



Stella Creasy MP

Working For Walthamstow



Sarah Bentley CEO Thames Water,
Clearwater Court,
Vastern Road,
Reading,
RG1 8DB

19 August 2022

Dear Sarah,

I am writing to you further to the recent flooding that has severely impacted residents in my constituency of Walthamstow. This follows previous incidents in the past two years of a similar nature on which I have also previously corresponded with Thames Water.

I want to put on record my thanks to your team for their responsiveness to the concerns we have raised over the past two days. I am particularly concerned that with this third incident of flooding there has been a substantial rise in reports that sewage has entered properties. Residents have provided substantial evidence of the residual detritus which has been left in their gardens, on the pavement outside their homes and inside their homes and businesses as the water has receded or been removed.

As this presents a serious risk to public health, I would request that Thames Water share as a matter of urgency your plans to sanitise these areas and how residents can report these sites to you. I would also welcome formal confirmation that Thames Water deal with all sewage enquiries as some residents have reported being told that this is a matter for the local authority. I know my office has shared with your teams the reports we have had and the list of local roads where sewage has been reported- please do let us know if you require this information again as many residents report that this material is still there. Residents have also been in touch to ask where the best place is to log their complaints and comments about this bout of flooding and about preventing future rounds of flooding. I would appreciate if you could point us in the right direction so that residents may pass on their comments to you about this incident which has had such a major impact on their lives, whether water has entered their homes, or not on this occasion.

Given our previous correspondence with both the local authority and Thames Water about flooding in Walthamstow, I want to put on record my concerns about the effectiveness to date of measures to mitigate these problems. Thames Water has previously sent my office details of a review you have undertaken and measures put in place to prevent heavy rainfall from impacting residents in this way. In the light of the events of the past few days, I would be grateful to know what actions will be taken to review the efficacy of the measures you have put in place over the past year and to improve the defences which are to be put in place in the future as existing work seems to have made little impact.

I recognise the underlying issues which will require national leadership- the climate crisis that means such levels of rainfall are more frequent, and that the drought that preceded it, and the age of the infrastructure and nature of housing and development in our area which means that drainage is less accessible. However, as this is the third time that flooding has happened, and so such problems are becoming increasingly predictable, I am concerned that for many residents the costs of repairs, increase in insurance premiums and distress this causes makes living in the local area unviable due to the debts they have incurred. So too, during this third round of flooding shows, many of the same roads have been affected suggesting measures to date to deal with these concerns have yet to be effective.

Residents have also feedback to my team that both Thames Water employees as well as those of the Council have been, when asked, passing the blame for what has happened onto the other and encouraging residents to present their concerns to them. This is an approach I am raising with both yourselves and the local authority, with a plea for joint working to ensure that whether the issues are surface water, sewage or infrastructure dependent, action is taken.

I would be grateful for a timely response to this correspondence as many residents have been left with damaged property, homes and gardens contaminated with sewage and no clear idea of who is responsible and what will be done to prevent this happening year on year. I am also happy to make representations to the Government about the support required to address these issues and so would welcome details of your discussions with them to date about this matter.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely



Stella Creasy
Labour and Co-operative MP for Walthamstow