Doncaster Local Plan
Examination

MATTER 13: Natural and Built Environment

Written Statement

Anglian Water Services Ltd

September 2020
13.6 Are the Council’s suggested changes to Policy 61 necessary to make the plan sound and would be effective in doing so?

Promoting water efficiency: Doncaster Council is proposing to make a change to Policy 61 of the Local Plan which states that proposals will be supported which promote water efficiency measures which take account of current water availability and future demand.

Anglian Water is supportive of increased water efficiency as part of development proposals but considers that to be effective the requirement for applicants need to be clearly set out in the Local Plan.

We had sought the inclusion of the optional higher water efficiency standard for residential development as set out in our previous comments on the Pre-Submission Local Plan (Comment reference Policy 46/0031/8/002).

The Council has stated that there is no substantive evidence for the optional higher water efficiency standard in the Anglian Water area or within the wider borough. Anglian Water remains of the view that the optional higher water efficiency standard is required for the area served by Anglian Water for the following reasons:

All new dwellings have to meet the mandatory national standard set out in the Building Regulations (of 125 litres/person/day). Where there is a clear local need, local planning authorities can set out Local Plan policies requiring new dwellings to meet the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres/person/day.

The National Planning Policy Framework policies expect local planning authorities to adopt proactive strategies to adapt to climate change that take full account of water supply and demand considerations. The local planning authority can consider whether a tighter water efficiency requirement for new homes is justified to help manage demand.

To include the optional higher target, national planning practice guidance states that it will be for a local planning authority to establish a clear need based on:

- existing sources of evidence
- locally specific evidence including water cycle studies.
- consultations with the local water and sewerage company, the Environment Agency and catchment partnerships.
- consideration of the impact on viability and housing supply of such a requirement.

Existing sources of evidence

The main source of information for establishing need is the Environment Agency ‘Water Stressed Areas Final Classification (2013)’\(^1\), which identifies areas of serious water stress

\(^1\)https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2013-classification
where household demand for water is (or likely to be) a high proportion of the current effective rainfall available to meet that demand.

The Environment Agency advises the Secretary of State that the areas classified as 'Serious' in the final classification table should be designated as 'Areas of serious water stress'. Anglian Water region is identified as an area of serious water stress.

In addition, Anglian Water’s Water Resource Management Plan 2019 identifies how Anglian Water will manage the supply and demand balance over the next 25 years. It shows what demand and supply measures will be introduced to manage the longer term challenge of population increase, climate change, drought resilience and growing environmental needs. It is currently forecasted that our average supply-demand balance will be 249Ml/d by 2045. In response, reducing the levels of consumption will help to counteract the reduction in resource availability as well as other proactive alterations.

Consultations with the local water and sewerage company and the Environment Agency

Anglian Water and the Environment Agency are of the view that there is sufficient evidence to justify the inclusion of the optional higher water efficiency standard in Local Plans where Anglian Water supplies water as outlined in the Joint Advice Note to Local Planning Authorities.

Viability

Local Planning Authorities are required to consider viability taking account of local circumstances and policy requirements but Government research has shown that the cost of the optional higher water efficiency standard and associated cost can be as low as £6-9 per dwelling. We therefore consider that this does not make the Doncaster Local Plan, or individual development proposals, unviable.

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