



Department
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Food & Rural Affairs

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Councillor Julian Saunders
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Your ref: Cllr Julian Saunders
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15 May 2023

Dear Councillor Saunders,

Thank you for your letter of 19 April about flood risk management.

The Government is acting to drive down flood risk from every angle. In March 2020, the Government announced that the amount invested in flood and coastal erosion schemes would be doubled in England to £5.2 billion between 2021 and 2027, providing schemes to better protect communities across England from flooding and coastal erosion.

In addition, our long-term Policy Statement, published in 2020, sets out our ambition to create a nation more resilient to future flood and coastal erosion risk. It includes five ambitious policies and a number of actions which will accelerate progress to better protect and prepare the country against flooding and coastal erosion in the face of more frequent extreme weather as a result of climate change.

We will ensure our country is better protected to reduce the likelihood of flooding and coastal erosion. Boosting our resilience will mean that more properties will be protected, and communities will be better prepared to reduce the impacts when flooding does happen.

The Environment Agency National Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy for England describes what needs to be done by all risk management authorities involved in flood and coastal erosion risk management. This includes the Environment Agency, lead local flood authorities, district councils, internal drainage boards, highways authorities and water and sewerage companies, who must exercise their flood and coastal erosion risk management activities, including plans and strategies, consistently with the Strategy. The Strategy provides a framework for guiding the operational activities and decision making of practitioners, supporting the direction set by Government policy.

National planning policy requires new development to be resistant and resilient to all sources of flooding and safe for its lifetime, taking account of climate change.

In August 2022, the Government published significantly updated planning guidance on flood risk and coastal change to help councils take climate change into consideration and make more informed decisions on whether a new development should go ahead. Under the changes to the Planning Practice Guidance, councils will be better placed to apply Government policy, where new homes in areas at risk of flooding should be appropriately flood resilient. The guidance will also help councils apply strict criteria to new development in locations at risk of flooding before they are approved, to make sure local communities are not negatively impacted as a result. This applies to all sources of flood risk, including areas at risk of surface water flooding, and covers flood risk now and in the future.

We are tackling surface water flooding through our £5.2 billion flood defence programme. This is currently expected to deliver around 500 surface water schemes, including sustainable drainage systems (SuDS).

The Government has reviewed making SuDS mandatory in new developments and will do this through implementation of Schedule 3 to the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. SuDS mimic natural water flow and are designed to reduce the impact of rainfall on new developments by using features such as soakaways, grassed areas, permeable surfaces and wetlands.

Schedule 3 provides: a framework for the approval and adoption of drainage systems; an approving body and national standards on the design, construction, operation and maintenance of SuDS for the lifetime of the development. It also makes the right to connect surface water to public sewers conditional on the drainage system being approved as meeting the mandatory sustainable drainage standards. This will help limit volumes entering drainage networks which will help ease the pressure on the sewerage system and mitigate flood risk.

The Government is now looking at how best to implement, considering scope, threshold, and process. There will be a public consultation later this year with implementation expected during 2024.

Thank you once again for taking the time to contact me about this important issue.



REBECCA POW MP