Anglian Water Consultation Response

Local Plan Main Modifications Consultation

1. Anglian Water and Loca Plans

1.1. Anglian Water is the statutory water and sewerage undertaker for the Borough Council for King's Lynn and West Norfolk and a statutory consultee under The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Anglian Water wants to proactively engage with the local plan process to ensure the plan delivers benefits for residents and visitors to the area, and in doing so protect the environment and water resources. As a purpose-led company, we are committed to seeking positive environmental and social outcomes for our region.

2. Commentary on the Local Plan Main Modifications

2.1. Anglian Water has engaged with the Council throughout the preparation of the Local Plan and the examination process and welcome the opportunity to comment on the Schedule of Main Modifications proposed for Part 1 of the Local Plan, noting that there will be a subsequent consultation for Part 2 of the Local Plan regarding policies for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People.

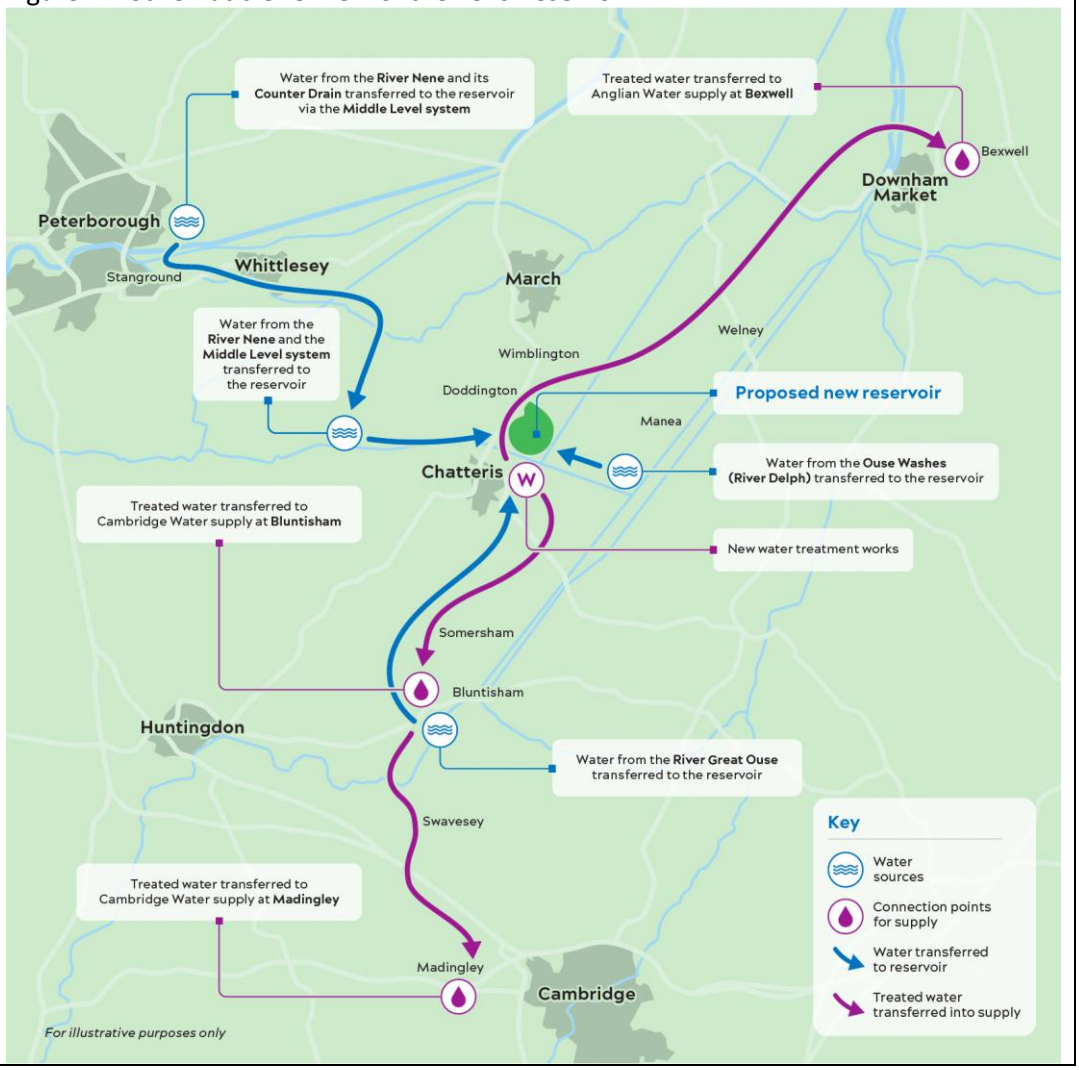
2.2. Anglian Water makes the following representations on the main modifications below:

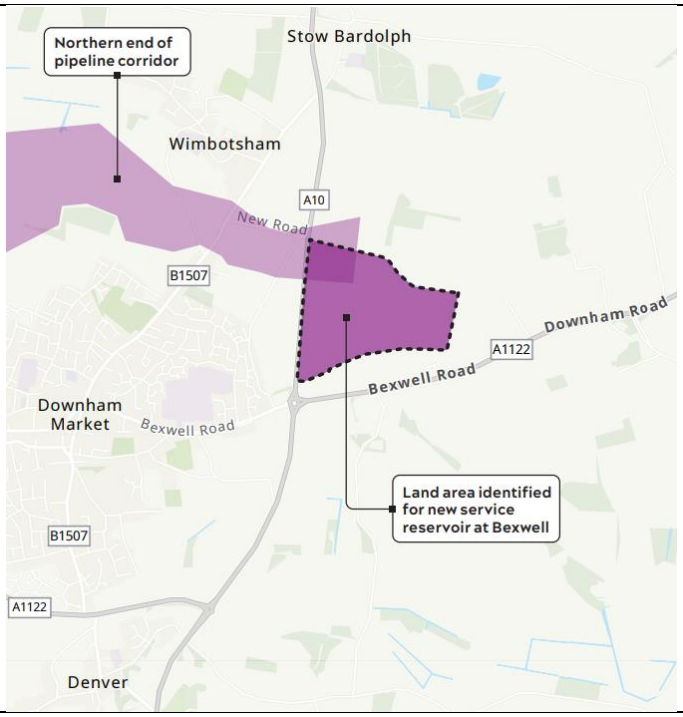
Main Mod	Anglian Water Representation
MM5	**Anglian Water is supportive of the spatial strategy which focusses growth in the main urban areas of King's Lynn** - including the West Winch Growth Area, Downham Market and Hunstanton. These locations represent where we have existing infrastructure capacity – this is expressed as available headroom at our water recycling centres (WRCs) based on the dry weather flow (DWF) permit to accommodate the proposed quantum of growth. Similarly, the Tier 3 settlements adjacent to King's Lynn and the Main Towns also fall within the sewer catchments and WRCs of King's Lynn and West Walton (Wisbech). **We agree that outside these areas the Borough's smaller communities (Tier 4-6) will vary considerably and in terms of impacts of growth on infrastructure capacity and the ability to accommodate additional growth.** Tier 6 communities, may have very limited infrastructure capacity in terms of wastewater treatment, due to small works with descriptive permits which are not designed to accommodate significant growth. Therefore, we welcome the approach that means growth will be limited to meeting local housing needs with the target of 127 dwellings to be dispersed amongst these settlements. We will engage with any subsequent Neighbourhood Plans that seek to allocate growth in Tier 6 settlements with limited infrastructure capacity, as and when appropriate.

	It is noted that the New Table Housing Supply demonstrates that the local housing need (LHN) under the current standard method can be met with a surplus of 1,912 dwellings. Anglian Water has noted that the current consultation on the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and proposed revised standard method, will not have a bearing on the examination of this plan; however, depending on the conclusions and publication of a revised NPPF, we recognise that the preparation of a new Local Plan may be required to commence at the earliest opportunity given the significant uplift in proposed housing numbers. Anglian Water would wish to engage with the Council to discuss future growth proposals at the earliest stages, to align growth with infrastructure capacity as far as possible, and then identify where further infrastructure investment may be required to support sustainable and resilient growth.
MM6	Some Tier 5 and 6 communities may have very limited infrastructure capacity in terms of wastewater treatment, due to small works with descriptive permits which are not designed to accommodate significant growth. Therefore, **we welcome the approach that means windfall development in Tier 5 and 6 communities will be confined to sites located within development boundaries**. We agree that this approach protects settlements from over-development and helps to ensure that existing infrastructure continues to have capacity to operate effectively. We will continue to engage with any subsequent Neighbourhood Plans that seek to allocate growth in Tier 5 and 6 settlements with limited infrastructure capacity, as and when appropriate. We support the **New Policy – Residential development on windfall sites**; specifically, criterion A.c. which refers to adverse impacts on services and infrastructure. This provides an appropriate policy requirement to assess any adverse impacts on our water and wastewater infrastructure arising from windfall development coming forward. Furthermore, we support Part C of the policy which requires any small-scale development in Tier 5 and 6 settlements outside the development boundary to meet both Parts A and B of the policy.
MM7	**New Policy – Neighbourhood Plans** Anglian Water recognises that this policy provides a housing requirement for neighbourhood plan areas across King's Lynn & West Norfolk, should any forthcoming neighbourhood plan seek to plan for housing growth through criteria-based policies and/or site allocations. Whilst we engage with the preparation of neighbourhood plans across our region through the required consultation processes, **we question whether the distribution of housing numbers across the neighbourhood plan areas has considered up to date evidence regarding infrastructure capacity and flood risk,** and overall sustainability and resilience of some locations to accommodate growth. We recognise that some of these housing requirement figures may already be identified through existing commitments and completions, and therefore will have already addressed these potential constraints.

	We would wish to ensure that neighbourhood plans are appropriately informed to bring forward sustainable and resilient growth. Some of our catchments are particularly constrained and specifically in low-lying areas where groundwater flooding experienced for a considerable period from October 2023 has caused persistent long-term issues with our wastewater networks (e.g. Grimston, Gayton, Burnham Market, Brancaster) - further growth in these catchments should be carefully considered and informed by up-to-date evidence. A number of communities are very susceptible to high groundwater levels, particularly in North West Norfolk. Over the winters of 2020/21 and 2023/24 these communities suffered from extensive loss of service (unable to flush toilets, shower, wash up etc) as groundwater levels rose above the level of the sewer (but often not high enough to cause an actual flood), inundating the public and private sewer networks in these communities. Unfortunately, there is a lack of legislation that governs this type of scenario (where high groundwater levels impact sewerage assets, but do not cause an 'above ground' flood), and so we have held multiple workshops and discussions with the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance partner organisations, in particular the Environment Agency, about managing groundwater differently in the future. Traditionally a water company's response to high groundwater levels would be to provide tankers to remove excess groundwater, mixed with wastewater, to be treated at a water recycling centre. Historically we have also used overpump solutions, temporarily creating new storm overflows, to relieve the pressure on the sewer network. We have also spent significant totex on relining public sewer networks, but this approach has very little benefit, as groundwater only finds the next weakest point in the network, which may often be a private lateral connection. As such, a new approach is needed to ensure communities are resilient to a changing climate. Other locations served by small WRCs (Outwell, Pentney, Tilney All Saints, Upwell) may not have sufficient capacity to accommodate even small-scale growth and could require significant investment in carbon intensive solutions, which would need to be planned for in future asset management periods (AMPs). There will also be locations where alternative wastewater treatment options could be considered where development is not within a reasonable distance to connect to a public sewer.
MM10	Anglian Water **supports** the inclusion of Green Infrastructure as a specific infrastructure delivery requirement. We recognise the importance and multi-functional benefits of green infrastructure, particularly for minimising flood risk and improving water quality. We also **support** the proposed amendment to Criterion 8, to require the appropriate phasing and delivery of growth with infrastructure delivery and with support of infrastructure partners and relevant assessments. The infrastructure we deliver is primarily funded in two ways including: • Developers pay infrastructure charges to connect to, and where necessary provide additional capacity for our water supply and sewerage networks, which are governed by Ofwat's charging rules; and

	• Water and sewerage charges agreed by Ofwat every five years, paid by our customers to fund our investment programme on existing and future infrastructure to: o address a rapidly growing population, o ensure we are resilient to impacts of climate change, o enhance our environment to reach the environmental destination agreed with customers and regulators, and o secure future water supplies. Whilst the delivery of infrastructure through our investment programme is often recorded in the Infrastructure Delivery Plans of local planning authorities, this is mostly to reflect infrastructure planned that will help deliver environmental improvements and accommodate future growth, such as investment to increase capacity for flows at our water recycling centres. These projects do not require separate funding through CIL or S106. Our PR24 Business Plan was submitted to Ofwat in October 2023, and we have recently responded to Ofwat's draft determination. The final determination of our Business Plan is expected in December 2024.
MM15	**Policy LP06 Climate Change Policy** Anglian Water is **supportive** of the amendment to criterion 7 to ensure that new development is resilient to the impacts of climate change such as flood risk. We agree that climate change allowances should be taken account of in flood risk assessments, and the Environment Agency's forthcoming new national risk information for flooding (NaFRA2) which will include future scenarios accounting for climate change.
MM20 MM21 MM139	**Paragraph 5.1.15** **Policy LP07 – The Economy** **New Policy – Downham Market, Bexwell Business Park (BEX)** As the Council will be aware through our engagement activities, Anglian Water and Cambridge Water have recently undertaken second non-statutory consultation on the Fens Reservoir – a nationally significant infrastructure project (NSIP). Anglian Water and Cambridge Water are proposing a new reservoir in the Fens to help meet the growing demands on water supply in the East of England. The reservoir is central to bringing forward new supply options and is identified in the Water Resources East Regional Plan and the respective water companies' Water Resource Management Plans. Our recent consultation identified the associated water infrastructure that will be needed to transfer water to the reservoir, and from the reservoir to homes and businesses, in order to secure a resilient and sustainable water supply for generations to come. **Anglian Water and Cambridge Water have undertaken an extensive site selection process for the associated water infrastructure which has identified a pipeline corridor which extends north east from the Fens Reservoir around Downham Market along with a polygon for a new service reservoir at Bexwell on the east side of the A10**, close to Anglian Water's existing service reservoir on the west side. Our site selection process is outlined in our Options Appraisal Summary Report and our pipeline route and polygon are shown in figures 1 and 2.

	We are aware through our discussions with the Council that the area covered by polygon is subject to an extant permission for a business park hotel, golf course and business park and that the southern section of the polygon is proposed as a new employment allocation of 20ha, identified through the Local Plan examination and subject to this consultation. **The area covered by our polygon is larger than is needed for the service reservoir and Anglian Water/Cambridge Water are keen to work with the Council as we move to the next stage in our design development to ensure that we can accommodate our new service reservoir and its connecting pipework in a way that is compatible with the proposed new employment allocation**, particularly given the wider benefit the service reservoir will deliver to the area and wider region in terms of ensuring a resilient and sustainable water supply. Figure 1 – Schematic Overview of the Fens Reservoir 

	 Figure 2: Phase 2 consultation document for associated infrastructure identified pipeline corridor and land for a new service reservoir.
MM43	**Anglian Water is supportive of the key design principles inserted into paragraph 6.4.1,** which ensure natural capital is protected and nature-based solutions are utilised as a framework for high quality design whilst ensuring multi-functional benefits for nature recovery, minimising flood risk, sequestering carbon, and improving local amenity.
MM44	Anglian Water notes the policy includes a modification to criterion g regarding the requirement of non-domestic buildings to reach the Good BREEAM status 'where relevant.' **We would encourage water efficient use in all types of development and would seek to work with the Council in the next iteration of the Local Plan to include more ambitious water efficiency policy requirements to help reduce demands on water resources.** Our Water Resources Management Plan 2025-2050 (WRMP24) clearly states that there are significant challenges across our region in terms of the reduction of water available for use due to abstraction licence caps, environmental destination (achieved by reducing the amount of water we abstract from the environment further), ensuring sufficient resources available for a 1:500 year drought, climate change, and population growth. As a result, the gap between the demand for water and our supply (aka headroom) has shrunk. This situation is reducing our ability to be flexible with new requests to supply non-domestic water connections (e.g. for manufacturing and processing) which were not planned for in the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). However, where our supplies allow, we will endeavour to help businesses in whatever way we can to meet their needs and continue to serve the communities and economies they support.

	Therefore, where new and unplanned non-domestic water requests are received, which exceed 20,000 litres per day (0.020 Ml/d) (this may be less dependent on the availability of water in that area) or where there is a cumulative impact from a significant number of smaller requests, there might be the need to decline in order to protect existing supplies (including for future housing growth), and the environment. To assess these requests, we will be asking all businesses to submit a Water Resource Assessment as part of our planning process, and, where feasible, we will work with them to explore innovative solutions to meet their requests. We are always willing to provide practical support and advice on navigating the regulation and the EA's abstraction reduction strategy to businesses in our region (see Appendix 1 Anglian Water's Non-Domestic Water Requests Policy). As new Local Plans are progressed across our region, we are seeking to ensure that new policies on water resources and water management reflect our position when considering new or extended employment proposals that require significant non-domestic water use.
MM55	**Anglian Water welcomes the supporting text to highlight groundwater flood risk and the safeguards needed to address such events in the future – however, it would be helpful to expand on this text to address the multi-agency approach required to address persistent flooding issues presented by groundwater flood risk in combination with other sources of flooding**. During the autumn of 2023 and winter 2023-24, many communities in the district experienced high levels of rainfall which led to groundwater flooding which inundated our sewer networks and led to weeks, and in some cases months of tankering away excess water in our networks to protect people's homes and businesses. Many parts of the drainage system are the responsibility of other stakeholders - road drains, gullies, ditches, rivers and canals, all have different owners and therefore effective management of the drainage system requires a combined effort from everyone involved, including home and business owners. Even with significant investment, our system is struggling to cope. We need to work with other agencies to prevent water from entering the foul system in the first place. Anglian Water with the LLFA, district councils, communities and other stakeholders have formed multi-agency groups to collaborate on these issues. Other measures include working in partnership with local councils, we are also looking at how we can utilise more green solutions, such as Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) and installing reed beds across our region. The most established flooding partnership is the Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance (NSFA). Founded in the winter of 2021, when there was widespread flooding across the county, NSFA is formed of the Environment Agency, Norfolk County Council (including highways), the Broads Authority and the Water Management Alliance. Using a catchment-based approach, NSFA works to take a holistic approach to water to protect

	communities and infrastructure within Norfolk from the risks of inland and coastal flooding, as well as drought.
MM56	**Policy LP25: Sites in Areas of Flood Risk** Anglian Water agrees with the amendment to criterion 4 to ensure all new dwellings incorporate flood resilient/resistant construction and design measures. This will also require suitably flood resilient and resistant infrastructure to support new dwellings. **We would request that the supporting text encourages developers to undertake early pre-planning engagement with Anglian Water to discuss their infrastructure connection requirements.**
MM115	**Anglian Water is supportive of the approach to deliver a sustainable settlement of up to 4,000 dwellings at the West Winch Growth Area (WWGA), which provides greater certainty regarding future infrastructure planning and provision.** Anglian Water previously responded to the consultation on the framework masterplan SPD, as we recognise the opportunities to deliver sustainable and resilient growth on this important strategic site through future proofing against long-term climate change impacts and utilising natural resources sustainably.
MM116	**Policy E2.1 West Winch Growth Area Strategic Policy Part A** **Anglian Water is supportive of the approach to deliver a sustainable settlement of up to 4,000 dwellings at the West Winch Growth Area (WWGA), which provides greater certainty regarding future infrastructure planning and provision.** Anglian Water responded to the consultation on the framework masterplan SPD as we recognise the opportunities to deliver sustainable and resilient growth on this important strategic site through future proofing against long-term climate change impacts and utilising natural resources sustainably. **We are particularly supportive of the changes to criterion 16 to emphasise high standards of design including water efficiency measures to meet a minimum 100 litres per person per day (l/p/d) and incorporating integrated water management measures to maximise efficiencies for potable water use**. This accords with the measures set out in the Environmental Improvement Plan Roadmap for Water Efficiency and the Defra Plan for Water. Anglian Water supports the ability for planning policy to set tighter standards for water efficiency which aligns with our overall approach to demand management in our Water Resources Management Plan 2025-2050 (WRMP24) - our plan demonstrates that there are significant challenges across our region in terms of the reduction of water available for use due to abstraction licence caps, environmental destination (achieved by reducing the amount of water we abstract from the environment further), ensuring sufficient resources available for 1:500 year drought, climate change, and population growth. This is reinforced by the work we are undertaking with Natural England and the Environment Agency on a revised Joint Protocol to support local planning authorities in applying tighter water efficiency standards that go beyond the optional higher standard of 110 l/p/d. The Joint Protocol will be underpinned by a supporting evidence base to help inform and underpin local planning authority policy-making. There are already significant water scarcity challenges in Greater Cambridge that are specifically referred

	to in the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities written ministerial statement of 19th December 2023. There is a risk that similar challenges will be faced elsewhere in East Anglia if all sectors do not work together now to be more water efficient and implement measures to save water. Anglian Water recognises that the delivery of infrastructure needed to support growth in the WWGA is required, including utilities as referenced by the 'New Criterion.' Once the Local Plan is adopted and there is greater confidence in delivery, it will enable the proposed level of growth to be assessed appropriately in terms of the infrastructure upgrades for water and wastewater that will be required to serve the WWGA.
MM131	**Policy LP39 – Downham Market** **F1.3 Housing Allocation Downham Market North-East** The pipeline corridor for the Fens Reservoir to the north of Downham Market (see Figure 2 under MM20/MM21/MM139) extends across the northern part of this site allocation. However, we note that the site area which falls within the proposed pipeline corridor already has planning consent and development has started on site. We will therefore seek to minimise any construction and operational impacts as we refine our design and fully assess these as part of our Environmental Statement including the identification of any appropriate mitigation.

3. Conclusion

3.1. Anglian Water welcomes the opportunity to comment on the main modifications for the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Local Plan. We welcome continued engagement with the Council through the progression of the Fens Reservoir NSIP through the DCO process and beyond, and in future reviews of the Local Plan.

APPENDIX 1: Anglian Water's Non-Domestic Water Requests Policy

July 2024

1.0 Executive Summary

The East of England is the driest part of the country and climate change is making summers hotter and drier. To help protect the environment, the Environment Agency (EA) is reviewing abstraction licences and reducing the amount of water that businesses including Anglian Water can abstract from the environment. As a result, **the gap between the demand for water and our supply (aka headroom) has shrunk.**

This situation is reducing our ability to be flexible with new requests to supply non-domestic connections which were not planned for in the Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP). However, where our supplies allow, we will endeavour to help businesses in whatever way we can to meet their needs and continue to serve the communities and economies they support.

To respond to both this challenge, and a growing population, Anglian Water is building a new strategic pipeline to move water around our region. We have also developed plans to build two new reservoirs to increase water supply. These solutions will take time to deliver, and so it is more crucial than ever that all homes and businesses are water efficient, to reduce the overall demand for water, to meet government targets and to ensure there is enough water to go around.

2.0 Background

2.1 Anglian Water

Anglian Water serves 20% of the total landmass of England and Wales and covers the largest geographical area of any water company. The Anglian Water region is the driest area in the country, receiving around two thirds of the average national rainfall. The population in the East of England has increased by 8.3% between 2011-2021, according to census data, which is the highest rate of growth in the UK. At Anglian Water we are committed to catering for this population growth and subsequently enabling growth in the economy. Agriculture and agri-food processing are vital industries in the East of England and require high volumes of water.

2.2 The EA's Abstraction Reduction Strategy

Water abstraction from the environment provides essential water for public water supply, agriculture and industry. However, unsustainable levels of abstraction impact the ecology and resilience of our rivers, wetlands and aquifers. Having the right flow in our rivers and protecting groundwater levels is essential to supporting healthy ecology, enhancing natural resilience to drought, and ensuring that rivers continue to support recreation and wellbeing. The Environment Agency (EA)'s abstraction reduction strategy is therefore essential for the health of our environment, but it does present some challenges for both ourselves and other businesses, especially as changes have been made to the EA's approach since we developed our last long term water resources management plan.

We also have three public water supply groundwater licences which require closure by June 2024. A further two public water supply groundwater sources have been identified at potential risk of closure by 2030. This, as well as the other pressures on our water supply, adds even greater pressure to the gap between demand for water and our ability to supply.

2.3 Water Resource Management Plans (WRMPs)

Every 5 years water companies create a WRMP which sets out how water companies intend to achieve a secure supply of water for customers and a protected and enhanced environment. This includes consideration of which abstraction licences are being reduced or removed and predictions for requirements from new homes and businesses. There have always been requests for new or increased water connections after the WRMP has been drafted and we build in an element of flexibility into the plan for unforeseen changes. However, due to the changes in the EA's abstraction reduction strategy the number of requests received by Anglian Water for non-domestic connections has increased in the last year as business are also having their licences reduced or revoked, or simply cannot access any other source of water. At the same time we have seen new requests related to the 'onshoring' of production following Brexit and other supply chain issues, as well as new demands relating to net zero ambitions.

3.0 How can Anglian Water Help?

Anglian Water has a statutory duty to supply water for domestic purposes. This means we are legally obliged to supply water to all household properties as well as any domestic requirements (e.g., drinking water, hand-basins, toilets and showers) of non-household properties. In many cases, domestic demand will be the only requirement for non-household properties (e.g., schools, hospitals, offices, shops and hairdressers). Non-domestic demand refers to water use for industrial processes, (e.g., agri-food production or car washes), and there is no legal requirement for us to supply for this type of water usage where it might put at risk our ability to supply water for domestic purposes.

Although Anglian Water do not have a statutory obligation to supply for non-domestic purposes in these circumstances, we factor this into our WRMP and we do everything we can to support businesses in the region, with the help of the water retail market. However, as described above, the situation is now changing, due to water supply being squeezed by abstraction reduction, climate change and a fast-growing population. Therefore, where new and unplanned non-domestic requests are received, which exceed 20,000 litres per day (0.020 Ml/d) (this may be less dependent on the availability of water in that area) or where there is a cumulative impact from a significant number of smaller requests, there might be the need to decline in order to protect existing supplies and the environment. In order to assess these requests, we will be asking all businesses to submit a Water Resource Assessment as part of our planning process, and, where feasible, we will work with them to explore innovative solutions to meet their requests. We are always willing to provide practical support and advice on navigating the regulation and the EA's abstraction reduction strategy to businesses in our region.

4.0 What can your water retailer do to help?

The water retailer is the main point of contact for any water related issues or advice a business might need. We would always advise businesses contact them first and foremost to discuss water supply. Water retailers can provide information, including on how to become more water efficient and make the water you already have go further.

5.0 What can businesses do to help?

The cheapest and most sustainable solution to the region's water resource problem is to collectively reduce our water consumption. Water efficiency measures can be an extremely effective way to free up water resources for business expansion or new connections. Anglian Water have an ambitious smart metering roll out programme across the region for all homes and businesses which help customers change their behaviour and become more water efficient. For our largest business customers, we offer smart meter data down to 15-minute intervals.

Water efficiency audits should be undertaken before new water supplies are requested. This could include installing water efficient devices (e.g., aerated taps and shower heads, low flush or air flush toilets) and efficient white goods (e.g., dishwashers and washing machines). Water demand can also be reduced through fitting smart meters, which measure water usage and provide regular readings, helping to identify leaks and tracking water consumption. Meters can also help support and encourage behavioural change.

In many cases, water reuse can also be a good option for reducing demand for water. Water reuse generally refers to the capture, treatment (if required) and use of alternative water supplies for non-potable purposes. It includes rainwater and surface water harvesting, greywater recycling and wastewater recycling. Water reuse technologies have the potential to save significant amounts of water, especially in situations where non potable water could be used in production.

6.0 What we need from government?

There are several things Anglian Water is calling on the government to do to help address this challenge and protect water resources:

3.2. Include every sector in a national campaign to reach the 20% water demand reduction target published in the Environment Act 2021.
3.3. Introduce a mandatory water efficiency labelling system for water using products, similar to the scheme already in place for energy using products.
3.4. Tighten building regulations and enforcement so that new homes are built to ambitious water efficient standards, as set out in the government's EIP (Environment Improvement Plan) 2023.
3.5. Make a commitment to link water efficiency with existing and new energy efficiency policies and retrofitting programmes.
3.6. Recognise the need to create new headroom to enable non-domestic growth.
3.7. Support us in delivering large scale strategic water resources options (for example, Anglian Water's two new reservoirs and new pipelines).