

East Of England Water Summit – briefing note for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The East of England Local Authority Water Summit was held on 8th March 2024 at the Nucleus, Chesterford Research Park, Saffron Walden. Delegates from the North Norfolk District Council were the Portfolio holder for Net Zero, Cllr Adam Varley, and the Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth, Rob Young.

The substance of the event included the following addresses, presentations, and panel discussions, in the order they occurred:

East of England Water: Collaborating for Sustainability - Daniel Zeichner MP, Member of Parliament for Cambridge and Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Ensuring Sustainable Water Resources for Regional Economic Growth - Duncan Baker MP, Member of Parliament for North Norfolk

Panel Discussion: Exploring Water Issues in the East of England

Chaired by Cllr Bridget Smith, Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council

- **Cambridge 2040** - Stephen Kelly, Joint Director of Planning, Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
- **Environment Agency** – Sadia Moeed, Area Director
- **Anglian Water** – Phil Jones, Growth Strategy Manager

The following four workshops were provided, the first two of which were attended by the Assistant Director for Sustainable Growth, the second two by the Portfolio Holder for Net Zero.

- **Future Water Supply to Meet Demand for Growth**

Chris Starkie, Director of Growth and Investment, Norfolk County Council

- **Managing Down Demand**

Richard Tidswell, Interim Head of Commercial Services, Waterwise

- **Biodiversity and River Health**

Cllr Richard Pavit, Utlesford District Council

Dr Claire Tancell, Principal Ecologist, Utlesford District Council

Professor William Sutherland CBE FRS, Director of Research, University of Cambridge

Charlotte Stannard, Cam & Ely Ouse Catchment Co-ordinator, The Rivers Trust

Chris Gerrard, Catchment and Biodiversity Manager, Anglian Water

- **Nature Based Solutions – The Future of Flood Management**

Samantha Kennedy, Director Environment and Climate Action, Essex County Council

Mat Hullis, Head of Environment Strategy, Suffolk County Council

John Hammond, Advisor (Civil Contingencies), MET Office

The full agenda and papers for the event can be accessed here: [Water Summit Information Pack - 8 March 2024 - 1 \(pagetiger.com\)](#)

The slides from the event can be accessed here: [East of England Local Authority Water Summit - EELGA](#)

The event established the water supply challenges faced by this region and the impediments they may pose to sustainable growth in housing and economic development. It also set out the paradoxical challenges of water management posed by both flooding and drought, exacerbated by climate change, and also the environmental problems of poor water quality. Presentations and workshop discussions delved into the topics somewhat and there was a wide appreciation of the perspectives on these diverse subjects from local authorities and water related organisations from across the region.

No clear conclusions came from the summit, but the overriding theme related to the problems caused by fragmentation and benefits of collaboration. The overwhelming view was that local authorities have a crucial role to play in facilitating the relationships that will lead to closer collaboration, that might help drive solutions to the interrelated and knotty problems of water supply, water quality and flooding, overcoming impediments to sustainable growth and the causes of environmental degradation.