



**Nicolas Heslop**

Leader of The Council

Borough Councillor for Cage  
Green, Tonbridge

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING  
BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Thérèse Coffey MP  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham St  
Westminster  
London SW1P 4DF

2 July 2019

Dear Minister,

**Amendment to the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976**

I am writing to confirm that Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council strongly supports the proposed amendment to the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976, which will allow an increase in the stored water level to 28.6m AODN.

Following the very significant and damaging flooding events that took place in 2013/14, the Borough Council has worked extremely closely with the Environment Agency and other members of the Medway Flood Partnership to pursue robust flood mitigation solutions. This has been clearly demonstrated by the agreement of the Borough Council in September 2016 to contribute up to £500,000 towards the delivery of the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme (LEHES), as well as the strong role the Borough Council has played in successfully securing Local Growth Fund Round 3 grant funding via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, and in providing strategic advice to the partnership.

Once delivered, the LEHES will result in much greater protection being afforded to 1,470 homes and 100 businesses in the Tonbridge and Hildenborough area, as well as creating greater resilience to Tonbridge Town Centre, which is seeing a renaissance as a food and drink destination, and better flood protection to local public leisure facilities in the area.

In addition, there will also be some benefits to other communities further downstream such as Golden Green and Little Mill. These are all benefits that are absolutely key to the future well-being of borough residents and businesses, and is the reason why this initiative is the top priority for the Borough Council.

In recognising the benefits of the LEHES, the Borough Council has also given consideration to the impact of the scheme. Having looked at the implications both as a landowner within the flood storage area and as a 'specified interest' as stated within the Act, the Borough Council acknowledges that there will be minimal impact on Haysden Country Park arising from the change in water storage levels, and early stage discussions have been undertaken with officers in our Leisure Services and Planning departments in order to minimise disruption during the construction works. It is also acknowledged that the additional 16.4 hectares of additional land around the edges and top of the flood storage area that will be required as part of the expanded scheme will be upstream, beyond the borough boundary. It is clear that the very negligible impacts within the borough are far outweighed by the tangible benefits that will be reaped once the initiative has been delivered.

I hope that you understand the importance of this scheme to the local area and that this proposed amendment to the Act is looked upon favourably.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'NH' followed by a horizontal line.

Nicolas Heslop  
Leader of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

cc: Tom Tugendhat MBE, MP