



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon George Eustice MP  
Secretary of State for DEFRA  
Seacole Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

8<sup>th</sup> March 2022

**Re: Developers right to connect – Thames Water**

Dear George,

You will be aware that I have been campaigning strongly on behalf of constituents and action groups for the Government to take action to clean up our important limestone rivers in the Cotswolds. I was therefore delighted to support the measures the government has taken through the Environment Act to better protect our rivers, which have provided such important opportunities for communities to care for their health and wellbeing during the pandemic.

I was pleased to see the government's decision to introduce a requirement for water and wastewater companies to make progressive reductions in discharges of sewage to the environment. I believe that this will make a significant difference to help shape reforms towards achieving cleaner rivers.

The importance of clean rivers, raised through the media and the public, has been echoed by my own constituents as well in The Cotswolds who very much value the health benefits of access to green and blue space. The importance of protecting our environment and rivers has also been made evident to me through my experience as a former Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food.

However, it is clear that wider actions beyond those water companies can take will also be needed to improve our rivers. To successfully address overflows we must manage multiple factors, including more extreme weather events, population growth and the paving over of urban space, which decreases natural drainage and puts more pressure on sewers. Surface water from new developments can be a particularly significant cause of overflows when surface water drainage is inappropriately connected to a sewer containing foul water.

*Member of Parliament for The Cotswolds*

Westminster Office: 020 7219 5147

email: [cliftonbrowng@parliament.uk](mailto:cliftonbrowng@parliament.uk) website: [www.cliftonbrown.co.uk](http://www.cliftonbrown.co.uk)

As a chartered surveyor, I very much welcome the government's decision to review the implementation of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The current approach is placing a growing pressure on sewers that increases the risk of sewer flooding and overflows to the environment. This can be prevented by implementing Schedule 3 and removing developers' automatic right to connect rainwater drainage to combined sewers. I believe that it is entirely reasonable for developers to be given responsibility for taking a sustainable approach to the impacts of their developments.

Schedule 3 offers an important lever to reduce future pressures on our already overburdened sewer system and better manage surface water at a local level. I would have liked to have seen the Schedule brought into force already but now I hope that, with your support, this can now become a reality, as it did in Wales in 2019. This would support improvements that my constituents in The Cotswolds and many others more widely are very much looking forward to seeing.

I look forward to hearing about the next steps in the review and supporting your work to move this important issue forward.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'G Clifton-Brown', with a small flourish at the end.

**Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP**

CC: Rebecca Pow MP (Minister for Nature Recovery and the Domestic Environment)