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Our ref: Loxwood  
PC/GW  
Date:23 March 2021

Ms Jane Bromley  
Clerk, Loxwood Parish Council  
West Sussex  
RH13 0QR

Dear Ms Bromley

**Loxwood Stream Improvement Project**

Thank you for your letter of 1 March 2021 to Mr James Humphreys regarding the Loxwood Stream Improvement Project. James has recently retired, and Mr Simon Moody has been appointed as the new Area Director for the Solent & South Downs Area. Simon has asked me to respond to your concerns.

Thank you for updating us on the recent decision by the Parish Council, that you are unable to take forward the recommendations from your recently completed feasibility study. As I, and my local strategic Floods team have previously communicated, the Environment Agency has not been able to progress a capital improvement scheme to reduce the risk of flooding from the Loxwood Stream. A feasibility study conducted by Consultants 'Mott MacDonald' on our behalf, concluded that it was not economically viable for us to do so, with the likely costs greatly outweighing the potential benefits. We have been clear with the local community and our partners on our position, since the study concluded in 2017.

We recommended that the Parish Council seek to identify local actions that could be taken forward on the Loxwood Stream, to help reduce the flood risk to the community. In our experience, such local actions can be preferable (and more achievable from a funding perspective), in communities where there are a small number of properties at risk. This is because the works do not have to meet the strict criteria required to secure Government Grant in Aid (GiA) funding, and you would likely be able to avoid the higher project delivery costs associated with a large Risk Management Authority. I do not consider this advice to be inappropriate, then or now.

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With regard to the potential for new development to lead to increased flood risk, and the role of the Environment Agency in addressing this. We are a statutory consultee for planning applications in areas of flood risk. Depending on where development is planned, if we are consulted we provide advice to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to help ensure that the development is safe and does not increase flood risk elsewhere. The final decision on new development sits with the LPA, and we would encourage the Parish Council to discuss your specific concerns with Chichester District Council.

I am aware that the Parish Council has previously been reluctant to pursue individual measures to make properties more resilient to flooding - known as Property Flood Resilience (PFR). However, it is our opinion given the conclusions of Risk Management Authorities and the Parish Council, that this may be the final avenue to explore, for those whose homes have experienced internal property flooding. There is increasing use of these measures across the country, and we have practical experience with similar local communities in Hampshire. I believe that the Southern Regional Flood and Coastal Community (SRFCC) would consider a bid to provide Local Levy funding towards the cost of a PFR project, and that a proportion of the costs may also be eligible for specific Government grants. We would be happy to provide advice on developing a business case, to support an application for such funding for Loxwood.

If you would like to discuss this option further, you are welcome to contact Tom Lamboo in our West Sussex strategic floods team, by email at [tom.lamboos@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:tom.lamboos@environment-agency.gov.uk), or by telephone on 02084 745239. We also remain available to provide more general advice to local residents at Loxwood, on how they can better protect themselves, or reduce the impacts of potential future flooding.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Wilson".

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