

Joint Position Statement on growth in the Water Recycling Centre (WRC) catchments in Colchester Borough (September 2017)

1. Introduction

1.1 This position statement has been prepared by Anglian Water, the Environment Agency and Colchester Borough Council. This statement is intended to set out the current position relating to the capacity of Langham WRC following the publication of the Colchester Borough Water Cycle Study (WCS) in December 2016. The housing figures referred to in this statement are those which appear in the Borough Council's Draft Submission Local Plan 2017- 2033.

2. Langham and Boxted

2.1 The WCS is based on a scenario involving 125 new dwellings at Langham and 36 dwellings at Boxted between 2017 and 2033. It concluded that action would need to be taken to accommodate the scale of growth identified in the Langham Water Recycling Centre catchment.

2.2 In the Draft Submission Local Plan it is now proposed that 80 dwellings will be developed at Langham and 36 dwellings at Boxted between 2017 and 2033.

3. Dedham and Dedham Heath

3.1 The WCS is also based on a scenario involving 17 new dwellings at Dedham and Dedham Heath between 2017 and 2032. It concluded that upgrades at the existing Water Recycling Centre at Dedham and a new permit is likely to be required to accommodate this level of growth.

3.2 In the Draft Submission Local Plan, no new residential development is being proposed in Dedham or at Dedham Heath between 2017 and 2033.

4. Environmental Constraints

4.1 Langham (East) WRC discharges to Black Brook entering the River Stour at the same point as Dedham WRC. The discharge point is approximately 8km upstream of Stour and Orwell Estuaries Special Protection Area and Ramsar site and Cattawade Marshes SSSI.

4.2 Dedham WRC discharges to Black Brook Local Wildlife Site, 0.1km from the River Stour, which flows past the River Marshes Local Wildlife Site. After approximately 2.6km the river enters the Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA and Ramsar site, and flows past Cattawade Marshes SSSI.

- 4.3 In the Water Cycle Study, reference was made to the Environment Agency and Anglian Water determining whether a new treatment solution is appropriate to address the potential effects on downstream ecology at Black Brook, the River Stour and possibly Cattawade Marshes SSSI. The WCS recommended that the Local Plan include a requirement for infrastructure to be in place prior to the delivery of new development or new housing would need to be phased in line with infrastructure improvements to ensure that Langham East and Dedham WRCs can provide the increased capacity.

5. Policy Position

- 5.1 Anglian Water is currently preparing a Long Term Water Recycling Plan. This will be used to inform the identification of further investment at existing water recycling centres to accommodate additional development to 2040 as part of Anglian Water's Business Plans (which are prepared once every 5 years). This plan will include identifying the infrastructure investment required as part of the next business plan to be approved by the regulator OFWAT.
- 5.2 Policies PP1 and SS9 in the (draft) Local Plan refer to the requirement for sufficient wastewater infrastructure to be in place before development is bought forward.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Planning applications for development connected to Langham and Dedham WRCs require careful waste water infrastructure and water quality consideration to ensure that the objectives of the Water Framework Directive are not compromised. The timing of development will play a crucial part in this, ensuring that developments are not progressed ahead of improvements in treatment technology capabilities or the identification of alternative approaches, to ensure the environment is protected. The relevant Local Plan policies for development at Langham and Boxted include this requirement.
- 6.2 Anglian Water will continue to monitor the quantity and quality of flows from WRCs in the Colchester area including Langham (East) and Dedham and will take the necessary steps at the appropriate time in order to accommodate growth within environmental parameters. Further work needs to be done to consider and identify all the improvements that will need to be implemented to enable development to proceed. Given the ongoing nature of this work it should be recognized that improvements may not be delivered during the earliest stage of the plan.

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