

## Questions for Anglian Water to be addressed at the meeting in Langham on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021

### Background

The meeting has been called due to the concerns that Langham residents have over the capacity issues at the Langham Water Recycling Centre (WRC) and the Langham sewerage network. These concerns are based on past overflow issues and the plans for additional major building work in Langham.

A joint positioning statement was signed by Anglian Water (AW), The Environment Agency (EA) and Colchester Borough Council (CBC) in 2017, at that time the Langham WRC was oversubscribed based on an assessment of the number of homes/premises connected to the WRC. To safeguard the local community CBC included a planning condition in the Linden Homes (now Vistry Homes) planning application, for 46 new homes in Langham, that *“Development should not commence until adequate waste water and sewage treatment capacity is available to serve the new housing”*. We are unaware of any upgrade work that has been carried out since the agreement was signed and the development has been halted whilst suitable solutions are considered.

AW have in the past stated that Langham WRC is flow non-compliant due to surface water and groundwater infiltration into the foul-only network. A major scheme to reduce infiltration was undertaken between 2010 and 2015. Additional work to reduce infiltration even further was then the subject of an infiltration reduction plan after the high flows recorded in Jan/Feb 2021. But AW have only very recently (7th Oct 2021) submitted a pre-application to the EA to upgrade the capacity of Langham WRC, with no guaranteed timescales for completion.

### Questions

1. What is the current status with regard to capacity issues at the Langham WRC? And what are the plans and timescales for upgrading the Langham WRC or increasing the throughput?
  - A. We have identified an investment strategy for the WRC in consultation with the Environment Agency. In October we submitted a pre application to the EA to understand what new limits will apply to an increased dry weather flow allowance. Once we receive their response, expected in December, we will be able to design and schedule upgrades. We expect all upgrades to be completed by 2025 at the latest.

In our pre application and in our discussions with the EA we have accounted for future growth as identified in the merging local plan. We have also completed surface water removal work in Boxted, which is within the Langham WRC catchment. This is to stop surface water entering the foul only network and then being treated at the WRC.

Surface water should be managed effectively at source and not be conveyed in the foul network to the WRC. The following surface water removal work has been completed in Boxted:

- Manhole sealing to stop surface water ingress.
- Clearance of a privately owned blocked surface water sewer.
- Disconnection of private downpipes into the foul network.
- The downpipes have been diverted into the dedicated surface water sewer.
- Notified Highways of blocked gullies in their ownership.
- Installation of six flow monitors to log data on how the network responds in storm events.

For the EA to understand the impact these surface water removal works are having at Langham WRC we have quarterly meetings with them to share the monitoring data. Please see attached Investment Statement for further details regarding WRC upgrade and surface water removal work.

2. Please can you explain how capacity and health & safety issues within the sewerage network are managed by Anglian Water? (Given that these are not within the remit of the EA to monitor and enforce). Langham Residents have suffered serious drain overflows in recent years. What if any plans are there to upgrade the Langham sewerage infrastructure?
  - A. We receive and manage all capacity and health & safety issues via our customer call centre, which are then deployed to local operations teams and our Field Technician Engineers to investigate. We take all reports and enquiries very seriously and we deal with every call on a bespoke basis depending on the type of call or issue. Any network issues are investigated and dealt with following a priority needs assessment, focusing on the most important issue first.

**Capacity.** We are not aware of any capacity issues in the network or indeed any significant flooding incidents from our assets. However, the local team do know of a couple of particular locations within the Langham village catchment that need a more detailed investigation. These are not serious but we have had repeat visits to these two locations for sewer blockages. We would ask that residents report such incidents to us on 03457 145145 so we can investigate as soon as they occur. It would also be very useful if you (and villagers) could collate any historical information of any incident and share with us when we meet in the New Year. I know our local Water Recycling Network Manager would find that most useful and we can then focus any investigations at specific locations.

**Upgrade.** We have no immediate plans to upgrade our infrastructure in the Langham catchment, but its performance is constantly monitored and investment will be put forward if and when needed. That said, we will of course look to instigate some enhancement to the works once we hear back from the EA on the DWF point. (See questions 1 and 6).

3. Could you explain the significance of Dry Water Flow at the Langham WRC and why this is an important factor in compliance with the Permit requirements of the EA?
  - A. The purpose of the Environmental Permit is to regulate both the quality and quantity of the effluent (i.e., the overall load) that we can safely discharge to the environment, whilst protecting river water quality. Dry Weather Flow is the primary volumetric measure that the EA use within the Permit to

regulate the quantity for compliance purposes. The EA website gives further information about how DWF is calculated.

4. We understand that Langham WRC has been flow non-compliant due to surface water and groundwater infiltration into the foul only network. Please could you clarify the period of non-compliance and describe any recently completed (plus near-future committed) activities that will reduce wet weather flow rates into Langham WRC? Also, the same question for dry weather flow rates.

A. We are not aware of any groundwater infiltration problems in the Langham catchment area apart from the issues found in Boxted (see question 1 above). However, our Water Recycling Network Manager is prepared to conduct a CCTV camera survey of any parts of the network that anyone has concerns about. Again, maybe something to pick up when we meet?

5. What are the actual measured Q80/Q90 DWF figures based on the first 11 months of 2021?

A. Langham WRC – 2021 Measured flows up to 12/12/2021

Measure	Value (m3/day)
Q80	514
Q90	481.5

6. What remedial actions will be put in place if the current DWF permit limit is exceeded for a second year in a row?

A. The process of remedial actions has already been started as we have put in an application to the Environment Agency to understand the limits we will receive on a higher DWF. Once we receive a response, we will start the process of designing and upgrading the WRC, as well as putting in a formal application to the Environment Agency to vary our permit.

7. The use of Combined Sewer Overflows by UK Water Companies has received a lot of press coverage recently, including BBC coverage of Stour swimmers at Manningtree (the receiving water body for Langham WRC). Event Duration Monitoring (EDM) of overflows is already in place at Dedham WRC. The lack of information would seem to indicate that EDM has not been installed at Langham WRC. Given that capacity overload was first reported at least 5 years ago now, are there any plans to install EDM at Langham WRC?

A. We take our responsibility to protect the environment very seriously and welcomed the new storm overflow provision in the recent Environment Act. We acknowledge that Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) are not fit for purpose, but they exist to protect homes and businesses from flooding in heavy rainfall, and when they discharge it is very dilute stormwater. That's not say we're not doing anything about them.

We are investing hundreds of millions of pounds in our biggest ever environment programme over the next four years, including to tackle the highest spilling CSO's first with a pledge to install EDM's on all our CSO's by the end of 2023.

However, there is no EDM at Langham WRC or no need for one, because there is no Storm Discharge at the site – the only discharge is from the Final Effluent Discharge Point.

Langham Parish Council - December 2021

Anglian Water Services – 22 December 2021