

Councillor Emily Smith
Leader of the Council
Vale of White Horse District Council
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Milton Park
Oxon
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**County Hall
New Road
Oxford
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Office of the Chief Executive

25 March 2021

By email to Emily.Smith@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

Re: Drainage and Flood Risk Management

Dear Councillor Smith

Thank you for your recent letter on drainage and flood risk management. Whilst we had an unusual level of rain with Oxfordshire experiencing over a month's worth of rain in a period of several hours, which fell on already sodden ground, it has highlighted challenges and issues which we are keen to work with yourselves and the Environment Agency on.

We are using the information and events to modify our cyclical risk-based gully emptying and cleaning regime, we have also reprioritised budgets and assigned an increased level of funding to drainage activities next year. However, as I'm sure you are aware, even if gullies and ditches are in a good state of repair there still needs to be somewhere for the water to drain into and with main rivers at capacity it can take time for the water to dissipate through the different drainage systems.

Your council are providing support in terms of undertaking initial flood investigations and engagement with landowners regarding management of riparian owners and I hope we will continue to work in partnership to tackle the challenges and legacy issues around flood risk management. It is also key that we work together to ensure we plan future developments appropriately and fully consider the flooding impact and necessary future infrastructure to mitigate their impact on flooding.

Whilst we did experience unusual weather this year, I'm sure that with the changing climate patterns this will become a more frequent occurrence. As such, we have identified a range of actions to improve Oxfordshire resilience to flood management responsibilities.

I hope this provides some re-assurance and confidence that Oxfordshire County Council recognises the challenges and are responding to flooding and drainage issues in a positive joined up approach with yourselves and the Environment Agency.

Yours sincerely



Yvonne Rees
Chief Executive
Oxfordshire County Council

cc Mark Stone Chief Executive, Vale of White Horse District Council