

GCLP Webinar 4 'Climate Change and Water'

Responses to questions submitted during the live session.

Question 1

Could Elliott Gill address the Stantec Report conclusion 5.1.1, first bullet point.

We are already carrying out unsustainable abstraction. The EA want a 60-70% reduction in current rates. The aquifer is not recharging adequately in 40 % of years.

What do you not question your fundamental assumption that growth is a given?

Elliot: I would suggest that the sustainability (or not) of the growth with respect to water abstraction is one of timing. Growth can occur without continued detriment (to the aquifer and river flows) provided that new resources are introduced into the region.

Question 2

Does the Local Plan cover retrofitting of existing buildings to meet the EUI target etc?

This question has been answered live

Question 3

Apologies Anna, you made an interesting point about how different houses perform. I slightly missed this, were you saying it was a general principle that blocks of flats performed better in terms of net zero? Just to clarify. thanks

The design of the home / building really makes a difference to the space heating demand and how easy it is to achieve the target. That target is related to the amount of heat lost through the building fabric - so, detached houses require more insulation to meet the target than flats do (with a corresponding increase in construction cost). Also, things like dormers and overhangs increase heat loss, and need more insulation treatment, increasing costs too. So, we found you could really optimise fabric performance and cost through paying attention to these details from the beginning of the design process. By doing so, the uplifts in cost can be minimal.

Question 4

The best practice MUST be to stop allowing any more developments. Presumably plans already approved have to go through with maybe stricter constraints on design, materials etc. Water is a major issue. Even with the proposed 2 new reservoirs we will only have enough water to provide for the existing populations, let alone the already approved plans.

This question has been answered live

Question 5

How is this working locally between the city, the county and the greater Cambridge group and with the mayor of cam and Peterborough?

We have worked closely with colleagues at the County Council and they were involved with the work on the net zero carbon study. We are also working with the

Greater Cambridge Partnership on issues such as grid capacity to support net zero carbon. With the Combined Authority, we have shared the findings of the net zero carbon study with the independent Commission on Climate Change, and their recommendations are currently being considered by the Combined Authority, which includes a recommendation around delivering net zero carbon faster than national regulations such as the Future Homes Standard.

Question 6

Why is Cleantech employment not recognised in the First Proposals Local Plan?

This question has been answered live

Question 7

How does the climate commission report affect your thinking?

The emerging net zero carbon policy has been shared with the Commission and they consider it an example of best practice. Many of the other policies in the First Proposals document are also in line with the commissions reports around issues such as biodiversity net gain, water and dealing with overheating in new buildings.

Question 8

Why are you proposing more growth than required by government?

This question has been answered live

Question 9

When does the stop to further development occur? No permission for more houses/development in the planning pipeline i.e., have planning permission already

This question has been answered live

Question 10

You've stated that we have responsibilities to build to meet 'objectively assessed need' and can't leave this to other councils. Given that Greater Cambridge is already a highly overheated economy, how does this fit with government's 'levelling up' agenda? Shouldn't development be focused in areas of the UK where the economy needs to grow (and that don't have acute water supply problems)?

This question has been answered live

Question 11

Marina Goodyear slide: Defining net zero carbon for local plan purposes: talking about carbon off-setting. I think it was said that carbon offsets would not be sought outside the County. Have I understood correctly?

Further to live answer - we would also want them to be energy-related offsetting (i.e. renewable energy installation) because that is the sector in which the emissions would be occurring. The sectors of existing buildings, and land use/afforestation, need to reach net zero carbon on their own if we're going to stick to carbon budgets. Yes, the offsetting that is proposed in the net zero buildings policy would be energy offsetting - that is providing additional renewable energy off-site where it is not possible for a building to achieve the energy balance on site (this would be in only

the a few cases as most buildings would be able to achieve an energy balance on-site).

Question 13

If jobs growth will happen regardless, why propose more employment land to the south - while homes are planned for the north?

This question has been answered live

Question 14

Thank you. V. helpful. Could the principles adopted in relation to carbon-offsetting also be applied to water supply?

This question has been answered live

Question 15

Is water neutrality a potential option?

This question has been answered live

Question 16

Could Elliott say why river flows have declined if present abstraction is doing no harm? We now (at last) have a 'water stressed' area declared. We have the EA now calling for reduction on present use. We now have (at last) Natural England recognising that Chalk streams are really special. If you take climate change seriously you would realise that increasing soil moisture deficits are likely to worsen. The precautionary principle is ignored at our peril! Happy to talk more with you and the Cam Valley Forum team and WRE

The Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study - Outline Water Cycle Study, available to view in the local plan document library, acknowledges that there is no environmental capacity for new development (beyond that already allowed for in the WRMP) to be supplied with water by increased abstraction from the chalk aquifer, and that further reductions in abstractions are currently being explored.

The Councils have been, and continue to, engage with the relevant bodies responsible for water supply planning, including Water Resources East, the Water Companies and the Environment Agency. The First Proposals sets out (on page 41) that we still need to understand whether water supplies can be provided in a way that is sufficient for the full objectively assessed needs to be able to be delivered in a sustainable way throughout the plan period.