

Backbench Business Committee

Representations: Backbench Business

Tuesday 18 November 2025

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Members present: Bob Blackman (Chair); Jonathan Davies; Mr Lee Dillon; Will Stone; Martin Vickers; Chris Vince.

Questions 1-3

Representations made

[I](#): Martin Wrigley

Martin Wrigley made representations.

Q1 **Chair:** Welcome to the meeting of the Backbench Business Committee, where this afternoon will only be considering one application for a debate in Westminster Hall. Then, in private session we will determine the timing and allocation of debates in Westminster Hall and the Chamber.

The application that we have before us is for a debate in Westminster Hall from Martin Wrigley on sustainable drainage systems. Martin, please present your case.

Martin Wrigley: Thank you, Chair. I feel honoured to be the only applicant here today.

As we build new homes in many of our constituencies, we are searching for the most suitable new sites to develop. These sites are getting more complicated, as the prime and most sustainable sites have already been developed. One of the main difficulties is water. We have seen in recent weeks the devastating effects of floods in Wales, and the increasing frequency of heavier rain across the country must be managed in our housing development sites. Planning rules state that water run-off from developed sites must be equal to or less than that of the undeveloped area.

Clearly, hard surfaces such as paths and roofs speed up the rainfall run-off, hence the need for SuDS—sustainable drainage systems—often made of attenuation ponds and other constructions designed and built by developers to manage the water on the site and going off the site. However, there is no defined responsibility for maintaining these structures. They are often handed to grounds management companies that have no idea of their purpose and function, let alone expertise in flood prevention and water run-off management. The grass is cut, but the SuDS gradually decay, becoming blocked, bunged up or even filled in. When I speak to my constituents on new-build sites, this is frequently brought up and is a major worry for them.

In 2010, the Flood and Water Management Act put forward primary legislation for a solution. Its schedule 3 establishes a system where local authorities become the approving and adopting body for these drainage systems, but schedule 3 has never been enlivened. This debate will explore the merits of adopting SuDS and push the Government for action to save your constituents and mine from flooding due to SuDS that have been left to decay.

I used to sit on the South West Regional Flood and Coastal Committee, which allocated funds to the Environment Agency and flood prevention schemes, and it came up time and again that no one is looking after these critical elements of our urban drainage systems. In fact, the Environment Agency, Devon county council—the adopting authority in my case—as well as South West Water, developers and the district planners are all in favour



HOUSE OF COMMONS

of having schedule 3 adopted. They are trying to say, "Why is this not in place? Why is it not happening?"

I would like to hold the debate to show the interest from Members, to try to encourage the Government to do something about it, and to put forward the statutory instrument that is needed to enable schedule 3 to take effect and save our constituents across the country from flooding.

Q2 **Chair:** Thank you. Martin, you have requested either a Tuesday or Thursday. If it is a Tuesday, we must know the answering Department so that it fits with the rota to allocate it. Which Department do you think would answer the debate?

Martin Wrigley: It is interesting, because I think it is a DEFRA Act, but it impacts MHCLG. I think that DEFRA is probably the responsible Department, because it is flood and water management, which would be DEFRA by title.

Q3 **Martin Vickers:** Given the backlog of debates that we have, and flooding is obviously an annual event, it could be well into next year before we could allocate you a slot. Would that still be acceptable?

Martin Wrigley: I will take a slot as soon as I possibly can, wherever that slot may be, and I will be grateful for whatever I can receive.

Chair: The Clerks will be in touch with you in due course.

Martin Wrigley: Fantastic. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chair: That concludes the public business of the Committee. The Committee will now go into private session to consider the application and determine debates to be allocated when we have time.