

**Supplementary written evidence submitted by the Local Government Association
(FLO00105)**

15 September 2020

Dear Mr Parish,

Thank you for the opportunity to give evidence to your Committee on Tuesday 1 September. I was pleased to outline the work of councils and flood authorities in mitigating the risks of flooding in their communities. As per my commitment at the meeting, I would like to follow up with additional information on the impact of the resilience grant payments for last winter's floods and planning permissions in flood risk areas.

Resilience grant payments for last winter's floods

Last winter's floods had a significant effect on communities, with a number of areas affected by several severe storms. Councils therefore welcomed the additional investment from the Government for the nation's flood defences. Whilst the emergency funding was helpful, councils would have preferred to see the announcement swiftly followed up with further detail of the scheme and guidance to support their work on the ground. We understand that councils were not given the details of the funding schemes until some days after the announcement and we raised this with officials at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy at the time.

Coronavirus restrictions have made it more difficult for councils to meet some of the requirements set by Government on the property resilience grant. One of the conditions attached to the grant requires a survey, undertaken by a suitably qualified surveyor, to be undertaken before funding can be made available. Restrictions on non-essential travel and social distancing during the lockdown made this extremely difficult during the original timeframe set for the grant programme. Flexibility from Government on the timescale has therefore been very welcome.

The property level resilience recovery support scheme only applies after named storms (for example, storms Ciara and Dennis) in specific geographical locations. Community expectations have to be managed by the lead local flood authority, with most minor, but locally significant flooding events falling outside the scope of the scheme. Councils have raised concerns about conflicting advice being given to residents on eligibility for government grants.

Council flood and in-house finance teams have struggled to find the resource to administer Government grant schemes in addition to their other statutory duties on flood risk. In some cases, the only choice has been for councils to take money out of other funding pots in order to cover the administrative costs of the scheme.

Our initial contact with councils suggests that there is more to learn. However, it will take some time to assemble a full picture while councils are under pressure to deal with immediate coronavirus related issues. We will continue to collect feedback beyond the deadline for this inquiry and would be happy to share this with you if there is an opportunity to do so.

Planning permissions granted in flood risk areas and permissions granted following appeal

Figures published by MHCLG as part of national statistics provide [information on planning and land use](#), including the proportion of new addresses in areas of high flood risk (flood zone 3). Unfortunately, we do not have a data source that would provide the number of permissions granted following appeal or a breakdown by area. As I noted at the Committee, councils take the issue of flood risk very seriously and work closely with the Environment Agency and the majority

of decisions are made in line with their advice. The Environment Agency may be able to provide additional information from their records.

Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010

We welcome proposals that strengthen the provision of effective drainage schemes. The independent review of surface water flooding led by David Jenkins published on 26 August 2020 recommends that Defra should consider the case for legislation, including commencement of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act. This is based on his engagement with local government flood professionals. The LGA has not called for change because of the potential burden for local authorities. However, we will consider this issue again in the light of Mr Jenkin's recommendations.

Resourcing and effectiveness of investigations, and implementation of report recommendations, under section 19 of the same Act (and whether local authorities are calling for changes or additional resources to deliver this).

I thought it would be helpful to clarify that the LGA is not asking for resources specifically for the purpose of carrying out Section 19 investigations. This is part of the role of Lead Local Flood Authorities and as I noted at the session, councils would welcome clarity on how this role will be funded beyond this financial year.

I hope that this additional information is useful and provides further clarity. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any further questions as part of your considerations on this important issue and I look forward to seeing the Committee's report when it is published.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr David Renard
Chair of LGA's Economy, Environment, Housing and Transport Board