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Councillor Bethia Thomas
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Dear Mr Duffy,

I am writing on behalf of Vale of White Horse District Council in relation to the issue of flooding. Following short periods of extremely heavy rainfall, several areas within the Vale experienced significant flooding on three separate occasions over the course of 2024. While parts of the Vale have previously experienced flooding issues, these incidents, due to our changing climate, are becoming more frequent and are hampering the lives and economies of our communities on a more regular basis.

Consequently, given the devastating impact that flooding has had on both residents and businesses throughout our district over the course of 2024, the council was disappointed to learn that the Environment Agency has decided not to proceed with the Thames Valley Flood Scheme on the grounds of cost effectiveness. The scheme, as proposed, would have looked to reduce flood risk across the Thames Valley, which includes large parts of the Vale, through a combination of large-scale water storage projects and natural flood management.

Although the council recognises the decision that the Environment Agency has made regarding the Thames Valley Flood Scheme, it highlights the need for further urgent action to be taken to help protect those areas of our district which experience regular incidences of flooding. We are, therefore, calling upon the Environment Agency to identify, publicise and implement viable schemes to reduce the growing issues of flooding of homes, businesses and infrastructure in the Vale.

In addition, the council also wishes to provide feedback regarding the accuracy of the flood modelling and forecasting for new developments provided by the Environment Agency. In our experience, there are many areas that are identified as low risk on mapping that turn out to be vulnerable to flooding. While we recognise the impact that climate change, extreme weather events, the complex relationship between groundwater and fluvial flows and difficulty in assessing small catchments, the Vale is, nevertheless, also requesting that the Environment Agency reviews its current models and methods to improve accuracy as this is important when assessing sites for development.

I look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Bethia Thomas
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