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For the attention of Emma Howard Boyd
Chair Environment Agency and
Sir James Bevan Chief Executive Environment Agency
PO Box 544
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United Kingdom

Date: 10th September 2021

Dear Chair and Chief Executive

After HRH Prince Charles and the Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited the devastating flooding in Fishlake and Stainforth South Yorkshire November 2019 the Prime Minister announced more support for communities affected by flooding following a meeting of the Government's emergency cobra committee.

Do you still support the following government statements?

(A) Published 23rd January 2020 Government Press Release:

"Environment Bodies set joint vision to tackle climate change. **Environment Agency**, Forestry Commission, and Natural England outline a shared vision to use up-stream nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency."

(B) In this <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbYXEDczL-U> Sophie Ridge interview George Eustace explains the government's response to UK floods. An extra £4 Billion is to be spent on flood defences. In Yorkshire, up stream nature based solutions are to be supported.

(C) Published 6 August 2020: Announced by Robert Jenrick MP the Secretary of State for Housing:

“Valued green spaces protected for future generations, with more building on Brownfield land.”

Prior to the public inquiry regarding Appeal Ref: APP/J4423/W/20/3258555 Land of Moorthorpe Way, Sheffield S20 6PD I requested on 26th May 2020 that George Eustace MP Secretary of State for the Environment “call in” the application. My request was in line with government directive which states that applications have to be made before the local planning Authority makes its decision. The decision to refuse the planning application by Sheffield City Council Planning & Highways Committee took place 2nd June 2020 therefore my application was submitted in time.

I personally think that flooding should take precedence over House Building but civil servants in Sheffield (LPA), The Planning Inspectorate and MP Robert Jenerick's departments seem to think otherwise. They totally ignore elected Councillors decisions and Government legislation and directive.

I have made a formal complaint to the Preliminary Ombudsman regarding public enquiry:
<https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/ParliamentaryOmbudsman.pdf> evidence I supplied to the enquiry
EO-01 to EO-21 can be viewed here: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/publicinquiry.htm>

Under the freedom of information ACT 2000 I wonder if you could supply the following information.

1. Do you agree with this statement? Published 6 August 2020 : Announced by Robert Jenrick MP the Secretary of State for Housing: **“Valued green spaces protected for future generations, with more building on Brownfield land.”** I ask this question because I took part in a public enquiry regarding building upstream in Ecological Owlthorpe, where I suggested to the inspector that Avant Homes move their project from our oasis to the old Aerodrome at Norton. The Aerodrome is a Brownfield site by definition boasting many derelict buildings in need of redevelopment. Do you agree with me that civil servants in Sheffield (LPA) the inspectorate and executives at Avant Homes are blatantly ignoring Government legislation and policy?
2. On 22nd January 2021 workmen were seen working on drains on Moss Way Sheffield; **GPS Co-ordinates: 53.340038,-1.362883** it is assumed this is where the flood waters of the disused mines usually discharge into the drains, but in heavy rain events the drains cannot cope and Ochre floods into the Ochre Dyke. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> this video was taken at the same time as downstream flooding occurred in Beighton, Rotherham and Fishlake. Were the workmen from the Environment Agency? I have been investigating who is responsible for the discharge from the old mine workings with the Coal Authority evidence can be seen hear <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/LettertoCoalAthority.pdf> The Coal Authority seem to suggest that the Environment Agency is responsible. Can you confirm this?

After reading extract form Abandoned mines and the water environment Science project SC030136-4.1: it does seem that the Environment Agency is responsible for discharge from old disused mines.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/291482/LIT_8879_df7d5c.pdf “The Environment Agency is the leading public body protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales. It’s our job to make sure that air, land and water are looked after by everyone in today’s society, so that tomorrow’s generations inherit a cleaner, healthier world. Our work includes tackling flooding and pollution incidents, reducing industry’s impacts on the environment, cleaning up rivers, coastal waters and contaminated land, and improving wildlife habitats. This report is the result of research commissioned and funded by the Environment Agency’s Science Programme.”

(3 Coal mines)

(3.1) The scale of the problem: “We have mined coal in the UK for many hundreds of years. As coal mining activities reduced, many mines were closed, underground pumping of water was stopped and the mines began to flood. As the water rose within the underground workings it dissolved metals and other substances, polluting rivers and streams when it reached the surface.”

(3.2) Science Report – Abandoned mines and the water environment: “We need a comprehensive groundwater monitoring network to minimise the possibility of environmental harm as mine water levels rise after years of pumping. The number of sites monitoring the status of underground mine water has increased from just over 100 to well in excess of 700.”

(3.3) what is still needed: “Despite the success of the mine water programme to date, much has still to be done. The majority of existing discharges on the priority list remain untreated. Underground workings the length and breadth of the country are still filling with contaminated waters, creating conditions for further uncontrolled discharges of mine water. Implementation of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) has provided impetus to the Coal Authority’s mine water programme, requiring us to prevent any significant future mine water

discharges whilst remediating existing ones that are causing pollution. The WFD has become the single most important legislative driver for the mine water programme.”

- 3. Published (Thursday 25 January 2018).** A £21 million flood defence scheme to better protect hundreds of businesses in Sheffield’s Lower Don Valley has opened today. The Lower Don Valley area is second only to the city centre for economic importance to Sheffield. The new flood alleviation scheme will benefit more than 500 businesses and safeguard around five thousand jobs, key roads in and out of the city and homes along a five mile stretch of the River Don. New ‘hard defences’ have been installed along an 8km stretch of the river to raise flood defence levels comprising new gravity walls, installation of flood gates and the fitting of more than 300 flap valves to pipes and openings which discharge to the river. **Sir James Bevan, Environment Agency Chief Executive, said:** “Flooding has devastating costs for people and businesses – and we know this has been the case for the people of Sheffield. This fantastic scheme will not only benefit homes and businesses in the city but it will also safeguard thousands of jobs due to the increased level of protection it provides. It’s been great to see Sheffield City Council and the Environment Agency working together in partnership to better protect the Lower Don Valley.” **The only problem with this concrete flood defence is that flooding has been transferred from Sheffield down stream to Rotherham, Doncaster and Fishlake. Please view this website: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/EO-04RiverDonFloodRiskatFishlake.pdf> as you see river levels in Fishlake are exceptionally high. On the last day of the inquiry Fishlake flooded again. At the bottom of this report it shows the flood defence in Sheffield that caused most of the damage in Fishlake, but some of the water came from the Ochre Dyke. As I have already made a formal complaint to the Parliamentary Ombudsman I am asking them to look into this situation. I would appreciate your comments which I will forward to their office.**
- 4. In 2019 flood water from old abandoned mines of Dent and Moorhole in Owlthorpe caused damage to the environment, wild life and increased the pollution of rivers also contributing to the devastation downstream flooding in Beighton , Rotherham, Doncaster and Fishlake. <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredyke2.mp4> Have you any comment to make regarding this?**
- 5. January 2021, Just after the public enquiry had finished Fishlake flooded again as you can see in this video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6ABoXGUgR4> there is extensive flooding in the fields around Fishlake but about 9mins into this video, it shows the erosion to the tow path at the side of the River Don. This is a frightening prospect. If we do nothing there will be fatalities down stream from the Rivers of Sheffield. Have you any comment to make about this very dangerous situation?**
- 6. Do you support the press release published 18th November 2020 by “Prime Minister Boris Johnson, outlines his Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution for 250,000 jobs. (9) Nature: Protecting and restoring our natural environment, planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year, whilst creating and retaining thousands of jobs?**
- 7. Sheffield City Council alongside local MP Clive Betts look to develop a green corridor in the Beighton ward: <https://www.ecological-owlthorpe.org/Ochredykegreencorridor.pdf> do you agree with me that Sheffield City Council plans to plant saplings downstream in Waterthorp, standing at 178ft above sea level, and destroying trees upstream in Owlthorpe (Plot E) standing 312ft above sea level, will do nothing to support Environment Agency, Forestry Commission, and Natural England shared vision to use up-stream nature-based solutions to tackle the climate emergency?**

Please view what Professor Ian Rotherham has to say regarding building in Owlthorpe Sheffield: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NU28ZUxBEK8>

I look forward to your responses Kind Regards

Michael Meredith>


