



CABINET MEMBER

Cllr John Furey
 County Councillor
 -Addlestone-
 81 New Haw Road, New Haw
 Addlestone, KT15 2BZ
 T: 01932 856623
 M: 07720 075440
 Email: John.furey@surreycc.gov.uk

Richard Benyon MP, Minister for Natural Environment and
 Fisheries
 Defra
 Nobel House
 17 Smith Square
 London
 SW1P 3JR

27 March 2012

Dear Minister

Surrey is the lead local flood authority with third highest overall flood risk nationally. We are concerned that the Government's future funding of flood risk management is insufficient to protect Surrey communities from flood risk.

We wrote to you in March 2011, to request that you remove the Lower Thames Flood Risk Management Strategy from the Flood and Coastal Resilience Partnership Funding model. I would like to reiterate that call. In addition we want the scheme to be considered as a national critical infrastructure project. We will be writing to the Planning Inspectorate to request this.

As you know, we agree that the costs of flood alleviation measures should be borne, in part, by the communities who would benefit from them. However, there is a question of scale. This would be the largest inland scheme ever delivered. It is the largest area of un-defended floodplain in the UK.

I also urge you to work with the insurance industry to guarantee the availability and affordability of flood insurance. 6,541 properties in Runnymede and Weybridge are at risk of not getting adequate insurance once the Statement of Principles lapses next year.

Small communities and businesses cannot be expected to bear these disproportionate and unfair burdens. It is further compounded by reductions in formula grant to local authorities, despite Defra's assertion to the contrary. Runnymede Borough Council tells us their funding has gone down substantially.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to more fully explain these concerns.

Yours sincerely

John Furey
 Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment



COUNTY HALL, PENRHYN ROAD, KINGSTON UPON THAMES, SURREY KT1 2DN
 TELEPHONE: 020 8541 7177/9733/9628 FACSIMILE: 020 8541 8968

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