with a re-cap to its approach to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) scoping. It is intending to submit both scoping requests to the Inspectorate in late September 2024 but noted the scoping request for Lincolnshire Reservoir could potentially be programmed for a later date.

The Applicant explained that the EIA Scoping Reports would:

- be based on the CON2 scheme design, construction and operation information;
- focus on the proposed approach, methodologies, data and information sources, particularly where it is looking for the Inspectorate's opinion; and
- balance the level of detail required at scoping and the need for flexibility.

The Applicant noted that the EIA Scoping Opinions would inform the assessments presented in the Preliminary Environmental Information Reports (PEIR).

The Applicant provided an outline of the structure of its EIA Scoping Reports and clarified some practical issues with the Inspectorate when submitting the scoping requests.

Forward programme of engagement

The Inspectorate requested further information from the Applicant on the potential need for utilising section 53 of the PA2008, as discussed at the previous project update meeting. The Applicant confirmed that it had been engaging with landowners well and had achieved the required access so far. The Applicant advised that the preference would always be to seek access by agreement and section 53 request(s) would only be made if needed. The Applicant will keep the Inspectorate updated in this regard.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Applicant to organise and confirm staggering the Fens Reservoir and Lincolnshire Reservoir programmes.
- The Applicant to stay in touch with the Inspectorate specifically with regards to EIA scoping and whether the two scoping requests would be staggered.
- The Inspectorate to confirm the responsibility of publishing the Issues Tracker. (See page 2, Post meeting notes)
- The Applicant to engage with the Inspectorate at the end of Autumn 2024 regarding consultation feedback.
- The Applicant suggested the next project update meeting with the Inspectorate to be held in person.