



The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
By Email

Ellie Chowns MP
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire
House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

27 November 2024

Dear Mr Reed

I am writing to you in the aftermath of Storm Bert which has caused widespread flooding in my constituency. Many current flood victims are still recovering from the last Herefordshire flood which occurred only five weeks ago on 16.10.24.

Following the floods that occurred in October, I met residents in the village of Eardisland who expressed concerns that I know are widespread in my constituency. In October more than 100 households in Herefordshire were flooded, yet the Flood Recovery Framework (FRF) was not activated because Ministers decided that there were not severe widespread impacts across multiple areas.

Following Storm Henk in January 2024, the Government said that local authorities reporting 50 or more flooded properties would be eligible for funding under FRF. In January residents of Eardisland received vital and immediate support through FRF in the form of community and business recovery grants, and council tax and business rate reductions.

Herefordshire Council also encountered difficulty issuing the Business Recovery Grant when the FRF was last activated in January 2024 due to the stipulation that flood victims show evidence of a recent application for affordable insurance. As victims of repeated floods, many business owners in Eardisland were unable to produce this evidence. They expressed that it is a waste of their time to apply for insurance when they know that they will be refused.

Can you advise why the FRF was not activated for Herefordshire following the October floods?

As part of the current review into the FRF will you please urgently consider the merits of placing responsibility for activating the FRF with local authorities, since they are best placed to rapidly and responsively judge when it is needed?

Will you also please reconsider the eligibility requirement for a recent insurance application for the Business Recovery Grant?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

Ellie Chowns MP, North Herefordshire.