



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

7 May 2014

Councillor Nicolas Heslop, Leader
Ms Julie Beilby, Chief Executive
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive
Kings Hill, West Malling
Kent, ME19 4LZ

Dear Nicolas and My Beilby,

I am grateful to you for sending me copies of your joint letter of April 17 to the Chief Secretary to The Treasury, Danny Alexander, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Owen Paterson, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Dan Rogerson, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Communities and Local Government, Brandon Lewis, the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office, Greg Clark, and the Chairman of The Environment Agency, Lord Smith.

Your letters are extremely helpful and, in my view, target the top flood protection priorities in the Tonbridge and Malling part of my constituency.

I have now written myself giving my very strong support to your letter and I attach copies of the letters that I have now sent to the 5 Ministers concerned and to the Chairman of The Environment Agency.

I shall be writing to you again when I receive the replies.

*Yours sincerely
John Stanley*



**TONBRIDGE & MALLING
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Nicolas Heslop

**Borough Councillor for Cage
Green, Tonbridge**

Leader of The Council

17 April 2014

Rt Hon Danny Alexander MP
Chief Secretary to the Treasury
HM Treasury
1 Horseguards Road
London
SW1A 2HQ

Dear Chief Secretary

Future Flood Defence Works – Tonbridge and Malling, Kent

We are sure that you will be familiar with the extent of flooding that occurred during the winter and especially over the Christmas and New Year period, when many families and businesses in our local communities in Tonbridge and Malling were devastated by severe flooding of property. Some 350 homes and 100 businesses in our Borough were directly affected with many more disrupted by the flood events.

The worst hit communities were in parts of Tonbridge, Hildenborough and East Peckham with properties in other areas in the River Medway catchment also affected, such as in the villages of Hadlow and Watringbury. You will also appreciate that communities are still recovering from the floods and in many cases repairs to properties will take a considerable time. The Borough Council, working with other agencies, has been committed to assisting those communities, both in responding to the emergency at the time and in helping the ongoing recovery process.

Of longer lasting affect is the distress that the flooding has caused and the fear of further such incidents. That is why our efforts must now turn to planning and implementing works to prevent a recurrence of the awful events that we have seen recently. To that end we have been working closely with colleagues at the Environment Agency and Kent County Council to promote a package of measures to provide flood defence for our most vulnerable communities. Such a programme must be clearly thought out and its elements complementary. The following are schemes that we strongly believe should receive high priority for the earliest possible funding and implementation:

- Works to substantially increase in the Leigh Flood Storage Area.
- Extensions and alterations to the river walls in Tonbridge.
- Flood prevention measures around the Hawden Stream, Hildenborough.
- Schemes to mitigate flooding from the Rivers Medway and Bourne in East Peckham.

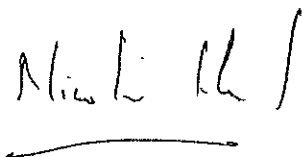
We believe that as a package of measures the above will form a very significant improvement to flood prevention in this part of west Kent. The Leigh storage area scheme, in particular, will also have positive influences on other currently vulnerable locations lower in the Medway catchment area, within our Borough and in locations such as Yalding and Maidstone town centre.

In addition to the relief for local communities that would be provided, the financial case for investment is compelling. We estimate that for the Tonbridge and Malling area alone expenditure through various Government subsidy and recovery and compensation schemes during the recent flood events to be in the order of £4m. Other areas in the locality will also have drawn on significant public expenditure in this way. This demonstrates that it makes sustainable economic sense to invest capital on projects now that can prevent such potentially recurring levels of public expenditure in the future.

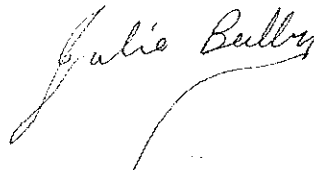
We would ask you to indicate your clear and strong support for the schemes and approach mentioned above as priority matters for funding.

We have of course copied this letter to Sir John Stanley who has been a key supporter of the efforts to address flood matters in this part of Kent.

Yours sincerely



Nicolas Heslop
Leader



Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

A similar letter has been sent to:

Rt Hon Owen Paterson MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
Dan Rogerson MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs);

Brandon Lewis MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary (Department for Communities and Local Government);

Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Minister of State (Cabinet Office); and

Rt Hon, the Lord Smith of Finsbury, Chairman, The Environment Agency