



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

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My ref: EW/KMR

Rt. Hon Theresa Villiers  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
House of Commons  
London, SW1A 0AA

Dear Secretary of State,

I am writing to seek your support in response to the severe flooding that occurred in Stockport at the end of July 2019.

The 25<sup>th</sup> July was the hottest day this country has experienced and, by the end of the month, Stockport like many areas experienced more than twice the average rainfall for the whole of July in just 5 days. This caused many lives to be torn apart, as the water flooded over 80 homes and businesses on two separate occasions across the borough, because watercourses and drainage systems failed to cope with the deluge. We were also managing the potential impacts of the Toddbrook reservoir dam failure, which would have required mass evacuation of villages in Stockport.

We understand that this level of rainfall is unprecedented and we know the Government is thinking long term and taking steps to prepare for the inevitable consequences of extreme weather events. Climate change means this level of rainfall is likely to be much more frequent in the future and we as a nation need to take radical action to overhaul how we capture rain where it falls at source. I am pleased to see that the Environment Agency has increased its focus on Natural Flood Management in recent years and acknowledge the work being undertaken on the Draft National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England.

As part of an overall approach to mitigating flood risks, we would like to see stronger legislation and accompanying financial support that encourages land owners capturing more water 'upstream', through initiatives such as introducing more ponds, wetlands and meadows and which recognises the inter-relationship between the upland catchment areas and the downstream urban locations. We also need to strengthen the approach to sustainable urban drainage and increase responsibility of homeowners to manage more of their drainage water. This, we believe, cannot be achieved at a quick enough pace within the current financial and legislative framework.

Councillor Elise Wilson  
Labour Member  
for Davenport & Cale Green

We would therefore like to promote a summit to further review any national and regional flood strategies and would be keen to share our experiences. I believe it is an opportunity to consider how the statutory agencies can work together more effectively, to develop comprehensive approaches to catchment areas and ensuring that the urban drainage infrastructure, is able to meet the growing demands of population growth. There is also an urgent need to review the insurance sectors response to household and business flooding, as it appears many individuals were not covered for the recent events. I would be pleased to participate in such an event and for it to be hosted in Greater Manchester, if this was agreeable.

We would also urge you to review the Household Flood Resilience Grant and the Communities and Business Recovery Scheme. The scheme supported Stockport residents in 2015 and given the adverse impact of the floods in July this year on the lives and livelihoods of our residents, we feel consideration should be given to its extension to cover those affected. We estimate this cost to be over £1 million, as a number of areas across Stockport were affected.

Finally, whilst we cannot engineer our way into removing the flood risks, our Section 19 report will identify improvements that can be made within the borough and will inevitably highlight the impact upon highway drainage schemes of the growth in population and the lack of management of water run-off and wastewater from many homes. More investment is required in order that water and drainage infrastructure in urban settings meets the increased demands placed from population growth and extreme weather changes. I would be grateful if you would confirm whether the government will commit to funding improved infrastructure requirements that will be identified in our Section 19 report as necessary.

I would be happy to discuss with you and your colleagues how we can work together to address the issue of flooding and further protect our citizens from its devastating effects.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Elise Wilson  
**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**



Councillor Tom McGee  
**DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**