

# P-06-1428 Stop the flooding in Caenant Terrace, Skewen NOW!

Y Pwyllgor Deisebau | 8 Gorffennaf 2024  
Petitions Committee | 8 July 2024

Reference: SR24/8813-1

**Petition Number:** P-06-1428

**Petition title:** Stop the flooding in Caenant Terrace, Skewen NOW!

**Text of petition:**

For the last 40 or so years, Caenant has regularly suffered flooding because the culvert and the drainage system can't cope with the amount of water and again, the terrace has been turned into a river with thousands of gallons of water pouring down the road and back lane. One house has suffered substantial flooding in this latest breach.

The council have been telling us residents for years that it will be fixed, but we've now had enough and are petitioning to ensure that:

1. Neath-Port Talbot Council to agree a solution that eliminates the risk of this regular flooding occurring again; and
2. The Welsh Government ensures that funding is provided to deliver the work as soon as possible.

The drainage officer stated yesterday that the system isn't fit for purpose, and we urge all responsible bodies to take action now.



# 1. Background

This [Senedd research briefing](#) provides an overview of flooding and coastal erosion in Wales. It sets out the legislative and policy context, and outlines the funding arrangements to address flooding.

The [Flood and Water Management Act 2010](#) legislates flooding and coastal erosion in England and Wales. [Section 6 of the Act](#) defines the roles and responsibilities of Risk Management Authorities (RMAs). In Wales these are Natural Resources Wales (NRW), all local authorities (who act as lead local flood authorities (LLFAs)), highway authorities and water and sewerage companies. There are other bodies that have a non-statutory role in flood and coastal erosion risk management (FCERM), including private landowners and owners of infrastructure assets.

The Act also places a duty on local authorities to develop and implement Local Flood Risk Management Strategies. The local strategies set objectives for managing local flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses, and must align with the [Welsh Government's National Strategy](#). Neath Port Talbot Council (NPTC) is the LLFA for Caenant Terrace, and [published its Local Flood Risk Management Strategy](#) in 2013.

Property owners are generally responsible for private drainage pipes inside their home and within the boundary of their property. Local authorities are responsible for drain blockages on properties they manage, highway drains, and gulleys. These responsibilities are detailed on [Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water's website](#).

## 1.1. Flooding on Caenant Terrace

In NPTC's Local Flood Risk Management Strategy 2013, [Caenant Terrace is listed](#) as a location with specific flood risk concerns affecting 33 properties. The cause of flooding is cited as "Inability of ex storm drainage system to cope with flows from intense and sustained rainfall".

In October 2023, [ITV reported](#) that floodwater on Caenant Terrace, Skewen was:

...coming from an underground waterpipe located between two houses on the street... a manhole cover in the lane which conceals the culvert is unable to cope with excess rainfall and is dislodged during heavy

downpours. That allows water to escape from the pipe and flood the area.

Regarding responsibility for the flooding in October 2023 and actions taken by NPTC council, a [spokesperson was quoted by Wales Online](#) saying:

Responsibility for piped watercourses within an associated piece of land transfers with sale of the property... This is the situation regarding these two properties in Caenant Terrace. There has been a problem with a pipe carrying a watercourse across their land and a blockage has occurred, which the owners have legal responsibility to address. The property owners in this case have had many opportunities to address the problem but have not done so.

...The council has served a legal notice served on the landowners to take action and in the absence of a response and in the interests of local residents, it arranged for a contractor to undertake works to repair the land drainage pipe.

This has been undertaken without prejudice, as, by law, the drainage at this location is owned by the residents of the said properties and is not a council asset nor a council responsibility. The works are now virtually completed.

Skewen was previously flooded [in January 2021](#), when an underground blockage caused mine water to flow to the surface. This flood led to the evacuation of 80 homes, mainly on Dynevor Road, which is separated from Caenant Terrace by a railway line.

## 2. Welsh Government action

The Welsh Government awards funding annually to RMAs through the [FCERM Programme](#). RMAs may bid for funds “to deliver a programme of capital works to reduce the risk of flooding and coastal erosion to communities across Wales”. NPTC is the RMA for Skewen and has been awarded £329,151.28 since 2021 for works on Caenant Terrace, detailed in the table below. For 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 the phase of work listed for these projects was ‘Detailed Design and/or Full Business Case (FBC)’.

Year	FCERM Funding allocated
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<u>2024-25</u>	£104,126
<u>2023-24</u>	£163,750
<u>2022-23</u>	£34,127
<u>2021-22</u>	£27,148.28

In his response to the petition, the Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs, Huw Irranca-Davies MS, said the “Welsh Government is providing 100% funding to the RMA to carry out Detailed Design and draft a Full Business Case” and that NPTC “intend to complete the design and apply for construction funding in early 2025.”

Following flooding on Caenant Terrace in October 2023, a Welsh Government spokesperson told ITV:

We have provided Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council with £765,000 to develop a scheme for Caenant Terrace, and they are currently working on a scheme that will benefit the wider community of Skewen.

Once this is completed, the local authority will need to submit a bid for construction funding.

The Cabinet Secretary’s response also stated the:

...scope of the scheme has grown as the RMA has sought to address all sources of flooding. The scheme area also experience flooding from a historic mine audit in January 2021, which required further consideration within the scheme scope.

### 3. Welsh Parliament action

There has been no Senedd activity regarding the flooding of Caenant Terrace, but the Skewen mine water flood was discussed following a topical question by David Rees MS to the then Minister for Housing and Local Government, Julie James MS, on 27 January 2021.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this briefing is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware that

these briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.