**Bricks and Water: Call for Evidence**

# Background and Introduction

Over the last five years, the Westminster Sustainable Business Forum (WSBF) has published three policy inquiries on water and housing in England, all chaired by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering. These include [Bricks and Water: A Plan of Action for Building Homes and Managing Water in England](https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/bricks-water-plan-action-building-homes-and-managing-water-england) (2018), [Bricks and Water: Building Resilience for England’s Homes](https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/bricks-water-building-resilience-englands-homes) (2020), and [Bricks and Water: Managing Flood Risk and Accelerating Adaptation in a Climate Emergency](https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/bricks-and-water-managing-flood-risk-and-accelerating-adaptation-climate-emergency) (2023). The Bricks and Water series has achieved significant impact across Westminster and Whitehall, with the most recent inquiry leading to an [amendment](https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3155/stages/17727/amendments/10007507) to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

Policy Connect and the WSBF are gathering written evidence to inform a follow-up report *‘Bricks and Water: Policy Recommendations for a new Government’*, Chaired by Baroness McIntosh of Pickering. The inquiry will explore existing gaps in Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) policy and make recommendations to a new Government to help address these gaps.

Inquiry Sponsors

This project has been made possible through kind support from the following organisations:

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Instructions

Policy Connect is gathering evidence through ongoing workshops/roundtable sessions, interviews with expert stakeholders, and this written Call for Evidence. Please find the questions below.

**We appreciate that you may prefer to respond only to the questions in your area of expertise. The questions are grouped into four themes:**

1. **Planning policy**
2. **Flood defence funding and maintenance**
3. **Coastal change**
4. **Property flood resilience**

Please feel free to send any additional evidence or information that might support our inquiry but has not been covered in our research questions (please do this by attaching a separate document to your email in either Microsoft Word or PDF format). We are particularly keen on **papers, data, or reports that you or your organisation have completed**. We would appreciate any data submissions, statistics or case studies showing **what works and what does not.**

The deadline for submission of evidence is Friday 19th July 2024 at 11:59 pm. Evidence should be submitted to: [Robert.Allen@policyconnect.org.uk](mailto:Robert.Allen@policyconnect.org.uk)

Research Questions

# Planning policy

1. Is existing planning policy sufficiently robust to ensure that new development is not at risk of flooding (both now and in the future) and does not exacerbate flood risk elsewhere? If not, what changes are required to ensure this is the case?
2. To manage the risk of flooding to new development most effectively, are there any parts of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that should be prioritised for reform? Similarly, are there any parts of existing Planning Policy that are currently working well and should be preserved?
3. How can the Government improve the capacity and expertise available in the planning system, against a backdrop of constrained public finances?
4. Should the Environment Agency be granted more power to halt planning applications that are proceeding against its advice? What other levers (such as changes to the existing “call in” Direction) can be used to ensure that planning advice from statutory consultees is followed?

# Flood defence funding and maintenance

1. Following forecasts that the current flood defence Capital Programme will better protect around 40% fewer properties than originally planned by 2027 (200,000 compared to 336,000), what changes can be made to accelerate the delivery of existing projects?
2. Do the Government’s existing partnership funding policy rules for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Projects remain fit for purpose? What changes are necessary to facilitate the delivery of new schemes and make project allocation more equitable?
3. In the 2021 spending review, the Environment Agency estimated that it required £235 million to keep 98% of its defence assets in the required condition. However, it only received £201 million. Should Grant-in-Aid funding for asset maintenance be increased to meet this 98% target?
4. Should the Environment Agency be given the power to reallocate Grant-in-Aid between capital and maintenance budgets to ensure optimal value for money?

# Coastal change

1. Should Shoreline Management Plans become statutory documents, to allow funding to be formally allocated to Risk Management Authorities in pursuit of better outcomes?
2. How can the partnership funding model for coastal defences better reflect the wider benefits that these schemes often seek to provide, including economic regeneration, amenity, highway improvements, etc. Should part of the Capital Programme budget be ringfenced exclusively for coastal projects?
3. How can flood risk and the implications of coastal change be better communicated to individuals in coastal communities?

# Property Flood Resilience

1. Do you agree with proposals for introduction of a Flood Performance Certificate, set out previously by [Policy Connect](https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/research/bricks-water-building-resilience-englands-homes) and [Flood Re](https://www.floodre.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/Flood-Performance-Certificates.pdf)? What changes are required to facilitate the successful roll-out of a Flood Performance Certificate?
2. Do you agree with the Public Accounts Committee’s recent finding that 2039 will be too soon to close the Flood Re scheme? What policy interventions are required to achieve risk-reflective pricing for home insurance by this date?
3. How can individuals and communities be made better aware of their flood risk and the need for preparedness, for example, by accessing flood warnings, creating and implementing a flood emergency response plan, and maintaining Property Flood Resilience measures. How can awareness of the [BeFloodReady](https://www.befloodready.uk/) campaign be raised?
4. How else can the use of Property Flood Resilience measures be accelerated?

Additional Evidence

Please feel free to send any additional evidence or information that might support our inquiry but has not been covered in our research questions. Please attach a separate document to your email in Microsoft Word or PDF format.

Submission Permissions

Kindly let us know whether we have your permission for the following:

1. Do you give permission for the report to quote your submission?
2. May we attribute the submission to the organisation you belong to?
3. May we attribute the submission to you personally, listing your job role?

# About Policy Connect

Policy Connect is a cross-party think tank. We specialise in supporting parliamentary groups, forums, and commissions, delivering impactful policy research and event programmes, and bringing together parliamentarians and government in collaboration with academia, business, and civil society to help shape public policy in Westminster and Whitehall, so as to improve people’s lives.

Our Work focusses on five key policy areas which are: Education & Skills; Industry, Technology & Innovation; Sustainability; Health; and Assistive & Accessible Technology.

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