



The countryside charity
Bedfordshire

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Rt. Hon. Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government

Submitted through the MHCLG website

1 February 2026

Dear Secretary of State

**Re: Special Development (No.2) Order 2025 No. 1322 , 15 December 2025
Universal Entertainment & Resort Complex Bedford**

**Decision taken in isolation, without regard for other major developments planned for Bedfordshire.
Leading to extreme pressure on Water Resources and Sewage Treatment Capacity in an area already
designated as “under severe water stress” by The Environment Agency**

CPRE Bedfordshire is writing this “Open Letter” to you which is also copied to our MP’s in Bedfordshire, in order to make you aware of our deep concerns regarding the environmentally sustainable supply of both potable and non-potable Water and Sewage Treatment Capacity to the above development, in an area already designated as being “under severe water stress” by the Environment Agency.

Bedfordshire is also suffering from a serious lack of Sewage Treatment Capacity.

This has resulted in a very large number of Sewage Storm Overflows into the River Great Ouse in North Bedfordshire.

The Sewage Overflows are the cause of serious river water pollution, dangerous to human health and wildlife.

See here:

<https://www.cprebeds.org.uk/news/storm-water-overflows-of-sewage-stop-new-housing-developments/>

The River Great Ouse and it’s valley area is a major environmental asset - hugely important for biodiversity, already under serious threat from Climate Change.

Our concerns are heightened by the fact that your Ministry appears to have taken the huge Water and Sewage Treatment requirements of the Universal Entertainment & Resort Complex in isolation.

Deciding not to take into consideration the very substantial demands on Water Resources and Sewage Treatment Capacity due to other major developments also planned for Bedfordshire and neighbouring Local Authorities as follows:

1. **Very large Housing Targets for Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire Councils as part of the Government's "Ox - Cam Arc" Growth Plans** – an increase of more than 40% over current Local Plan 2030 targets in the case of Bedford Borough (something which CPRE Bedfordshire supports - particularly Social Housing).
2. **Government's New Town Proposals**
 - **Tempsford (min 10,000 homes)** on the border between Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire.
 - **Eastern Expansion of Milton Keynes (approx. 10,000 homes)** – which may require water/sewage resources from Anglian Water supply zones.
3. **Support Organisations supplying goods and services to the Universal Resort Complex** Requiring
 - Warehousing, Office Accommodation, Production Facilities, Hotels, etc. etc.

Anglian Water states in its current Forward Plan:

".....without long term planning and action, there will simply not be enough water to supply our customers in the future...."

CPRE Bedfordshire was very surprised to read in your Ministry's "Statement of Reasons" for approving the Special Development Order for the Universal Complex, that it regards Water Resources to be "*neutral in the planning balance*".

We believe that this is far from an accurate assessment of the current situation.

CPRE Bedfordshire therefore urge the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government to act now and:

Undertake an "independent" Comprehensive Review of both Water & Sewage Treatment Resources across Bedfordshire.

This is essential in order to determine how the necessary water and sewage treatment capacity can be provided in an environmentally sustainable manner for the Universal Entertainment & Resort Complex and it's "Support Organisations".

As well as demands due to increasing Housing Targets and the Government's New Town proposal at Tempsford and, if required, the Eastern Expansion of Milton Keynes.

With Climate Change now leading to more regular periods of drought in the UK - as experienced during 2025.

CPRE Bedfordshire has no confidence that Anglian Water will be able to supply the water and sewage treatment requirements of all the massive new developments planned for Bedfordshire in an environmentally sustainable manner.

For many years, Anglian Water has given priority to the payment of Executive Bonuses, excessive dividends to private sector shareholders and provided them with opportunities to loan the company money at high rates of interest, rather than using the money to invest properly in additional and environmentally sustainable water and sewage treatment capacity.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Paul Jenkins

Vice - Chair CPRE Bedfordshire

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Copied to:

Mohammad Yasin MP

Richard Fuller MP

Blake Stephenson MP

Rachel Hopkins MP

CPRE Bedfordshire's response to the Universal UDX Consultation can be found here:

<https://www.cprebeds.org.uk/news/cpre-bedfordshires-seven-key-asks-for-universal-studios/>