

To be sent by email to [REDACTED]@planninginspectorate.gov.uk

20th November 2023

Deborah Allen

Case Manager

Planning Inspectorate

Dear Deborah

Application by Anglian Water Services Limited for an Order Granting Development Consent for the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation project (Ref WW010003)

I write in response to the Examining Authority's written questions and requests for information in document ExQ1 and following my participation in the second Issue Specific Hearing "Principle of Proposed Development" on 18th October 2023.

I welcomed the opportunity to contribute to the Examination and underline the commitment of Homes England and the Government to the delivery of the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant and unlock up to 8,600 much needed homes in North East Cambridge in what is an important nationally significant project.

To support our response to the Examination, we have provided the Applicant, Anglian Water, with some additional information to help inform detailed responses to the questions in document ExQ1. Please see our answers to the questions specifically to Homes England in Annex A.

Homes England's commitment to the project

Homes England has actively supported this project for a number of years (as set out below) through the Government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) programme. The HIF programme awarded funding to local authorities on a competitive basis for new infrastructure to unlock new homes in the areas of greatest housing demand. Homes England manages the HIF programme outside of London on behalf of Government. The objectives of the fund are to:

- Deliver new physical infrastructure to support new and existing communities;
- Make more land available for housing in high demand areas, resulting in new additional homes that otherwise would not have been built;
- Support ambitious local authorities who want to step up their plans for growth and make a meaningful difference to overall housing supply; and
- Enable local authorities to recycle the funding for other infrastructure projects, achieving more and delivering new homes in the future.

The Cambridge HIF scheme meets all of these objectives. The original application was submitted in 2018 and the assessment and due diligence process found the scheme to be of value for money, high strategic importance, highly



deliverable, and would achieve the necessary step-change in housing supply required by the HIF programme objectives. The HIF funding award of £227m, one of the highest for the programme, was made in 2019 and the HIF Grant Determination Agreement (GDA) that sets out the final funding conditions was signed in March 2020 and included the contractual requirements to relocate the treatment plant and deliver the core housing outputs. Since that time Homes England has been working pro-actively with Cambridge City Council (as Grant Recipient) and the Applicant to bring the scheme forward with our own team of project delivery specialists and in addition to the grant funding by also providing capacity funding to the City Council.

The project is of national importance

Our commitment to the scheme and Cambridge as a whole has been further strengthened by the Government's renewed focus on Cambridge as an important part of its long-term plan for housing announced by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 24th July 2023 (see Annex B). This plan seeks to bolster Cambridge as a place that is central to the country's scientific leadership and competitiveness by addressing the lack of new space for lab capacity and research activity as well as the constraints on new housing which have priced new graduates out of the market and have also made attracting and retaining skilled employees much harder. Work has commenced with local partners on developing a vision for Cambridge and the Government has established the Cambridge Delivery Group led by the Chair of Homes England, Peter Freeman, to lead this effort and identify the right long-term delivery arrangements to implement it.

Homes England is the Government's Housing and Regeneration Agency, and our mission is to drive regeneration and housing delivery to create high-quality homes and thriving places. This will support greater social justice, the levelling up of communities across England and the creation of places people are proud to call home. Our five interconnected strategic objectives will work together to deliver our mission:

- We will support the creation of vibrant and successful places that people can be proud of, working with local leaders and other partners to deliver housing-led, mixed-use regeneration with a brownfield-first approach;
- We will facilitate the creation of the homes people need, intervening where necessary to ensure places have enough homes of the right type and tenure;
- We will build a housing and regeneration sector that works for everyone, driving diversification, partnership working, and innovation;
- We will promote the creation of high-quality homes in well-designed places that reflect community priorities by taking an inclusive and long-term approach; and
- We will enable sustainable homes and places, maximising their positive contribution to the natural environment and minimising their environmental impact.

The opportunity unlocked by the relocation of the waste water treatment plant strongly aligns with these ambitions. North East Cambridge will release economic growth and productivity not just in Cambridge but much further afield and will help reduce the high levels of unaffordability in the Cambridge housing market. North East Cambridge is the last large scale brownfield regeneration site within the urban area of Cambridge and it is right next door to existing key infrastructure as it is located adjacent to the A14 and in close proximity to the new Cambridge North Station and the city's guided busway. The project will deliver a step-change in housing supply - up to 8,600 homes including 5,600 homes on the Hartree Site / Core Site – and in excess of 500,000sqft of lab and employment space all in a highly sustainable location. There is a genuine opportunity, because of the area's size, scale and location, to create truly transformational and exemplary placemaking for Cambridge.



Focus on project delivery

Given the national importance of this scheme, Homes England is absolutely focused on working with local partners to deliver the wider housing, employment and economic growth benefits to UK plc that are unlocked by it.

The HIF funding agreement is designed to provide delivery certainty by including obligations on the parties. The Enabling Stage is sufficiently flexible to allow the scheme to evolve through the new waste water treatment plant site identification, design, and planning stages including, subject to approval, securing the development consent order itself. The Delivery Stage has a number of conditions which must be satisfied prior to drawing down the Delivery Stage HIF funding. For the wider housing scheme the GDA includes start on site and practical completion dates for the core housing outputs on the Hartree Site in North East Cambridge.

Should the forecast costs of the proposed HIF project change, a possibility envisaged as being potentially needed in the GDA, the funding arrangements include a mechanism for additional engagement by the parties to allow time for additional funding to be secured by the project partners.

This contractual delivery framework is supported by a joint DLUHC and Homes England HIF Delivery Board (that includes representation from HM Treasury and Department for Transport) and hands-on support from our own team of project delivery specialists all of whom will work with the project partners to progress the scheme and seek to resolve any issues, for example those that relate to funding or delivery timescales, through a formal change request and approval process.

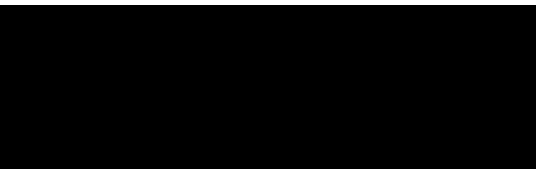
Alongside delivering the HIF funded project, Homes England is fully engaged in the Cambridge Delivery Group who, as referred to above, have been tasked by the Secretary of State to develop a vision for Cambridge and establish a long-term delivery vehicle to lead its implementation. This work will focus not only on housing and business (including technology and life sciences) but also on transport, water supply and public services.

Homes England is also establishing its own Cambridge multi-functional team to drive activity from all parts of the Agency as a whole coordinating our work with landowners, investors, local authorities, local community groups as well as other parts of Government to help bring forward multiple sites across Cambridge.

Through these arrangements, Homes England is actively supporting the relocation of the waste water treatment plant and we are working closely with the parties to ensure that delivery commences as soon as the appropriate approvals are forthcoming. We will work with all partners and are determined to drive pace of delivery and quality of development on this important brownfield regeneration site.

Homes England is and will remain committed to working in tandem with the project partners on the delivery of the project, which will allow not only the new waste water treatment plant to be delivered but the wider development of life sciences and homes to come forward.

Yours sincerely



Peter Denton

Chief Executive

