



BEDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Borough Charter granted in 1166



Chief Executive: Laura Church

Simon Lightwood MP
Department for Transport
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Please ask for:
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Sent also by email to simon.lightwood.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Minister,

Potential Impact on Future Connectivity and Growth in Bedford Borough at A421, Marston Moretaine due to National Highways in-situ pumping solution

Following Bedford Borough Council's Water Management Partnership (WMP) meeting on 20 November 2025, officers from National Highways provided an update on the A421 following the severe flooding in September 2024 after heavy rain overwhelmed roadside pumps.

At the WMP meeting two critical issues relating to the A421 were discussed, these were:

- The exceptional rainfall in the locality at that time, and
- The failure of pumps due to prolonged flooding.

It is appreciated that National Highways have since repaired/replaced all pumps, with the electrical supply relocated to higher ground, however it was deeply concerning to hear from National Highways officers that even if the pumps had remained operational, it would still have required five days of continuous tankering/pumping to clear the road due to the capacity of the in-situ pumps and overall drainage solutions in that area.

Although these pump and power supply improvements reduce vulnerability, the current system remains inadequate to manage extreme rainfall events. In practical terms this means that the A421 – a major strategic route both into and out of Bedford Borough – could still face prolonged closures such as those witnessed in September 2024.

Such disruption would have serious consequences for residents, businesses, and the wider economy, particularly as significant residential and commercial developments are underway in the area. The potential impact on connectivity, emergency services, and supply chains cannot be overstated.

With climate change driving increasingly frequent and intense rainfall, I call upon the Government and National Highways to act decisively by installing a robust, fail-safe drainage and pumping system that can cope with future weather patterns and supports the region's growth. Failure to address this now risks catastrophic consequences for Bedford Borough's economic resilience, accessibility and wider public safety.



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I urge that this matter be treated with the highest priority, we need a clear plan outlining the measures required to guarantee that this vital route remains open, safeguarding our communities and enabling sustainable development in an era of climate uncertainty, before Universal arrive.

Yours sincerely

Mayor Tom Wootton
Elected Mayor of Bedford Borough

cc. by email

Nick Harris, Chief Executive of National Highways (Nick.Harris@nationalhighways.co.uk)

Richard Fuller MP, North Bedfordshire (richard.fuller.mp@parliament.uk)

Blake Stephenson MP, Mid Bedfordshire (blake.stephenson.mp@parliament.uk)

