



9 January, 2025

Dear Minister,

Once again, severe flooding has seen residents across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland endure a dire start to the new year.

Hundreds of people were forced to leave their homes and seek shelter after thawing snow and intense rainfall, which also affected numerous businesses.

Emergency services, councils, NHS and voluntary groups are still working day and night dealing with the major incident declared early on Monday (6 January) as individual agency resources were overwhelmed.

To underline the sheer scale of the incident:

- Over 630 properties flooded – exceeding the numbers affecting last January during Storm Henk
- Leicestershire Fire and Rescue Services received 380 calls, rescued more than 60 people from properties and 27 from cars by boat.
- Leicestershire Police handled over 2,100 calls on 6 January - a 40 to 50 per cent rise on average daily demand
- East Midlands Ambulance Service declared a critical incident because of the demand in the region
- The Environment Agency issued a highly unusual severe flood warning, indicating ‘risk to life’
- Over 160 roads reported flooded
- People were evacuated from a caravan park
- An emergency alert was issued due to the imminent threat to life - one of the only times this has been used in the UK

This is the second year in a row where hundreds of residents are left homeless and local pubs, sports clubs and others do not know if they will be able to survive. Many are cleaning up after just getting on their feet after Storm Henk battered the area just 12 months ago. Residents sought shelter and support in emergency rest centres, many with just the clothes they were wearing. It is a torrid situation.

The right thing is for Government to release funding now and help our residents and businesses to get back to some kind of normality.

As local leaders, we're doing everything we can to keep people safe and clean up. But there is a limit to what we can do.

We're also calling on the Government to wake up to the threat posed by flooding. Our climate is changing and we need a new approach. We are seeing far more frequent events, causing greater impact and affecting areas never historically known to flood. National changes to funding and powers are required to help us better prevent and then react to flooding when it does occur:

Funding:

- Immediate funding support to affected local agencies and communities to deal with incident and immediate aftermath, as set out above
- A streamlined process (including review of criteria) to access Environment Agency funding for flood prevention projects. The current system takes at best two years to access funding for a straightforward project.
- National grant funding for property owners to make their property flood resilient - including a suitable and straightforward criteria for accessing it and a simple process for administering it.
- Additional funding accessible to a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) to enable investigations, adaptation and project identification to happen at pace rather than over a number of years – and drive the delivery of small-scale alleviation projects, quick wins that can make a big difference

Powers and communication:

- Review of role of LLFA to provide powers over risk management authorities to enable delivery of solutions where multiple parties involved.
- More stringent planning powers in relation to building on floodplain
- A new national communications campaign designed to bring about behaviour change – and awareness that flooding is now a normal occurrence and it is everyone's responsibility
- Government-led conversation with the insurance sector to increase uptake of insurance and incentivise property owners to implement flood protection measures

Flooding is one of the biggest threats to our communities and needs propelling to the top of the agenda. Government needs to step up and lead the conversation on how we collectively up our game in tackling flooding.

Current regulations and funding mean we are doing a major disservice to those many devastated communities up and down the country.

We're very happy to talk in more detail and look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr Deborah Taylor
Acting Leader,
Leicestershire County
Council



Cllr Gale Waller
Leader, Rutland County
Council



Cllr Terry Richardson
Leader, Blaby District
Council



Cllr Jewel Miah,
Leader, Charnwood
Borough Council



Cllr Phil Knowles
Leader, Harborough
District Council



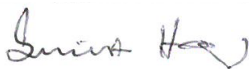
Cllr Stuart Bray
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Cllr Pip Allnatt, Leader,
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