

Host a screening of the People's Emergency Briefing

In November 2025, the National Emergency Briefing brought together leading experts to present the latest evidence on the climate and nature crisis to politicians and other influential people in Westminster. The next step is to take this vital message across the UK, bringing together people from across local communities to hear the evidence and discuss how to respond.

<https://www.nebriefing.org/aims>

Dear Eleanor,

Thank you for considering hosting a screening of the *People's Emergency Briefing*. You're now part of a growing group of people working to take this vital message into communities across the UK - and beyond.

Screenings are being held for local communities in village halls, cinemas, faith spaces, council buildings, libraries, schools and festivals. Companies, councils and unions are organising screenings for staff and members.

Feedback from screenings is very positive. Our website lists [testimonials](#) including: "This was the kind of messaging I've been hoping to see for a long time. It's authoritative, digestible, psychologically realistic, savvy, and caring. Even funny in places, if you'll believe me."

The next step – once you're ready – is to add your screening to our map.

This is what confirms your event and adds you to the list to receive the film 10 days ahead of your screening date.

[Instructions for adding your screening to the map](#)

It takes a couple of minutes, and you can edit details later if needed. We are receiving interest from around the world, and the map now accepts entries outside the UK.

Planning your screening

In broad terms, hosting a screening involves: securing a venue, inviting people, showing the film, and holding a short discussion afterwards.

Everything you need to do this is provided here:

- The [Screening Guide](#) - all the resources you need
- The [NEB Noticeboard](#) - for key links and updates

Why the map matters

As well as directing people to your event, adding it to our screening map helps show the scale of what is building across the country - vital information for journalists and politicians.

Physical vs Online

At this stage, we are focusing on in-person screenings, not online. The aim is to bring communities together for shared discussion and response. If you want to organise a closed online screening which you think will help seed physical screenings, please get in touch.

Free of charge

To maximise public access, we make no charge for the film. For organisations hosting internal or corporate screenings, we invite a pay-what-you-can contribution, [using this donation link](#), to support the project and help us continue expanding its reach. *This is entirely optional* - our priority being to maximise reach.

Thank you for helping take us closer to a societal tipping point towards genuine emergency action and a better future.

Simon Oldridge & Nick Oldridge
On behalf of the National Emergency Briefing team
www.nebriefing.org



Dear Liz, and Burwell Parish Council,

We are writing to ask whether the Parish Council could help work with the Swaffham Internal Drainage Board regarding the clearing and maintenance of the lode areas around Newnham and Wiers Drove this Autumn.

Many residents we talk to and we have seen commenting on Facebook have noticed how heavily overgrown and silted sections of the lode have become in recent years, particularly since the battery farm development. Historically, these waterways were an important and beautiful feature of Burwell village life, supporting wildlife, drainage and the overall character of the area.

It is especially sad to see that the swans which traditionally nest along the lode now appear to be struggling to move through the dense reed beds and overgrowth. The ecology of the lode is something very special to Burwell and deserves care and attention before conditions deteriorate further.

Residents often compare the situation with Reach, where dredging and clearance work is regularly undertaken each Autumn, helping to keep the waterway open, healthy and attractive. Many people are asking why Burwell is not receiving the same level of maintenance and support.

Burwell should celebrate and care for its lode. It is one of the village's most distinctive natural assets and could be something the whole community learns to value and love even more, both for its wildlife and for the beauty it brings to the village environment.

We would therefore respectfully ask whether the Parish Council could:

- Engage with the Swaffham Drainage Board regarding a planned Autumn clearance programme;
- Explore whether dredging and reed management could be reinstated on a regular basis;
- Help raise awareness locally about the importance of protecting and maintaining the lode ecology.

Thank you for considering this request and for all the work you do on behalf of the village. If we can assist in any way please let us know.

Dear Yannifer and Katherine (Burwell PC)

During the Burwell Parish Council AGM on Saturday, the flooding and sewer capacity issues experienced in Burwell were discussed and I mentioned the work I had done after experiencing issues in 2024. As requested, using some helpful tools I have attached an infographic and slide summary of the multiple email exchanges I had with the following people during that time.

- **Cllr David Brown (ECDC):** The lead liaison between residents and the District Council's technical departments.
- **Sally Bonnett (Director for Infrastructure, ECDC) & Craig Smith (Head of Building Control, ECDC):** Responsible for investigating how these infrastructure failures impact local planning and building regulations.
- **Peter Simpson (CEO, Anglian Water):** The ultimate authority for the utility provider.

During 2024, we experienced repeated incidents of sewage backing up into our private properties (the private sewer systems) and some incidents of overflow into gardens during periods of heavy rainfall. One neighbour had to put sandbags on his manhole cover to stop it overflowing and some residents have had to install their own mitigation measures, including non-return valves to protect their properties. Despite this Anglian Water has maintained that the sewerage network is functioning as intended and has attributed many of the problems to rainfall, groundwater infiltration, and surface water entering the system which they are not responsible for rather than to a lack of infrastructure capacity

Local evidence suggests the system is already operating at or beyond its practical limits during the wetter months. In February 2024, I documented sustained high sewage levels, overloaded pumping stations, and even situations where my next-door neighbour's new sewer connections could not be completed due to pressure in the network, the trench was left open for days whilst the levels subsided. Similar incidents continued into 2025 as I noticed that sewerage had backed up into my private sewer system again during periods of persistent rainfall but didn't document it in detail this time. Another neighbour also had their garden flooded for the second or third time in September 2025 but in this case, I think it was a blockage.

My concern is that planning decisions for developments like Newmarket Road, appear to rely on "dry weather" capacity modelling which does not reflect real-world wet weather conditions. Anglian Water official figures suggest spare capacity remains, however the repeated failures experienced locally indicate otherwise. There also appears to be a gap in accountability between Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, and local authorities. This fragmentation allows for "institutional buck-passing" leaving residents without clear answers or effective action.

I would therefore ask for your support in seeking:

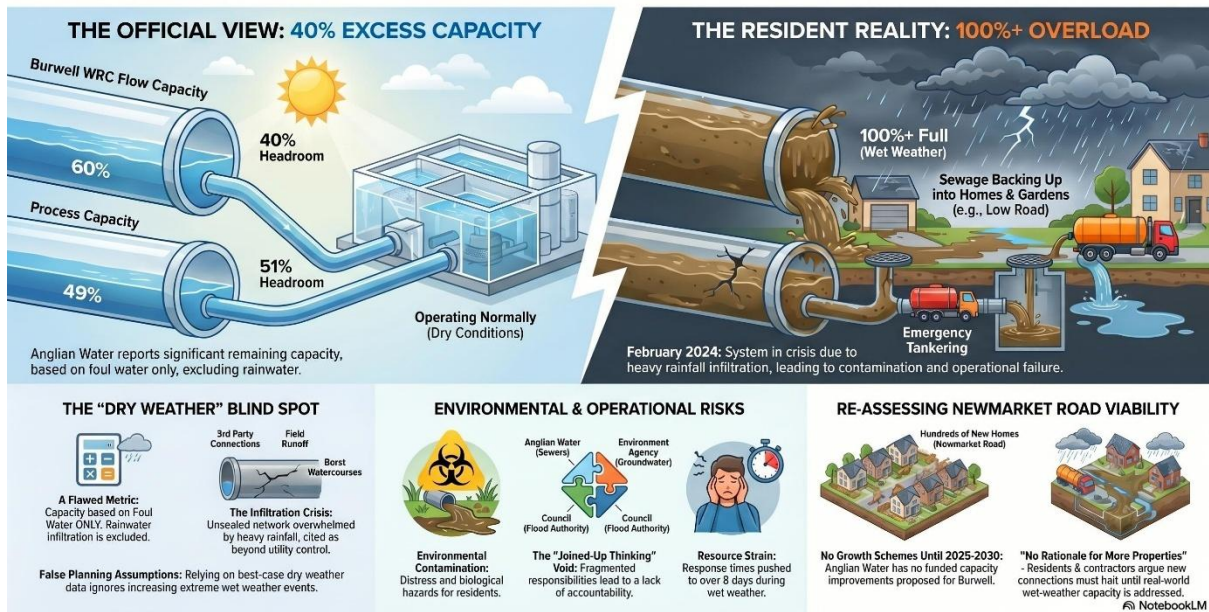
- An independent review of Burwell's sewage infrastructure capacity **stress tested under wet weather conditions and forecasts.**
- **Greater transparency from Anglian Water** regarding current **network resilience** and future **upgrade plans.**
- **A reassessment** of whether further **large-scale housing development** should proceed before infrastructure improvements are delivered.
- Better **coordination** between **planning authorities, water companies, and flood management bodies.**
- Consideration of **climate resilience and infiltration risks** within future **infrastructure modelling.**

As the 300 odd houses in the Newmarket Road development come on stream, residents particularly on Low Road are increasingly concerned about the risk of sewage flooding, environmental harm, and damage to private property during the wetter months.

Thanks

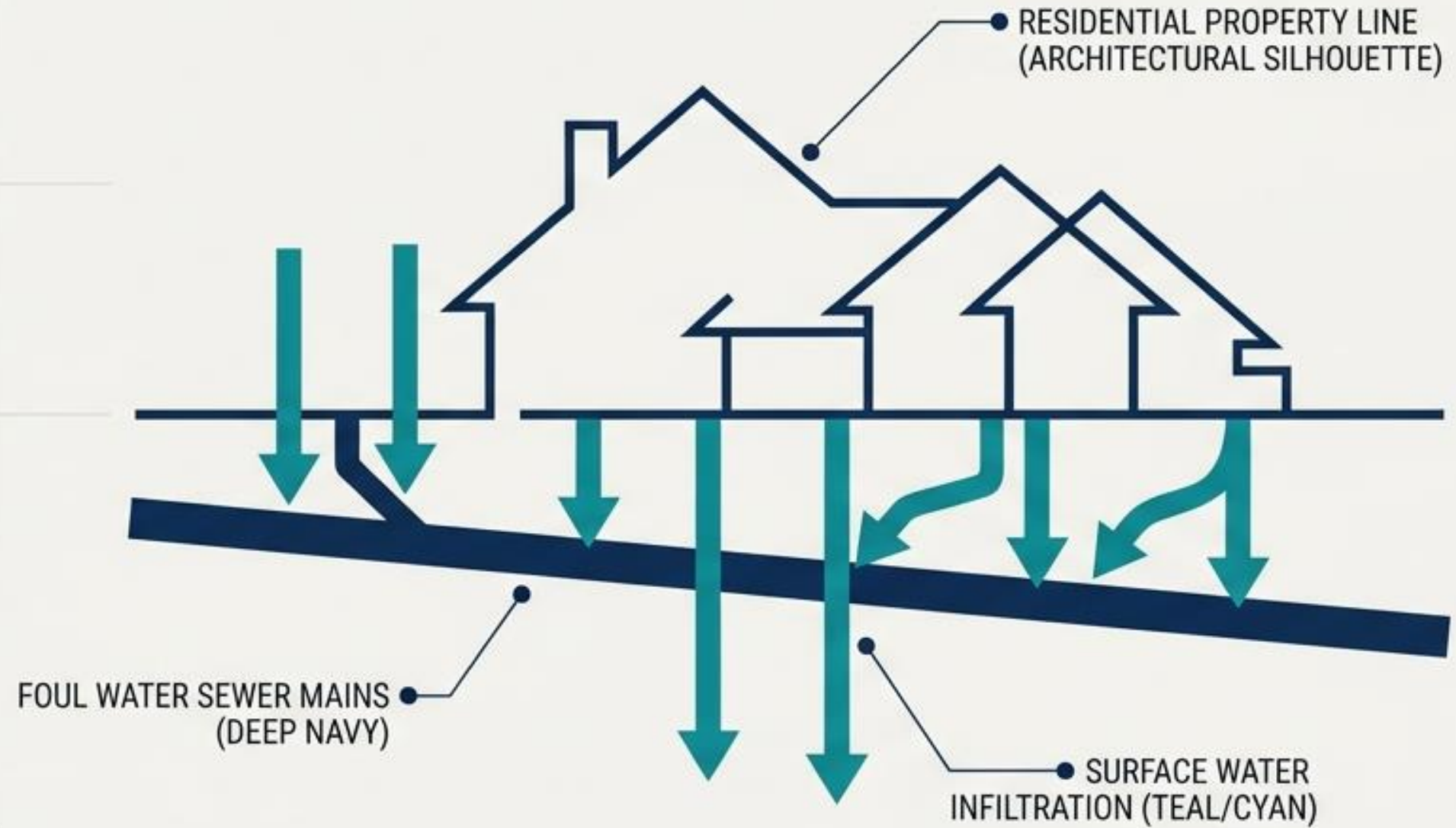
Note: I have used AI tool to produce some graphics, and they sometimes include the odd spelling mistake.

The Burwell Capacity Gap: Why “Dry Weather” Data Fails Residents



The Burwell Infrastructure Disconnect

A case study on sewer capacity, surface water infiltration, and the challenges of future urban planning.



Compiled for East Cambridgeshire District Council & Community Stakeholders.

Executive Summary

The Incident (Lived Reality)



February 2024: Following heavy rainfall, residents in Low Road, Burwell experience ongoing sewage backups. Wait times for utility assistance extend to 8 days.



The Dispute (Institutional Defence)



Anglian Water maintains that the local pumping station is operating correctly and within capacity, attributing backups to uncontrollable rainwater infiltrating the unsealed foul-water system.

The Planning Dilemma (Systemic Impact)



The fundamental friction: With hundreds of new homes planned for Burwell, local authorities must reconcile theoretical 'dry-weather' capacity approvals with real-world 'wet-weather' system failures.

An Unconventional Protest

Frustrated by a systemic lack of capacity and extended response delays, resident Simon Hunt submitted a formal invoice to the Anglian Water CEO.

The premise: if the utility lacks adequate storage, the resident's private sewer is acting as an uncompensated overflow facility.

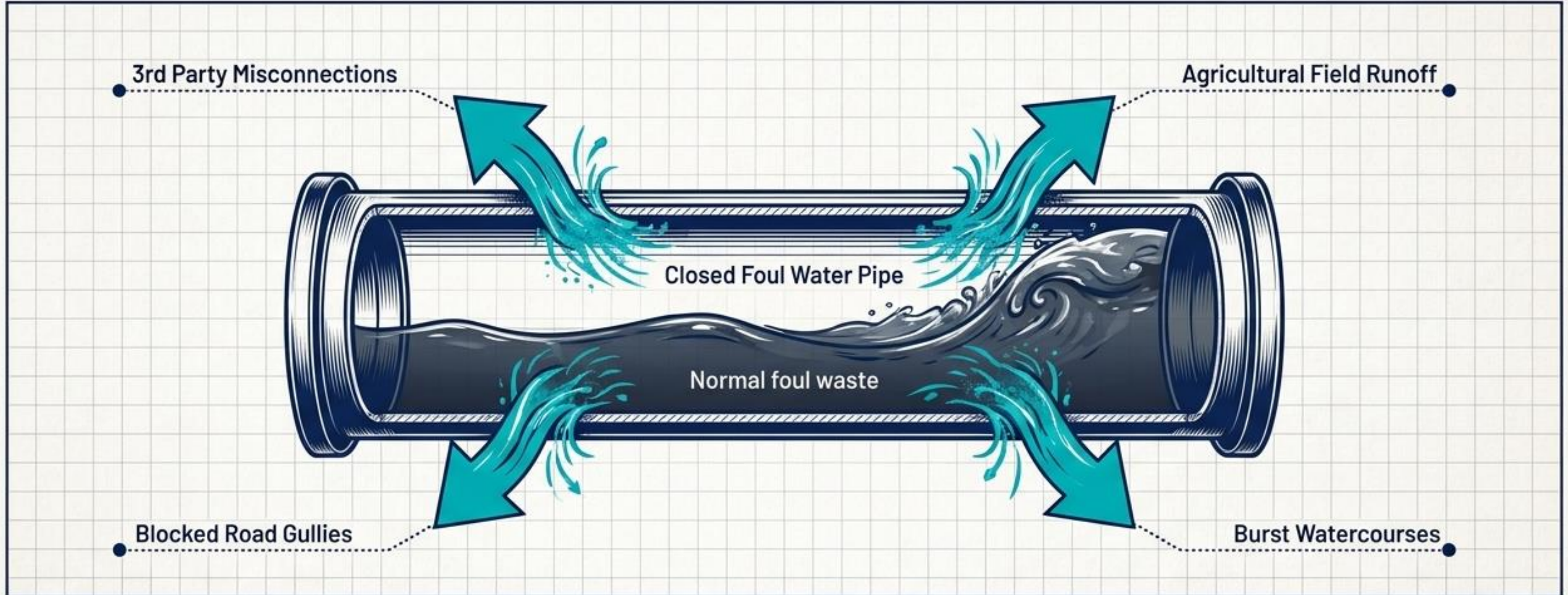
INVOICE



Billed To:	Peter Simpson, CEO, Anglian Water Services
Service Provided:	Storing excess sewerage in private system & 3x daily monitoring
Rate:	£25.00 / Day
Terms:	Payment 7 days in advance until solution is found.

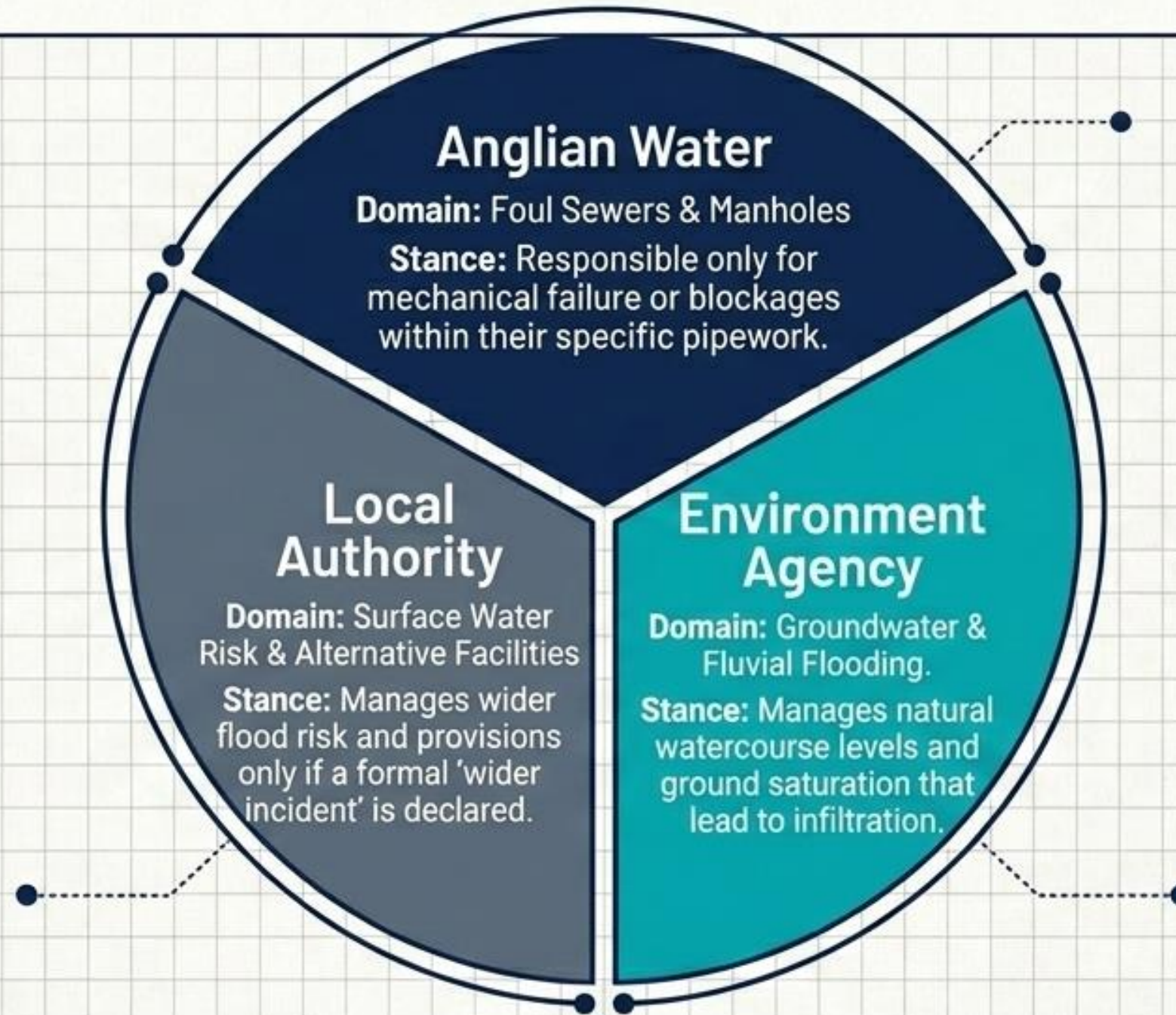
UNPAID

The Infiltration Effect (Utility's Defence)



The system is designed to pump foul wastewater only, not rainwater. The Burwell pumping station is operating correctly and running constantly. Backups occur when excess rainwater illegally or accidentally enters the unsealed sewer network, causing a delay in disposing of extra loads.

The Multi-Agency Perimeter



Flooding resolution requires joint multi-agency action; no single entity owns the entire root cause.

The Dissonance Dossier: Two Competing Realities

	 Resident Perspective	 Utility Perspective
Primary Metric	Empirical “Wet-Weather” Reality (Sewage is physically backing up into private drives).	Theoretical “Dry-Weather” Model (System flow and process capacity calculations are within limits).
Root Cause of Failure	Historical lack of investment, inadequate resources, and overloaded pumping stations.	Extreme persistent rainfall and uncontrollable 3rd-party surface water infiltration.
Immediate Solution	Halt all new property connections until existing capacity is demonstrably upgraded.	Continuous telemetry monitoring and multi-agency root cause investigations.

The Official Capacity Dashboard

Current Capacity



Flow Capacity



Process Capacity

2050 Forecast



Flow Capacity



Process Capacity

“

“There are no growth related schemes proposed for Burwell at present due to current capacity.”

”

According to official metrics supplied to East Cambridgeshire District Council, the Burwell Water Recycling Centre (WRC) has ample headroom for current and future populations.

Planned Interventions (The WINEP & DWMP Horizon)

Short-Term
(PR24 AMP / 2025–2030)



Focus on **Monitoring**.

WINEP schemes pending Ofwat approval.
Installation of MCERT'd overflow and flow meters.

BURWELL STW
UMON4

MCERT'd UMON4 Inlet
FFT flow meter, inc of
divert's of ST retuns
and Liqours

Medium-Term
(DWMP / 2025–2040)



Focus on **Mitigation**.

Implementation of Sustainable
Drainage Systems (SuDS) to
naturally slow, hold back, and
treat **surface water runoff** before
it enters the system.

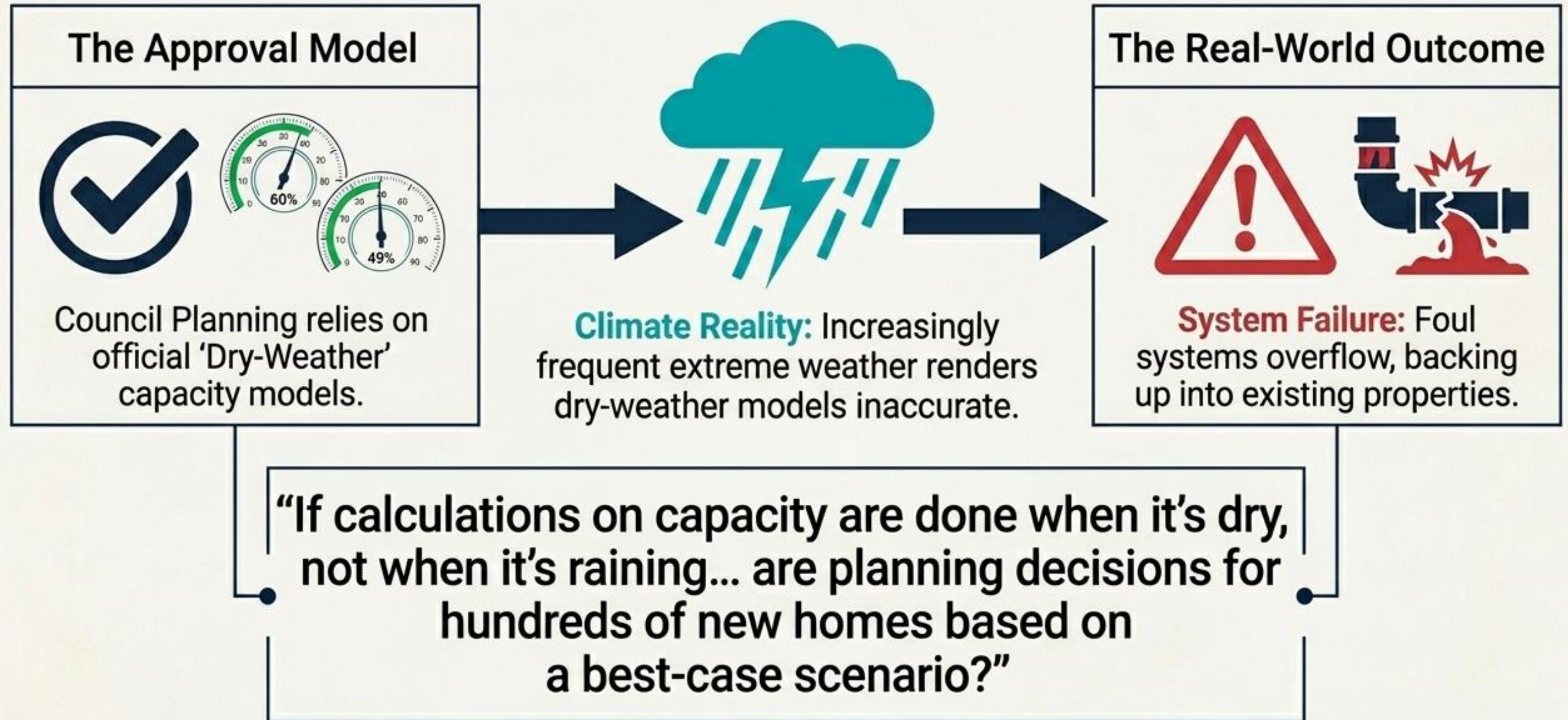
Long-Term
(2050 Strategy)



Focus on **Separation**.

Securing a new WRC Permit
with increased capacity and
executing a **massive 50%
Surface Water Removal
scheme** (disconnecting
rainwater systems from the
combined foul sewer).

Synthesis: The Planning Paradox



Key Takeaways & Open Questions

• 01 •

Re-evaluating Planning Assumptions

- Councils must ask if they are relying solely on best-case, dry-weather capacity calculations from utilities. Should **worst-case "wet-weather" scenarios** be a prerequisite for approving large developments?

• 02 •

Mandating Surface Water Independence

- With utilities planning 50% surface water disconnection by 2050, local planning must aggressively enforce **Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)** for all new builds today to prevent adding to the infiltration burden.

• 03 •

Protecting Existing Infrastructure

- Acknowledge the dissonance. While systems may mathematically support growth on paper, lived community data proves the infrastructure is already operating at **zero physical headroom** during seasonal weather events.