



Office of Sarah Bentley
Chief Executive Officer
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25 August 2022

Stella Creasy MP
Labour and Co-operative MP for Walthamstow

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Stella,

Thank you for your letter regarding last week's storm and I want to start by expressing my sympathy with everyone who was flooded last week, particularly those experiencing flooding for a second time in just over 12 months. I know what a devastating impact it can have to your residents' lives.

While the storm was not as intense as the one that struck last July, it still dropped nearly a month's worth of rain over Walthamstow in a few hours. However, we applied the lessons learnt from July 2021 so were well prepared, with teams on standby who did what they could to minimise the impact of the very heavy rainfall and I am pleased they responded quickly.

Since the storm, we have been carrying out a full clean-up operation in all properties, gardens and roads which experienced flooding once our sewers become full. We have been working closely with LB Waltham Forest to ensure we capture all flooded properties.

I also want to assure you that we have taken action since last year, including carrying out extensive cleaning of our sewer network to ensure it is working properly. We have also co-funded with the council the creation of three neighbourhood community flood action plans in the Walthamstow, which allows residents to decide how best to protect themselves against flooding.

I agree with you entirely that extreme weather of this nature is set to become more common which is why last year we commissioned an independent review to explore among other things how London can tackle this growing problem. The review came up with a number of recommendations, but the overarching message is collaboration between stakeholders with flood-risk management responsibilities is essential. It found no sewer system in the world could have handled the extreme events of July 2021, so our focus must be on controlling the rate water enters our network, which will bring us in line with international thinking in this area.

An example of this includes Waltham Forest Council's sustainable drainage scheme we are helping fund near Brooke Road. In the coming years, we plan to support many more of these schemes and will be working with local authorities to support with a whole range of measures to manage drainage.

I agree with you about leadership being needed so it is encouraging to see a new London-wide body being established which will focus on developing a flood plan for the capital, as risk cannot be managed solely on a local basis.

Again, I am so sorry to everyone affected by the latest storm but want to reassure you, and your residents, that we are committed to playing our part in protecting them in the future.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

With very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Bentley".

Sarah Bentley
Chief Executive Officer