

Flood Resilience Management



Tamworth

Sarah Edwards MP

Tamworth Constituency Boundary

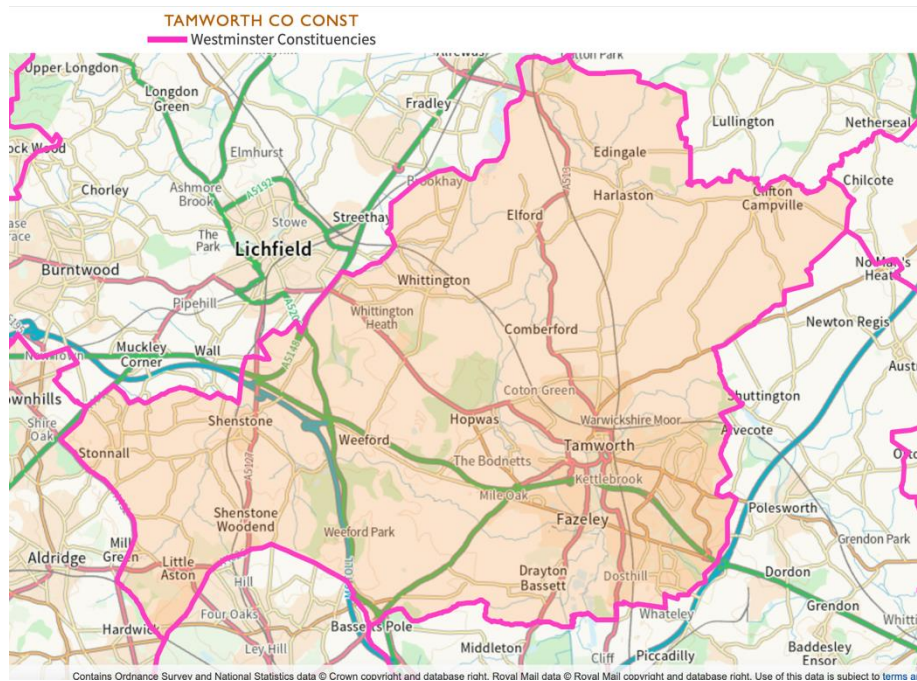


Image: Flooding on A513 towards Elford



Executive Summary

The problems created by global warming have significantly increased the number of flooding incidents within the constituency. In a survey of residents, 84% of respondents had been affected by flooding. Two-thirds of respondents reported difficulty getting to work which underlines the economic impact of flooding. Therefore, this report seeks to look at practical steps that mitigate the flooding risks in the light of the economic geography of rural areas bordering urban centres. The widespread development of housing on the edges of urban cores, means that the report's conclusions have a wider applicability than simply to Tamworth.

The pattern of developments and funding for flood resilience have not been linked due to the lack of a holistic approach by the last government. The failure of the last government to bring in Schedule 3 of the Water Management Act has gifted developers a period where they could generate additional profits without meeting appropriate standards.

The report outlines steps which would allow for regular additional funding to go to flood resilience measures without requiring additional funding from central government. It also seeks to locate future flood prevention and management functions within the evolving landscape of the ambitious devolution agenda set out by the Deputy Prime Minister.

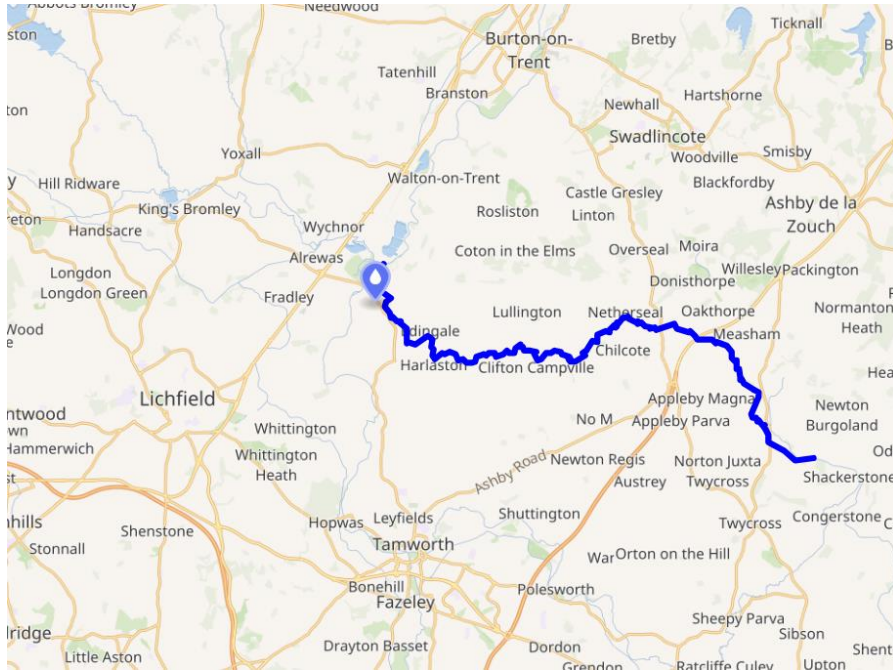


Image: The Mease Valley, North of Tamworth

In the years before the major development of housing on or close to the flood plain in Tamworth and Burton-upon-Trent, excessive levels of water in the Mease Valley could be alleviated by dredging or farmers removing obstructions, such as fallen trees. This allowed the water to clear the Mease Valley and empty into the larger Trent and Tame / Anker rivers. The threat to the large developments from water released from the Mease Valley means that now the Mease Valley is used to hold and slow the flow of water but this has had a major impact on the villages. The impact of Climate Change has exacerbated this further as there are more incidents occurring in which there is excessive rainfall.

In accordance with the recommendations of the Pitt Review (2008), the strategic Flood authority is Staffordshire County Council. They maintain a rolling six yearly Flood Risk Management Plan in accordance with their obligations under the Water Act. However, although updated in 2024, the plan does not include Edingale amongst the top 10 villages at risk of flooding even though it has been cut off four times in the past 18 months. The current system is further compromised

by housing being a responsibility of the district authorities. Therefore, planning applications have been approved by the authorities who are not responsible for strategic Flood risk management. The district authorities are the ones who receive the New Homes Bonus and the County benefits financially from the wider tax base on which it is reliant for income. Major capital works schemes related to flooding are carried out by the Environment Agency. Capital works such as the new Chetwynd Bridge that would help avoid villages being cut off are part of the County Council's programme and are therefore competing against all the other potential infrastructure projects within Staffordshire.

Image: Flooding from the Anker and Tame near the Castle grounds in central Tamworth



Section 1

Strategic Issues & Discussion Points

In the first decade of the last government, 1,405, 771 new homes were registered. That included 161,022 in 2019, almost double the number registered in 2009 (88,849) at the time of the financial crash. Tamworth is in the West Midlands which saw the highest regional rise, 169%.¹ As well as demand driving the market, this outcome was assisted by the government's New Homes Bonus Scheme (NHB) that rewarded council's that approved increases in homes above a base figure. This continued throughout the period of the Conservative Government.

In 2023, Tamworth saw 432 homes completed of which 305 qualified for the bonus.² Therefore, Tamworth received £503,264 in NHB in 2024; this compares with a Rate Support Grant (RSG) of £322,000.³ With annual cuts in the RSG, albeit eventual abolition deferred by Covid, Tamworth Council treated NHB as an alternative revenue source.

With these incentives at work, local Councils approved large scale developments. Tamworth sits on the confluence of the Tame and Anker rivers. The rural part of the constituency consists largely of an area called the Mease Valley. At the other end of the Mease Valley is the junction with the River Trent and the town of Burton-Upon -Trent. Burton is the main part of East Staffordshire which built 817 homes of which 651 qualified for a bonus and the authority netted £1,111,712 in 2024. With extensive development at either end of the Mease Valley, the assessment of flood risk was affected.

In one of my earliest meetings, a parish councillor said to me that the problem in the villages stemmed from the decision to

¹ NHBC Report, 2020.

² UK Govt. stats for local government settlement

³ Tamworth Council Budget Book

protect all the developments on the flood plain, leaving the villages to flood. His technical input to the summit received high praise from the Environment Agency representatives. The strength of his overview was evident in the more oblique language expressed in the summit that the focus was on the protection of life and that therefore the villages were a low priority. The creation of large developments on or close to a floodplain led to the villages receiving lower priority. In the villages, the assessment of a threat to life was very low as few houses were involved. At the flooding summit, agencies stated that people in the villages would have to learn to live with flooding. This clashes with the functioning economic geography.

There is a perception that the villages are populated by retired people who are economically inactive or very wealthy individuals who can run their business from home. Both of these categories exist but they are not the whole picture. Under the Cameron government's localism agenda, infill settlements were agreed by villages to avoid larger developments on their borders. These houses, though relatively expensive, attracted working age buyers with properties to sell.

For example, the village of Harlaston is only four miles from an 1,100 home development in northern Tamworth. Property prices around the new development rose as the high prices of the new properties raised perceptions of the area; the new properties drew in people from outside the town and some existing residents cashed in on rising prices to move to the villages.

The value of the property threatened might individually be higher in the villages but the scale of the new developments meant the overall value was much lower in the villages. For example, Edingale's population is around 680 but the Dunstall Park development alone in Tamworth involved the creation of 800 homes with an estimated occupancy in excess of 1680. The development sits between the branch of the local canal and the water meadow which borders one of the two local

rivers. It is a typical example of a development that creates a large area of hard surface on land which had previously been permeable.

The flood protection defences created at Fazeley (in Lichfield but on the Tamworth boundary) facilitated the redevelopment of the former Robin Reliant factory, in Tamworth, to create new housing estates. The Lower Tame Scheme for Flood defence cost £15m⁴ and was built in 2015 to prevent the flooding of the properties built upon the former site of a paper mill. Those properties are so close to the river flood plain that the development is bounded by a nature area in which there is a large weir. One of the major developers in Tamworth is David Wilson Homes whose parent company, Barratt developments PLC, declared profits of £385m in 2024 and £884.3m in 2023.⁵ In 2014, Barratt reached the landmark of having built 400,000 homes, and since then has built between 14,000 and 20,000 homes per year. Therefore, it can be argued that the previous government has not imposed the full economic cost of developments on developers during the period whilst Schedule 3 of the Water Management Act was not in operation.

The current planning system means that developers enter into Section 106 Agreements or make Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments to the local planning authority. Health is not covered as a specific need that can be funded through this mechanism. Tamworth sits in a two tier County with payments made to the County as the highway authority and the district for local services. Typically, the developer calculates the anticipated amount and offers to build, for example, a school to win acceptance from the county council and possibly junction infrastructure. Payment to the district is usually in the form of a community facility, for example a shop, or a Section 106 or CIL payment for leisure or other local facilities. For example, the 800 homes built in the Anker Valley led to a payment covering the cost of

⁴ Written answer by PUS – Defra, 14 February 2014

⁵ Barratt Developments PLC, annual accounts 2024 and 2023 respectively.

a primary school (for the County Council) and a community shop.

The absurdity of the system is illustrated by two neighbouring developments. The 1,100 homes built on the Amington Village site resulted in a Section 106 Agreement to fund the creation of a primary school and a community shop. The primary school has been built but the construction appears to have led to neighbouring houses being subject to mudslides and flooding. The site of the community shop remains vacant, over 3 years after completion, as Tamworth Borough Council have not progressed it.

Meanwhile, there continues to be issues with traffic and local flooding as the County Council, as the Highway Authority, agreed to conclude that no money was required for infrastructure development. This maximised the receipts received by the landowner, Tamworth Council which received £24m. Tamworth then invested over £8m in property bonds to create income from this capital receipt. Since this development was begun, a similar development has been proposed just across the county border in Warwickshire. As part of the outline agreement, the developers have offered to build a primary school for Warwickshire County Council. The school would be built within a few hundred yards of the Staffordshire school. Meanwhile, both County Councils lack the funds necessary to manage drainage and flooding because the system does not encourage joined up thinking.

Tamworth Council regularly pooled Section 106 / CIL Money from smaller developments. It was sometimes used for a facility which might relate to the development; but it was often used for other purposes. This is possible as the developers simply allow for a sum to be paid as part of the development and do not bother checking up. For example, the Section 106 / CIL Money has previously been used to offset the costs of grounds maintenance, “a leisure related activity”. As the Council is the planning authority, the developer would risk future difficulties if they challenged the Council’s use of the money. All this means that the money that could go on flood

prevention measures is used to offset other Council costs or pay for consultants for projects the Council classifies as covered by the payment.

In these negotiations, the developer will usually seek to trade off the “Affordable Homes” requirement of the Council against the Section 106 / CIL money by arguing that the Council is driving down the value of the development. As is evident from this description, the issue of flooding is not raised.

Annual capital expenditure nationally on building schools declined from £10bn in 2009-10 to an average of £4bn per annum in 2015-19 and to around £2.5bn per annum from 2019 as more money had to be spent on repairs. It was therefore easy for education authorities to focus on developers to replace lost funding.⁶ The Labour government plans to restore school capital funding to £4bn per annum.

Therefore, this is a good opportunity to redirect the focus of strategic planning authorities to use Section 106 and CIL payments to fund flood resilience.

Flood defences are explicitly mentioned in the list of items that CIL money can be spent on.⁷ There is already provision under Section 59A of the Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations (2013) for the levying authority to transfer between 15% and 25% of CIL receipts to parish councils.⁸

If the principle that all developments impact upon flood risk is accepted, then the appropriate proportion of receipts could be credited to the parish council even if in practise the county council⁹ carried out the works on their behalf. In this manner, funding for rural flood defences could be channelled into rural flood defence projects without requiring a direct cash injection from central government. Section 181 of the National Planning Policy Framework, issued in December

⁶ Institute for Fiscal Studies

⁷ HM Government website.

⁸ [The Community Infrastructure Levy \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/1211/contents/part-2/section-59A)

⁹ This refers to the current structure of local government; see below for reference to how the proposals in the report would fit into a revised structure.

2024, explicitly states that development should not increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. This provides the necessary basis for levying the Section 106 / CIL money for affected rural areas impacted upon by suburban development.

Section 2

The Tamworth Flooding Summit

“This is a circular issue in that the water must go somewhere: we therefore need an end-to-end solution.”

The Context

Tamworth has had 3 floods in the last 20 years that were at one point considered “1 in 100 year” events. The Environment Agency defines this as a property as having a 1% chance of being flooded in any given year. Flooding is becoming an increasingly frequent event resulting in damage to property, but also affects the connectivity of local communities from local school routes to national highways, that are not built to withstand this intensity of rain. This raises the importance of both maintenance and new intervention in our flood planning and response.

In addition to the qualitative data generated by the flooding summit; a survey was undertaken of over 5,000 residents in the rural areas of the constituency. 84% of respondents reported being affected by flooding, with 6% having been directly affected by their property being flooded. The responses showed 46% had had trouble accessing their homes. Over three-quarters reported that they were unable to access social activities. Just over 68% reported difficulties getting to work; the key dilemma being whether to go to work and risk not being able to get home again. Tamworth is a centre for logistics and continues to support a significant manufacturing base. It is easy to believe that “working from home” solves this but variable rural connectivity remains a key issue for those still in employment that cannot be conducted at home. The key suggestions from residents all focus around alleviating local flooding to make their communities more flood resilient. That is why this report focuses on channelling existing funding into local projects

that would make a difference to local community resilience. Larger works by the EA, the County Council and other agencies are important but typically have long lead times.

The Environment Agency (EA) noted that one of the key issues is that many flood defences in Tamworth are from the 1960s, they are in need of being rebuilt so that they reduce the risk of being 'over-topped' by water. They are currently undertaking their review and are working with Tamworth Council and their new leader. Timelines for EA reviews are generally 10-years from start to finish and will consider upstream and downstream impact, as well as habitat issues.

Tamworth Borough Council are also in the process of developing their Local Plan which is a 5-year process and will covers the period up to 2043. This plan is required to incorporate government housing targets and is subject to approval by the Planning Inspectorate. The revised government housing targets issued by MCHLG require an additional 419 houses per year which means that over the first ten years of the plan, a further 4,190 houses will be built. This will put further pressure on water management as sites in the flood plain may be needed and town centre brown-field sites such as the former police station involved detailed debate regarding meeting the requirements for managing run-off.

There is the possibility for the Council to dovetail its plans with those of the Environment Agency to create greater synergy. However, differences are already evident in that the initial phase of the EA works are to protect the edge-of-town shopping centre which has not flooded to date. On the positive side, further into the programme there will be an opportunity to address local flooding issues and protect key energy supply infrastructure.

Another key issue is surface water drainage. It was raised that a key challenge included not only the impact of climate change, but also the increase in housing on flood plains, and patios replacing lawns etc. The Environment Agency has

raised the need for any new development schemes to have sustainable drainage. It is a significant technical issue as currently drainage plans require detailed approval, but local examples demonstrate that the system is not robust enough. For example, approximately 750 homes were developed on a site known as Anker Valley during the past 4 years. This effectively extended the developed area to the north of the town beyond the private housing constructed in the 1970s and 1980s. Despite the drainage systems being assessed as adequate, the drains on the boundaries of the new development have failed and cars are obliged to drive through raw sewerage following heavy rain.

There is currently a lot of pressure on existing water drainage, locally much of it is under the management of Severn Trent, and of road drainage systems largely maintained by Staffordshire County Council. There are often cross over issues where roads and drainage system meet rivers. An

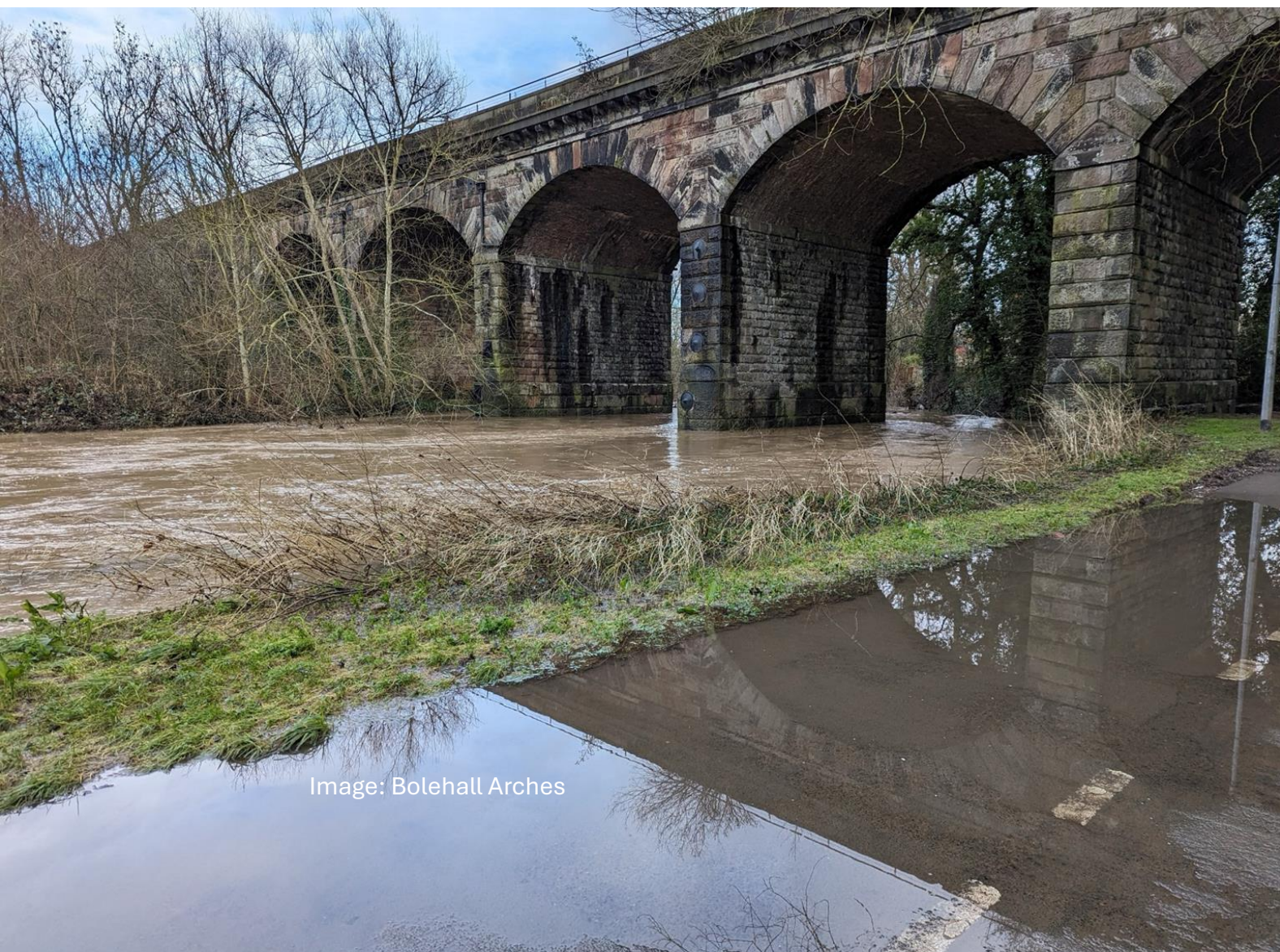


Image: Bolehall Arches

example from Tamworth would be the Arches in Bolehall, where the water from the rising river comes up through the drains and floods the road under the railway arches. For years, different agencies have argued over responsibility.

At the summit, in a conducive atmosphere, possible solutions emerged. There are one-way valves that can be used, and it should be reviewed where valves can be introduced as part of flooding response and defences. In some locations one-way valves may not be suitable so this may only provide some relief in some locations.

The built environment & insurance

Aviva shared that companies are developing apps to respond to flooding including alerts. They have a project ongoing called 'Build Back Better' - a UK government backed initiative where they offer up to £10,000 for flood resilience measures on top of repairs following an eligible claim. Flood RE is leaving the market in 2039 and so they are trying to encourage all insurance companies to take this approach. They are working with the Government on planning rules & building on flooding zones, subject to enforceable resilience and resistance measures when built on. Aviva told us that they had invested in greater planning capacity in local authorities to prevent building on flooding plains. This highlighted another major issue; that cost savings in local councils had denuded planning departments.

Tamworth Borough Council operates a planning service based on three staff and delivers building control through a service agreement with four other authorities. The building control joint service continues to struggle to recruit enough staff. These departments are revenue generating so nationally Councils have cut staff to maximise the flow of revenue to other departments.

As the MP, I have come across numerous examples of schemes that have not been inspected upon completion.

There is considerable casework building up around unsustainable development. At a recent SME round table, and a discussion with a major construction company, a common theme was the willingness by commercial builders to pay higher fees for a high quality planning and building control service.

Lastly, Aviva noted that there is a cultural belief that flooding *'will never happen to them'*. Therefore, we must educate people on flooding insurance and mitigation measures. Aviva are happy to share surveys, anecdotal and emotive stories to build the case for change.

Flooding maintenance

Representatives from the NFU noted that the pressure on waterways was immense. They referenced the dilemma faced by farmers who wanted to dredge rivers, as many have done in the past. Those farmers now face prosecution as had happened elsewhere. Farmers wanted clearer lines on what they could do to support the effort to reduce flooding. There remains a debate between two main schools of thought – one being the dredge the rivers and increase water flow, the other being slowing the water down by adding natural blocks throughout the river system. This can involve leaving trees that have fallen in rivers and water courses. Part of the challenge is that with such an increase in rain and the first three months of 2024 being the wettest on record, where there is reduced natural draining and the increase in the use of hard surfaces across our built environment – communities are then left with increased water runoff into water courses, and areas previously not as prone to flooding are now being affected. In one village that I visited during the floods, the residents pointed to the water covering most of the cricket pitch on Brickhouse Lane and said they had never seen that happen before; several had lived there all their lives, over 60 years.

Image: Elford Cricket Pitch 2024



Image: Brickhouse Lane, Elford



The Wildlife Trust and other environmental organisations have cited the use and development of natural flood management schemes which should not only benefit communities affected by flooding but also our wildlife. Our wildlife is under

immense pressure; the UK is one of the world's most nature depleted countries. One farm demonstrated that the previous government's poor management had further worsened the problem. They had land which had flooded two years running so they applied for it to be designated as wetland habitat. The application was turned down because the quota for land had been filled; it appeared that no checks had been made and that the scheme had been operated on a first-come-first served basis regardless of whether the land was suitable for growing crops. With so many farmers looking to retire, the scheme had been used to offload land to provide a regular income. This places a great constraint on the land available for food production and should be considered as part of a national food security risk assessment.

Food Security

The NFU raised food security. Under this new scheme, farmers will get paid to store water. Landowners can do land maintenance but will need to be clear on what they are allowed to do and ought to be doing.

It is therefore important that any strategy for dealing with flooding considers how different methods are used together, when they are appropriate and how decisions are taken. The potential impact any intervention may have further up or down stream needs identifying in conjunction with local teams. Local partners are keen to work together, but greater clarity is needed to encourage activity particularly where financial pressures are causing organisations to scale back support in some areas.

Farmers and potential initiatives

The group discussed the issue of natural flood management and increasing evidence of its effectiveness. A new scheme means landowners and farmers are rewarded for playing their part. There was wide support for farmers receiving public

money for public good and that payments for storage of water made sense particularly where arable land was under water for many months of the year and was potentially no longer available for food production. In this The Canal and Rivers Trust operates man-made channels that can take additional water, albeit with a careful approach. Tamworth has several miles of canals running through it. It was suggested that they could link with other organisations on this and think about where this can be used most effectively. They receive money from developers to do this at present and see this as a potential policy when working with partners at the Summit in response to government initiatives.

Planning Permission

The issues around planning applications, the planning system and new developments were discussed. Schedule 3 of the Water Management Act is now in force and will include a better description of SUDS (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems) blue/green infrastructure. This means both the water management and ecological aspects of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. It will also enable Local Authorities to have more teeth when it comes to refusing planning applications on the basis of flooding risk. In the longer term, for a lot of SUDS schemes developers do not want to take on liability. There have been a number of constituents raising problems with developers not taking responsibility for the management of new developments. Some developers seem to take the approach that residents will pick up management tabs and flooding reduction measures like water pumping infrastructure. It was widely agreed that proper local plans need to ensure that hardstanding that contributes to additional water load being put onto drainage systems should be managed. There are specific examples where developments have gone ahead without drainage plans being signed off despite it being a condition of the planning permission. A major legacy of the outgoing government is

that for the past 14 years, major developments have taken place leading to thousands of homes being constructed without it being mandatory to include sustainable drainage.

It may be that we work towards a policy that requires a legal duty to inform people buying property that they are buying on a floodplain in plain English and what this means in practice. The Law Society have been issuing Practice Notes on this area of legal practice, but the last one was issued in 2020, so it might be helpful for the note to be updated and reissued to stress the importance of solicitors making the risks clear to would be purchasers.

Flooding Response

The FBU raised the point that England is the only part of the UK where there is no statutory responsibility upon them to attend flooding incidents. Fire Brigades are therefore doing their best to attend but do so without any government funding with extremely low capacity. The FBU, following a National Audit Office Report in November 2023, are pushing for policy change at national level and reiterated that there should be a statutory duty to attend, and the appropriate funding to accompany this change.

Communication, signage and short-term interventions

One of the key issues and returning themes throughout the afternoon discussed by the group was a coordinated, coherent flooding response system spanning communication. There is no flooding phone line, no singular agency that is the first port-of call. No clear support system or directory available. There is a clear comms issue that needs a solution. This also ought to include a synchronised warning system. The Environment Agency issues warnings on main rivers, but

the highest risk is surface level flooding, which isn't as predictable and is covered by National Highways.

These alerts also do not necessarily get received by everyone in affected areas. Parish Councils and flood wardens, are committed to serving their communities but there needs to be a complete directory held in a designated place that is easily accessible. Local alerts and local teams to put out signage are needed. We also need to agree who is responsible for routes that do not sit under the National Highways remit.

Edingale village was for the first time cut off during storm Henk in January 2024. Waters there can rise within just a few hours of rainfall starting. It meant that some people could not return home. It raised the serious issue about routes that should be prioritised and how to ensure residents are aware of this through effective communications. It was suggested that this is something that County Councils and National Highways can pick up together by working with local parishes who have very detailed knowledge of hot spots. However, the village is not even in the Staffordshire CC list of the 10 villages most likely to flood. The group discussed additional steps that can be taken by the local community when it comes to creating a warning system and building a local response.

For example, the NFU suggested using signage, and depth markers along roads so more information is available to drivers to know if they can make it through roads when the water gets to specific levels. At present it is very local knowledge that confirms what level waters can be driven through by most ordinary cars. At present a road closure sign may be present and should you drive along a road with a closure sign, insurance companies will not pay out for damage. Road closure signs are often left out for days providing confusion and issues around insurance cover and the actual safety of roads.

The British Red Cross raised that this is when the community and voluntary sector can really contribute. They have

‘community leads’ in specific areas to share flooding updates within specific areas, bolster local communications and even assist in insurance claims by making residents aware of the need to take photos, etc. They can go door knocking, identify who does not have access to online platforms, support with distribution of info and materials. There therefore needs to be a partnership effort depending on the nature of the flooding. It was agreed that further work was needed to identify the best way to proceed with a collaborative approach and which stakeholders to include and widen the next phase of work.

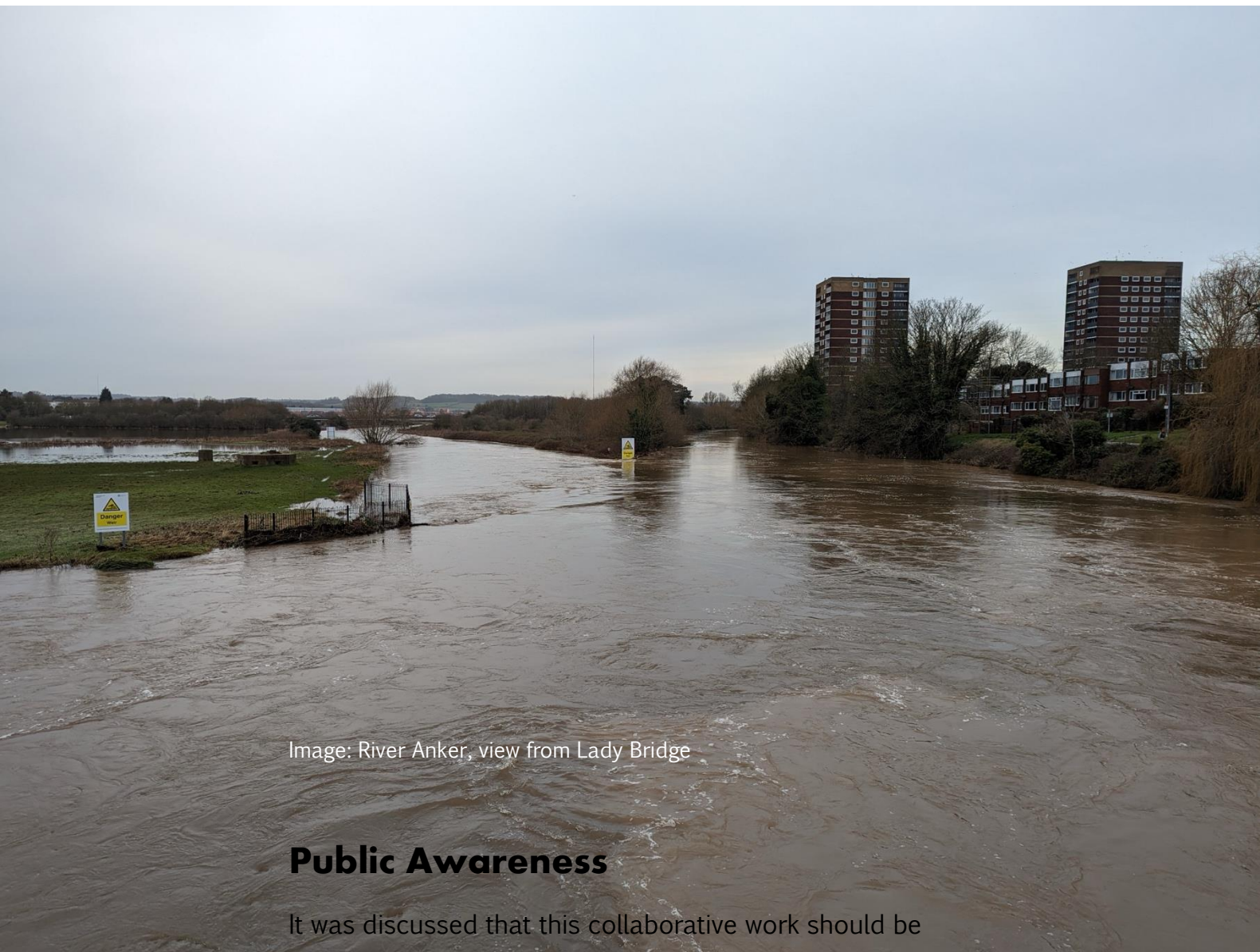


Image: River Anker, view from Lady Bridge

Public Awareness

It was discussed that this collaborative work should be balanced with a need to raise public awareness that flooding cannot be ‘fixed’ with a one size fits all approach. The

changes to our climate are creating ever increasing challenges. Living with flooding and reducing their impact is a critical part of adapting to a less predictable future.

Some representatives in attendance stated that we must build tolerance to the reality of flooding while working on solutions to mitigate its impact and making a response system that is easier to navigate. When it comes to developing a collaborative communications and warning system, the group discussed that many older people are not technologically savvy yet are amongst the most vulnerable to being impacted by floods. It is therefore important these communities know who to contact, and that local teams on the ground have a systematic approach to vulnerable people and those not digitally connected.

Recommendations

This section pulls together the findings from discussions with those in attendance about how at a regional level flooding response and preparations could be better tailored to communities. It also highlights the context of the need for a national flooding strategy that responds to our changing climate.

1 - Areas and communities that flood should wherever possible establish a 'one route access minimum'

Flood resilience planning should focus on the steps to create a route in and out of villages during extreme flooding. The example in the report is Edingale and the North road access as the most viable solution to solve the issue of access to the village during flooding. This is particularly important where emergency services access is needed, and home-based care or food deliveries may be unable to take place. To identify and establish a coordinating body, such as the county council, for linking up communities across the county and establishing a location for accessing of information in a more standardised manner.

Presently, there are various locations for information, and it was agreed a better approach was needed but that due to the current complexity of flood response, the single point best placed to host the information was still for discussion. This collation of information would serve as a directory for residents to provide on the ground contact details and response plans.

2 - Organisations such as The Environment Agency and Severn Trent should identify areas with crossover initiatives of longer-term plans including working with the County Council on drainage affected by river water, and to review the

maintenance and infrastructure investment plans for potential cross organisational working so that finances and resources can be maximised. Pooling capital expenditure can be done via streamlining investment plans and strategies across different organisations.

3 - Aviva & the insurance industry should pull together case studies citing the complexity in establishing flooding causes and the right person to tirage to, particularly as they are often the first to be called in a flooding event and can support with local on the ground information if they are provided with it. This will support in identifying ways to improve communication and link into the information host organisation.

4 – The Revised NPPF and a “Flooding Precept” should be used to channel money from Section 106 / CIL Payments to fund local flood resilience.

This would enable more localised responses to be created alongside communities and would not automatically necessarily require additional funding from government.

5- With devolution pending, the co-ordination for flood resilience planning and investment should be placed with the Housing Authority. They would then oversee the construction of SUDS for new developments to ensure Section 3 of the Water Management Act is implemented and they can use the “flooding Precept” funded from Section 106 / CIL money, to prevent flooding being made worse elsewhere, as laid down in Section 181 of the NPPF (Dec 2024).

Appendix A

The Tamworth Flooding summit

The Summit was convened by Sarah Edwards MP on Friday 22nd March 2024 to bring together organisations and agencies who have responsibility or interest in flood management and response. The constituency is situated in a flood plain and in January 2024 experienced, in the wake of Storm Henk, the third largest flooding event since records were started.

Flooding poses a variety of challenges; it is a combination of factors which when they overlay create difficult situations for those on the ground to navigate. The 18 months ending in Spring 2024 had been the wettest since 1837.

Some of the issues facing the constituency that have been raised include, road closures, flooded homes, flooded farmland, and a complex interplay between drainage systems, roads and natural water courses.

The aim of the Summit was to bring together all the relevant agencies and interest groups; and, to identify potential partnership working and lines of improvements that can help to deal with flooding in the short, mid and long term. Climate change means flooding events will only increase in frequency, and magnitude. Therefore, a collaborative and multi-faceted approach to flooding response and preparedness has to be taken. The summit therefore sought to utilise the convening power of the MP to bring together those who are often perceived to be working in silos. The Summit was not intended to be a blame game, because the severity and the complexity of flooding facing our communities needs coordinated and innovative ideas coupled with local knowledge and support

It is with thanks that the following people are mentioned for their open minded and collaborative approach to what is envisaged to be a longer-term project to benefit the constituency of Tamworth: • Roy Stokes - Place Manager Staffordshire, Environment Agency • James Bailey - Assistant Director - Highways and the Built County, Staffordshire County Council • Jamie Cooper - Flood Risk Manager, Staffordshire County Council • James Johnson - Regulation & Enforcement Manager, Lichfield County Council • Andrew Barratt - Chief Executive, Tamworth Borough Council • Dr James Jesic - Director of Capital and Commercial Services, Severn Trent Water • Simon Spencer - Group Secretary, Lichfield, Rugeley & Tamworth NFU Branch • James Startin - Chairman, Lichfield and District branch of the NFU. • Julian Woolford - Chief Executive, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust • Anthony Mason - Parish Councillor, Edingale Parish Council • Martin Starkey - Staffordshire Brigade Secretary, Fire Brigade Union • Blandine West - Senior Emergency Response Officer - West Midlands, British Red Cross • Tony McNamara - Network and Field Lead, Aviva • Lucas Brown - Senior Water Engineer, Canal and Rivers Trust • David East - Route Manager (Walsall (part), Stoke & Staffordshire), National Highways • Alex Shilton - Senior Engineer, National Highways • Michelle Cliff - Senior Development Officer – Resilience and Rural

