

Our approach to socio-economic opportunities

Alongside public water supply, the reservoir could potentially play a wider role for the region by creating long term investment and employment opportunities.



Our existing water parks, such as Rutland Water and Grafham Water, are great examples of what this can look like. The reservoirs themselves create a wide range of employment opportunities in everything from water and estate management to recreation and hospitality. Beyond this, as attractive places to visit, reservoirs can also sometimes prompt wider investment in an area as businesses develop their own plans to benefit from visitors.

In our phase one consultation, potential effects on the local economy was a primary theme for stakeholders and communities.

We recognise that the project is having an effect on existing businesses and operations, notably those whose land is affected by proposals or close by. We are carefully considering what impacts there are on these businesses and activities, what this means for the area, and how we can limit or manage these impacts. That includes working closely with those with land interests.

We also received feedback about whether the reservoir could bring economic investment too. As we plan the new reservoir, we are considering what potential opportunities it could create for the region from now, through construction, and into operation.

The National Policy Statement for Water Resources Infrastructure¹ provides the framework for how water resources such as reservoirs should be developed. It sets out the types of socio-economic impacts and opportunities water resources like reservoirs can have.

It notes the construction and operation may have both short and longer term economic impacts. It adds reservoirs can also offer long term opportunities for the provision of recreational and/or educational facilities. And it points out that water supply itself could also bring economic opportunities such as for local industry and agriculture operations.

Our emerging design includes potential economic opportunities through the recreational features we have included. We are keen to hear people's views on this and if there are wider opportunities they would like us to consider.

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6437e3a2f4d42000cd4a1a7/E02879931_National_Policy_Statement_for_Water_Resources.pdf

To assess the potential economic impacts and benefits of the project, we are developing a socio-economic strategy. Through this work we will:

Carefully consider agricultural operations affected by the reservoir and also if there are opportunities for agriculture as part of Anglian Water's involvement in wider initiatives, such as the Future Fens: Integrated Adaptation project.

Seek to ensure our design for the reservoir allows for the development and evolution of economic opportunities (where reasonable and having regard to considerations such as operational requirements), such as through recreational activities and providing good access to the benefits of these.

Consider the different economic impacts and opportunities related specifically to construction and operation, recognising these are different.

Assess the potential economic impacts of the reservoir so we can understand if there are ways to avoid or limit these impacts.

Look at opportunities to create skills development and employment opportunities for the area, including exploring the use of the local supply chain for goods and services.

Consider if there are wider economic opportunities related to health and wellbeing that comes with access to recreation and open spaces.

Seek input from stakeholders and your local authorities.

Continue to engage with communities so their feedback can influence this area of our work.

Assess which opportunities might bring the greatest overall benefit to help inform design and investment decisions.

More information on the economic impacts and opportunities related to our proposals will continue to be shared at future consultations.