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Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet
dros Newid Hinsawdd a Materion Gwledig
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for
Climate Change and Rural Affairs



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Llyr Gruffydd,
Chair, Senedd Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee
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21 October 2025

Dear Llyr,

Thank you for your letter of 4 September enclosing the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee's Report: *The response to recent storms*.

I am grateful to you and the Committee for your comprehensive report, and for your work with key stakeholders as well as those who have been impacted by previous storms.

I have considered the recommendations in your report and have set out my response to each of the recommendations in the attached paper. The Welsh Government's position has been categorised as accept, accept in principle, or reject in each case, accompanied by a rationale and any financial implications that reflect the government's policy position.

I wish to reiterate my thanks to the Committee for its valuable report and its ongoing support in this important policy area. I hope you find this response highlights the government's commitment to flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized representation of the name.

Huw Irranca-Davies AS/MS

Y Dirprwy Brif Weinidog ac Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Newid Hinsawdd
a Materion Gwledig

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Climate Change and Rural Affairs



The Response to Recent Storms

Response to the CCEI Committee Report (September 2025)

21/10/2025

In September 2025, the Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee submitted its report on the Welsh Government's Response to Recent Storms. The report includes 25 recommendations. This is the Welsh Government's response to those recommendations.

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Introduction

Managing the risks of flooding and coastal erosion is a high priority for this Government. This Senedd term, we have committed to fund additional flood protection for 45,000 homes. We have made our largest ever investment in flood risk management, with over £300 million committed to reduce risks for communities across Wales.

The winter season of 2024-25 again demonstrated that, faced with a changing climate, we will experience more frequent and severe floods, rising sea levels and faster rates of coastal erosion. We must be prepared for more extreme weather events on a more regular basis.

We know it is not possible to prevent all coastal erosion and flooding, but we are committed to reducing the consequences for and to increasing the resilience of communities across Wales.

Storms Bert and Darragh brought significant impacts in November and December last year. The rainfall from Storm Bert exceeded the February Storms of 2020 in some places, but thanks to the dedication of our Risk Management Authorities and first responders, fewer communities were impacted.

I thank the members of the Climate Change, Environment and Infrastructure Committee for their report on the Welsh Government's Response to Recent Storms. I have set out my response to the Report's individual recommendations below.

Response to the 25 recommendations

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary must ensure that NRW has immediate and ongoing access to the latest flood forecasting technologies and systems. The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that a programme of funding is available for this purpose, and to ensure that Wales is able to influence research and development priorities. The Cabinet Secretary should also ensure that NRW is able to access and participate in ensemble forecasting trials.

Response: Accept

I recognise the vital importance of having access to the latest flood forecasting technologies. In aid of this, Welsh Government provided NRW with almost £6 million to launch their new Flood Warning Information Service for Wales in 2024. This business-critical capital investment project has enabled NRW to provide a service tailored to the needs of customers in Wales.

NRW work in close collaboration with the Met Office and Flood Forecasting Centre to enhance forecasting data, modelling and assessments. These help to inform preparations and communications before, during, and after developing flood events. NRW has also reviewed impact thresholds at all warning locations across Wales and updated at some to help improve timeliness and accuracy of warnings.

Financial implications: If further enhancements are required by NRW, costs would need to be submitted to Welsh Government for consideration. We are supportive of any proposal to improve flood forecasting techniques and systems but would need to understand the costs further.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that a systematic approach is introduced for cross-agency lessons-learned exercises following storm events such as storms Bert and Darragh.

Response: Accept

In line with our commitments within the Wales Resilience Framework, we have been working with UK Resilience Academy to develop and implement a pan-Wales lessons management system.

The internal lessons management system enables us to identify lessons from exercises, incidents and inquiries and to put in place the appropriate processes that ensure the lessons are implemented.

Following the storms of 2024, the Deputy First Minister led a number of debrief sessions to ensure we were able to swiftly capture the lessons from the responses to support our

collective learning. Lessons identified during this process have helped shape our preparations for the 2025-26 winter season, including the NRW review to impact trigger thresholds, and the further planned enhancements to the JIGSO platform to provide emergency responders with higher quality and more accurate information on vulnerable people.

A continued supportive lessons management approach will help us to learn, adapt and ultimately enhance resilience at the pan-Wales level.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should work with partners to ensure that the Common Warnings Framework is implemented, so that flood warning language is consistent and clearly understood by both the public and responder organisations.

Response: Accept

Welsh Government is working closely with NRW to ensure consistency and clarity in communication to the public in Wales. NRW are actively engaged in the Common Warnings Framework and are contributing to its delivery along with the EA, SEPA and Met Office.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should work with NRW and relevant partners to increase public engagement with flood and weather warnings, with a particular focus on low-income and digitally excluded households.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government will continue to work in partnership with statutory responders, including NRW, and the third sector to enhance community resilience to enable individuals, businesses and civil society to improve their ability to understand, prepare for and to respond to weather warnings. Work on the Common Warnings Framework will make warnings and communications more accessible to the public.

The UK Government has recently undertaken the UK Public Survey of Risk Perception, Resilience and Preparedness to help understand what people think about different types

of emergencies, and what steps they have taken to prepare for them. The Welsh Government is currently analysing the **headline findings from the survey** to help inform future public communications on preparing for emergencies.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that

NRW should update the Committee on the promotion, reach, and impact of its weather warning service, including how success is being measured and what actions are being taken to improve sign-up rates and accessibility.

Response: Accept

NRW provide the Flood Warning Information Services for Wales, and will provide an update to the Committee on this accordingly.

Financial implications: None

Recommendations 6 & 7

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that the Flood Response Framework is reviewed and updated to reflect the learnings from flooding events that have taken place since 2016.

And

The Flood Response Framework should define roles and responsibilities, including those in leadership roles, across all levels of government and responder agencies, to improve understanding and accountability.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government has been undertaking a review of pan-Wales resilience governance structures and published the Wales Resilience Framework in May this year. In the associated Delivery Plan, Welsh Government committed to ensuring guidance is available for first responders, where appropriate, and that it is subject to regular review.

In line with this, an updated Flood Response Framework will be published in Spring 2026.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should provide an update on the additional funding provided to LRFs to support multi-agency coordination.

Response: Accept

During 2024-25, Welsh Government provided funding to Local Resilience Forums (LRFs) for the first time. Each of the four LRFs in Wales received £30,000 to support emergency planning and preparedness work, with funds being used to support a range of training and exercising activities.

Building on the success of the 2024-25 funding award, LRFs in Wales will each receive £50,000 during 2025-26. Funding will complement the contributions of partners and will support LRFs to continue to enhance their strategic coordination capacity and capabilities.

We have made commitments within the Wales Resilience Framework to introduce an annual statement to the Senedd on civil contingencies risks and resilience. This will include information on the current risk picture, our resilience performance, our current state of preparedness and how funding to Local Resilience Forums has been utilised.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that

The Flood Response Framework should set out clear escalation protocols for Tactical and Strategic Coordination Groups.

Response: Accept

Each Local Resilience Forum has well-rehearsed escalation protocols for Tactical and Strategic Co-ordination Groups which are aligned to the Joint Emergency Services Interoperability Principles (JESIP).

These protocols sit within a wider multi-agency management structure for the effective coordination of their joint response and includes the level of response activation, activity and escalation. This information already features in the Flood Response Framework, and officials will consider during its refresh how it can complement other guidance and protocols already in place.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should clarify the use and effectiveness of the JIGSO project, including whether it could serve as a reliable alternative to, or complement, the existing PSR systems. The Cabinet Secretary should set out how he will improve awareness of the tool among emergency responders.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government has developed a cutting-edge data application, “JIGSO”, to provide information to emergency responders on the ground. The application, which is part of DataMapWales, provides mapping including the addresses of those who have joined a Priority Services Register (PSR), which will include vulnerable individuals. This system has already helped responders to take action to ensure the safety of vulnerable people when emergency plans have been activated.

JIGSO adds value to the PSR by combining it with other data such as active flood alerts to help target any potential emergency response.

The PSR data in JIGSO comes directly from utility companies and is updated regularly. Work is underway to bring in PSR data from more utility companies to enhance what is available in JIGSO currently.

JIGSO is designed to complement existing responder arrangements and with the dedicated resources recently allocated to support JIGSO we are working to enhance the service and raise awareness with emergency responders.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should ensure that LRFs develop formal, standardised agreements with third-sector organisations, ensuring these partners can be mobilised quickly and effectively during emergencies.

Response: Accept

We have made commitments within the Wales Resilience Framework Delivery Plan to support greater consistency of approaches across Local Resilience Forum structures and activities in Wales. It includes specific actions including working in partnership with statutory responders and the voluntary and third sectors to enhance community resilience to enable individuals, businesses and civil society to improve their resilience.

Each Local Resilience Forum in Wales already includes relevant subgroups that manage relationships with local third sector organisations. How these organisations are mobilised during emergencies is for LRFs to determine based on local needs.

NRW and its LRF partners work with a number of third sector organisations in helping to promote flood resilience. They regularly attend community flood volunteer network

events, as they form a crucial part in supporting community response to - and recovery from - flooding.

Financial implications: None

Recommendations 12 & 13

The Committee recommends that

There should be a stronger recognition of the role of community groups. The Cabinet Secretary should work alongside NRW to explore opportunities to provide sustainable funding for community resilience groups.

And

The Cabinet Secretary should update the Committee on steps being taken by the Welsh Government or NRW to embed community participation in flood resilience planning processes, including through citizen forums and co-designed local plans.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government expects Risk Management Authorities (RMAs) to work collaboratively with communities when developing Flood Risk Management schemes and plans. This approach is set out within our National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) and our associated business case guidance.

The business case guidance is used in the development of all new FCERM schemes in Wales. The principles and ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations Act are embedded through the guidance, which encourages collaborative ways of working throughout the development process.

However, we acknowledge that there is always room for improvement and communities should feel seen and heard. We recognise the role that the Welsh Government must play in embedding community participation in flood risk management in Wales.

Within the streamlined national civil contingencies governance structures, the role of the Wales Resilience Forum has been strengthened to ensure it is able to provide the necessary strategic leadership and challenge to our partners across the responder community and the voluntary and third sector for the enhancement of risk management and preparedness across Wales.

Membership of the Wales Resilience Forum and the Wales Resilience Partnership have been revised to include representatives from voluntary and third sector. This reflects the key role of the voluntary and third sector in resilience activity across Wales and provides direct links into resilience activity at the strategic and coordination tiers.

I am also delighted to confirm that additional revenue funding has been made available to support the National Flood Forum in Wales. Welsh Government will be working with the National Flood Forum to explore how their services can be implemented on a wider basis across the nation. The National Flood Forum can aid communities in drafting flood plans, as well as offering wider advice and support, and I understand that communities already in receipt of this support have found it to be incredibly valuable.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should review the adequacy of current emergency funding provided by the Welsh Government for households affected by flooding, to ensure that funding support better reflects the costs arising from severe weather events.

Response: Reject

The Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme is a flexible revenue scheme designed to respond to specific events which can have very different impacts in different areas and can be Wales-wide or localised. The specific support for individual households is intended to offer initial assistance with immediate costs and is not a replacement for insurance. It is a discretionary part of the scheme which Ministers have considered over recent years when whole communities are significantly affected, and community resilience and support reduced.

Financial implications: N/A

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should introduce grant funding to enable individual homes and businesses to put in place preventative resilience measures, such as floodgates.

Response: Reject

Property Flood Resilience (PFR) measures are eligible under the capital Programme and through the Small Scale Works Grant to local authorities. The Welsh Government encourages all RMAs to consider PFR measures, including as an interim measure, where they are considered an appropriate option for reducing flood risk.

RMAs determine the appropriateness of the use of PFR and may submit an application for funding, as they are best placed to ensure a cohesive review of the community at risk of flooding.

Welsh Government have funded a number of these schemes throughout Wales, such as the £1.7 million made available to local authorities for PFR following the Storms of February 2020. This included projects in Rhondda Cynon Taf, Caerphilly, Monmouthshire and Powys, which are estimated to have benefitted up to 594 homes.

Welsh Government and our RMAs will always work with local communities to identify the best combination of measures that address the specific threats in each locality.

Financial implications: N/A

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should report back to the Committee on how, in his view, existing insurance schemes such as Flood Re, can be better promoted to residents of high-risk flood areas in Wales.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government is actively working with wider partners to encourage RMAs and the insurance industry to engage with communities and individuals to raise awareness of flood insurance.

We recognise that homeowners need to understand their coverage, as standard home insurance policies often do not include flood damage. We are promoting clearer communication about the Flood Re scheme, which helps make flood insurance more affordable for properties at high risk of flooding.

The Welsh Government also supports the Flood Re 'Build Back Better' initiative and is promoting greater awareness of how participating insurers can offer up to £10,000 towards property flood resilience measures when repairing homes after a flood.

NRW amplifies these messages via signposting on its website, which includes information about 'Build Back Better', and through its hard copy booklets. These are distributed via community leads, partners such as local authorities, town and community councils, and charities, as well as being requested directly from NRW by the public.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 17

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should take steps to ensure that mental health support is integrated into local flood response and recovery strategies.

Response: Accept in principle

We recognise the significant negative impact that flooding can have on people's mental health. People whose mental health has been impacted by flooding are able to access a wide range of support for their mental health, without the need for a formal referral.

The CALL helpline (0800 132 737) provides 24/7 emotional support and information about mental health and related matters to anyone in Wales. Every health board has a dedicated page detailing mental health support available in the local area – this includes easy-to-access support and online cognitive behaviour therapy services which do not need a GP referral.

The NHS 111 press 2 service is available for anyone experiencing an urgent mental health need – it ensures people in urgent need of support can be placed in direct contact with a mental health professional when they need it most. If children and young people have been affected, they can access support from the schools counselling service in their area.

People who are experiencing mild to moderate, or stable, severe and enduring mental health problems may be referred to their local primary care mental health support service by their GP.

NRW's website and hard copy advice also signposts to mental health support (Mind, CALL, Meic, PHW, Samaritans), and it ensures organisations offering these services are invited to the flood community volunteer network events that NRW facilitates.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 18

The Committee recommends that

The Welsh Government should ensure that national guidance on riparian responsibilities, including for culverts and ditches, is updated and promoted. The guidance should be supported by mapping tools, a register of owners, and compliance assistance for landowners.

Response: Accept in principle

RMAs only have permissive powers relating to the management of flooding. They do not have powers to intervene when river erosion occurs, which is the responsibility of the riparian landowner.

The principals of riparian ownership have been established in common law for over 200 years, but recent discussions around flood risk management in the Senedd suggests that many landowners are unaware of the concept.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) has produced **guidance** which explains to landowners how riparian ownership works, and how it might affect them. It also maintains up to date guidance on the NRW website at **Natural Resources Wales / Responsibility for rivers, streams, culverts, and canals**. I strongly encourage Members to share these resources with constituents so that riparian landowners are fully informed of their role in managing flood risk. This will help to improve our collective resilience to flooding by ensuring that our watercourses and their associated assets are maintained to the best possible condition.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 19

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should review the Emergency Financial Assistance Scheme (EFAS) to ensure that the thresholds of the scheme reflect the financial capacity of local authorities responding to repeated severe weather events.

Response: Accept

The current thresholds are 0.2% of general revenue expenditure in any one year, therefore are increased every year in line with overall projected expenditure. It is expected that Local Authorities have reserves to deal with unexpected events, which includes severe weather events. The use of the EFAS scheme should be considered alongside the preventative funding available for severe weather events, primarily through flooding prevention grants. The potential impacts of climate change are well recognised, and local authorities are developing adaptation plans to identify risks and mitigations over the medium term. This work is being supported by Welsh Government funding to the WLGA.

Financial implications: The financial implication if the threshold was changed would depend on the change to the thresholds, upwards or downwards, and the type and size of event within any given year.

Recommendation 20

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should consider whether a 10-year strategy, such as the National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion, is sufficient to ensure improved long-term planning and investment.

Response: Accept

The current National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management is set out under the terms of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The measures the Strategy contains are designed to be deliverable over the decade from 2020, but it was drafted with an inherent longer-term view due to the threat of climate change and its impact on flood and coastal erosion risk.

Welsh Government will continue this strategic approach when drafting the third National Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion. It will align with other relevant plans such as those for shoreline management, infrastructure and planning, and will draw together our responses to recent reports from sector representatives, to give a clear long-term plan for flood and coastal erosion risk management in Wales.

Financial implications: None

Recommendations 21 & 22

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Section 19 review, led by Elwen Evans KC.

And

The Cabinet Secretary should review the Section 19 flood investigation process to ensure it better supports local resilience planning.

Response: Accept

In August 2023, the independent review of the local government Section 19 and Natural Resources Wales reports into extreme flooding in winter 2020 was published, followed by an Oral Statement in September 2023. This was a Programme for Government commitment that has been completed.

The Flood and Coastal Erosion Committee (FCEC) have established a Section 19 working group and are working with Welsh Local Government Association and Local Authority partners to consider the review findings. The subgroup is carrying out a consultation this Autumn to identify high level requirements to develop supporting guidance for Section 19 flood investigation reports, with the aim of drafting a standard template that will simplify the investigation process and be more accessible to the public.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 23

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should provide an update on the development of the catchment planning roadmap, including timelines and stakeholder involvement.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government recognises the importance of integrated catchment planning as a key tool in building resilience to flooding and coastal erosion, particularly in light of the increasing frequency and severity of storm events such as Storms Bert and Darragh.

As committed to in our response to NICW's report, *Building Resilience to Flooding in Wales by 2050*, work on a roadmap to catchment planning is progressing, with the aim to provide a strategic framework for managing flood risk and water resources at a catchment scale. Officials will involve stakeholders as the policy development progresses.

Financial implications: None

Recommendation 24

The Committee recommends that

Given their potential impact, the Cabinet Secretary should prioritise scaling-up nature-based solutions, and make sure there are appropriate levels of funding available for that purpose. Farmers and landowners should be provided with support to understand their responsibilities and the opportunities in this policy area.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government is committed to embedding catchment-based approaches within broader land use planning frameworks to ensure a holistic and sustainable response to flood and coastal erosion risk.

This approach will help ensure that land use decisions contribute positively to flood resilience, water quality, biodiversity, and community wellbeing.

The Welsh Government actively promotes Natural Flood Management and supports RMAs to work in collaboration with landowners and farmers to pursue nature-based solutions to reduce flood risk and to protect and enhance our natural environment.

To further strengthen Natural Flood Management, we have made £2 million available to support projects across Wales in 2025-26, aimed at enhancing the natural environment and reducing flood risks to properties.

Officials are also working collaboratively with partners to ensure that farmers are supported to understand natural flood management opportunities on their land through the Sustainable Farming Scheme, and incentivised to take those positive actions.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications

Recommendation 25

The Committee recommends that

The Cabinet Secretary should provide an update on the steps being taken to expand the use of nature-based solutions, including details of how these are being embedded into policy frameworks and reassurance that these schemes will continue to be funded beyond 2025-26.

Response: Accept

The Welsh Government is committed to ensuring that nature-based solutions are effectively considered to deliver long-term resilience to flooding and coastal erosion.

The Natural Flood Management (NFM) Fund is a key mechanism for resourcing nature-based solutions. The fund supports projects that reduce flood risk while delivering wider environmental benefits such as biodiversity enhancement, carbon sequestration, and

improved water quality. The Expression of Interest window for the 2026-7 NFM Fund is currently open.

The FCERM business case guidance, released in 2018, encourages NFM approaches where appropriate as part of the options appraisal process when RMAs apply for flood and coastal erosion risk management scheme funding. The guidance also ensures that appraisals capture evidence of the wider benefits associated with a given scheme, such as amenity, regeneration, community and biodiversity benefits.

Financial implications: No additional financial implications