



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Steve Reed MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Seacole Building, 2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

13th February 2025

Dear Dear Secretary of State,

Government Commitment to Flood Management

I was pleased to see the government's announcement of funding to protect flood defences (4th February 2025). Although the highlighted projects did not include ones in my constituency of North Bedfordshire, I am sure you and your department are aware of the impact of the frequent flooding of the River Great Ouse and River Ivel.

Last year, in partnership with the Mayor of Bedford Borough, I set up the North Bedfordshire Water Management Alliance to bring together the various bodies that my residents rely on when there is the risk, or reality, of flooding. Although there was often shared recognition of issues, there were too many incidents of agencies "passing the buck" on who ultimately had the responsibility to resolve a matter: the alliance, under the leadership of Paul Leinster CBE, aims to improve coordination and to come forward with shared plans for flood management and for improvements to the water quality of the River Great Ouse.

I wanted to highlight these initiatives to you and your department as there may be a future time when it would be opportune for you to see the benefits of this cooperative approach.

I also wanted to highlight a concern that residents in the east of my constituency, particularly in Wyboston, have raised about the maintenance of flood defences by the Environment Agency in the Bedfordshire/Cambridgeshire border area. May I draw your attention to a petition on this matter here:

<https://www.change.org/p/demand-the-environment-agency-to-reinstate-flood-prevention-measures>

This area has had considerable housing growth – with potentially much more planned in the near future. Might I ask your department to conduct their own enquiries to the matters raised in the petition and advise your own findings so as to reassure local residents.

Sincerely,

Richard Fuller MP