

The Rt Hon Boris Johnson
Prime Minister
10 Downing Street
London
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Our Ref/Ein Cyf: PM/KG
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Date/Dyddiad: 2nd March 2020

Dear Prime Minister,

Re: Flooding Relief Across Caerphilly County Borough

You will be aware over the last three weeks, families, businesses and communities across South Wales have felt the devastating effects of Storm Dennis, Storm Ciara and most recently Storm Jorge.

The impact of the damage and flooding across South Wales has been traumatic and in many cases, life changing.

As one of the hardest hit areas, the County Borough of Caerphilly has seen flooding and damage in excess of 200 properties, as well as damage to many schools, bridges, culverts and roads, and despite the efforts of our Local Authority staff and emergency services colleagues, significant long term damage has been sustained.

The Council has established an emergency fund, offering £500 to each damaged residential property and £1000 to each damaged business and this is supported with similar financial support from Welsh Government.

However, these funds, whilst welcomed, will not address the full extent of the loss incurred by many Caerphilly residents and businesses, and further financial support is desperately needed.

The impact of the floods to the infrastructure of the County Borough, is currently calculated at approximately £4m, but this is anticipated to at least double, over the next few weeks, as the full storm damage impact is determined following detailed structural inspections.

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Of particular concern to us here in Caerphilly, is the structural integrity of a major highway, which connects our most deprived communities to the north of the County Borough, to the south and beyond. The A469 between Tirphil and Pontlottyn (a stretch of some 6 miles) has shown signs of significant movement following the recent storms, and structural engineering reports have determined that whilst there is a low risk of imminent collapse, prolonged heavy rainfall could contribute to further slip movement and heightened risk of major failure and collapse.

Collapse of this strategic highway route would essentially isolate our most deprived communities, paralyse our many businesses in the area and sever the Rhymney Valley railway line that connects the Rhymney Valley line to Cardiff. This line is also subject to movement and is scheduled for major upgrade as part of the WG and Cardiff Capital City Region, Metro plans. Clearly, the threat of further failure of the A469 road network which links the A465 in the north to the A470 in the south, would not only have a local economic and community impact, it will detrimentally impact significantly the Cardiff Capital City Region.

Geotechnical surveys have highlighted that the risk of failure remains high without significant remedial works being undertaken across the site. However, it has been confirmed that these works would be financially unfeasible due to the size and scale of the deep seated stabilization works required to protect the highway from future movement.

Previous feasibility studies have identified three possible options ranging from £75 million to £85 million.

There is now an urgent need to progress a long term engineering and funding solution, beginning with further detailed studies, estimated at £5m.

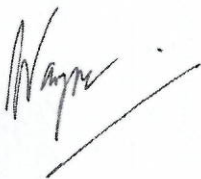
It is clear that the recent storms and flooding are key indicators of the climate emergency that we face and we must commit to tackling the challenge with better protection for everyone. In this regard, urgent discussions are needed across all levels of Government to develop a coherent and deliverable strategy to minimise the impact of storm and flood damage we have recently experienced across Caerphilly County Borough and the South Wales Valleys.

In the meantime, we look forward to your urgent response and assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Councillor Philippa Marsden
Leader, Caerphilly County Borough Council



Wayne David MP



Gerald Jones MP

Handwritten signatures of Chris Evans and Dawn Bowden. Chris Evans' signature is on the left, and Dawn Bowden's signature is on the right.

Chris Evans MP

Dawn Bowden AM

Handwritten signature of Hefin David.

Hefin David AM

Handwritten signature of Rhianon Passmore.

Rhianon Passmore AM