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15th December 2025

Dear Lucy

APPLICATION 24/02259/FUL: REBUTTAL ON ANGLIAN WATER'S POSITION

This letter has been provided by Carter Jonas LLP on behalf of Bellway Eastern Counties. It relates to application 24/02259/FUL for Land at St Ives Road Somersham.

Anglian Water have objected to the development on the basis of lack of foul water capacity. Following a meeting with the planning authority, this letter reviews the foul water flows from the proposed development. It also summarises the key benefits of the development that should be afforded significant weight in the planning balance.

The Application

Application 24/02259/FUL seeks approval for the erection of 52 homes, access, open space and associated infrastructure. It was validated on 2nd December 2024.

The site is north of St Ives Road, on the eastern edge of Somersham. It was allocated for 55 homes in the 2019 Huntingdonshire District Local Plan.

Response to Anglian Water

The application was submitted following a Pre-Planning Assessment with Anglian Water. As a statutory undertaker, Anglian Water have an obligation to facilitate development upon planning consent being granted. Anglian Water first raised foul capacity concerns in July 2023 through the Pre-Planning Assessment Report. Following further correspondence in September 2023, Anglian Water advised via email that upgrade works to Somersham (Cambs) Water Recycling Centre were planned in AMP 8 delivery period (2025-20230) and that flows would be accepted from the development prior to the upgrade works being completed.

Following submission of the application, Anglian Water have raised concerns regarding insufficient capacity at the Somersham (Cambs) Water Recycling Centre and confirmed that these upgrade works are no longer scheduled. The applicant is keen to work with Anglian Water to agree a strategy to address the capacity concerns and allow the development to progress.

Currently, the applicant has received limited information on Anglian Water's existing drainage infrastructure and has been provided with no evidence of Somersham (Cambs) Water Recycling Centre's capacity issues or operation of the storm overflows referenced in Huntingdon District Council's letter received 25/11/25. However, the 'Pre-Planning Assessment Report (Dated 28/07/2023)' received from Anglian Water advises the concern relates solely to the foul water treatment centre, as the report confirmed there is sufficient capacity in the foul sewerage system to convey flows from the development to the treatment centre.

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The development deals with surface water and foul water flows separately. The approach detailed in the Drainage Strategy proposes all surface water flows are to be discharged into an existing ditch along the southern boundary of the site. Two large storage basins have been provided onsite with a combined storage of 689m^3 (including the 300mm freeboard). Flows are proposed to discharge at the agreed greenfield run off rate of 5.41l/s. This replicates the existing greenfield scenario.

The foul strategy proposes a connection into Anglian Water's existing manhole '3801' located in St Ives Road as specified in Anglian Water's Pre-Planning Assessment Report. Anglian Water's asset records confirm this is a foul water only sewer (as opposed to a combined sewer as stated in the letter from Huntingdon District Council). Based on the housing mix of the 52 dwellings detailed in application 24/02259/FUL, the estimated total daily foul volume to be generated by the development is 27.28m^3.

We have undertaken a review of the 2024 EDM Overflow Regulatory Annual Return for Anglian Water to better understand the capacity concern at the Somersham (Cambs) Water Recycling Centre. Overflows of the storm tank have been recorded since 2022 but there have been no foul overflows recorded.

Based on the information Bellway has to date, it appears there are limited opportunities for Bellway to assist with addressing the capacity concerns raised. As the development currently does not discharge surface water into the Anglian Water's drainage system and does not propose to, there is no opportunity for Bellway to offset the new foul flows from the proposed development by reducing surface water flows into Anglian Water's drainage network. Additionally, as the capacity concern relates to the foul water treatment centre rather than the foul sewerage conveyance system, providing additional storage to the proposed onsite foul drainage system offers little benefit as there would be negligible impact to the volume/day processed by the treatment plant.

Ultimately, the capacity concerns raised by Anglian Water extend beyond this development only. It is likely any proposed development in the area reliant on the Somersham (Cambs) Water Recycling Centre will face the same issue. As a statutory undertaker, Anglian Water have an obligation to facilitate development upon planning consent being granted. Bellway submitted the application on the basis that upgrade works were planned, and in any case Anglian Water would accept foul water flows from the development. Subsequently, the upgrade works were cancelled by Anglian Water and to Bellway's knowledge have not been rescheduled.

The applicant's view is that a foul water connection into Anglian Water's system is the only viable strategy to facilitate this development and the application needs to be determined on this basis.

While Anglian Water have not yet quantified what, if any, harm will arise from this development, it is noted that this is a modest development on an allocated site. If Anglian Water does quantify any harm, this will need to be weighed against the significant benefits of this development. Based on the information available, it is clear to us that the benefits of development are considerable and should be given significant weight. For ease of reference, the key benefits of this development are as follows.

1. Housing Provision

- 52 new homes, helping to meet local housing needs.
- 40% affordable housing (15 social rented homes and 6 shared ownership homes).
- Mix of 1–4 bedroom homes, including bungalows and accessible units, catering to diverse needs.

2. Sustainable Location

- Site is allocated in the 2019 Local Plan (Policy SM1) and within a Key Service Centre.
- Close to village amenities (schools, shops, healthcare) and well-connected by footpaths and public transport.

3. Design & Amenity

- High-quality design with traditional materials and varied roof forms.
- Generous open spaces: 2,400sq.m of wildflower meadows, naturalistic SUDS basins and grassed amenity areas, with a green and open feel.
- Good residential amenity with noise mitigation measures.

4. Infrastructure & Access

- Safe vehicular access with footway links to the village.
- Adequate parking and cycle storage.
- Transport assessment shows minimal traffic impact.

5. Environmental & Health Benefits

- SUDS drainage system to manage surface water sustainably.
- Flood Zone 1 (low flood risk).
- Sustainability measures including energy-efficient homes, use of water-saving devices, and solar PV panels on every house (estimated 25% of regulated energy needs).

6. Ecology & Biodiversity

- No significant ecological constraints; mitigation and habitat creation proposed.
- Biodiversity Net Gain strategy with off-site compensation secured via S106.

7. Compliance with Policy

- Aligns with Huntingdonshire Local Plan policies on housing, design, sustainability, and infrastructure.
- Responds to pre-application feedback, improving layout, landscaping, and amenity.

Conclusion

The applicant cannot provide any meaningful mitigation for Anglian Water's capacity concerns because the issue lies entirely with the foul water treatment process at the Somersham Water Recycling Centre, not with the conveyance system or surface water drainage.

There is currently no clear upgrade plan or alternative solution from Anglian Water, which presents a barrier to the building out of the site. If this scheme does not proceed, the area will lose significant benefits, including 52 new homes (21 of which are affordable) delivered on a sustainable, allocated site. These benefits align with local policy objectives and address pressing housing needs, meaning their loss would represent a missed opportunity for both the community and the district's growth strategy.

Yours sincerely,

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Associate

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