

# Rt Hon John Healey MP



## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London  
SW1A 2AA

21 February 2020

Dear Prime Minister

The floods in November 2019 affected almost 1,000 homes and 565 businesses in South Yorkshire.

The four local authorities – Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham – and the Mayoral Combined Authority, with the Environment Agency, have prepared a paper setting out a Priority Business and Infrastructure Resilience Flood Priority Programme for the region.

The programme would protect at least 2,800 businesses and 10,300 homes, saving £1.7bn of future damage. Government is being asked to commit to providing £271m to enable the programme to be delivered.

The South Yorkshire Business and Infrastructure Resilience Priority Programme includes projects that would protect parts of my constituency badly hit in November:

- Rotherham to Kilnhurst flood alleviation scheme (phase 2), which would protect 46 homes and 196 businesses - £24m required
- Parkgate Flood Alleviation Scheme, to protect 56 homes and around 300 businesses - £10m required

In a 24-hour period on 7-8<sup>th</sup> November 2019 over 82mm of rain fell, slightly more than the average for the whole month of November in recent years and equal to that experienced in June 2007 – the most serious flooding event in the region up to 2019. Levels in the Rivers Dearne and Don reached or surpassed those of 2007.

In Rotherham, 135 homes were flooded and more than 300 businesses affected. There are 46 homes still unfit for people to go back to. Kilnhurst Primary School in my constituency may be closed until September. In Barnsley, 90 homes and 20 businesses flooded and £2m of damage was caused to roads.

Investment since 2007 has helped limit the extent of flooding and protected many properties, but it is clear from November that significant further investment is needed.

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The schemes for Kilnhurst and Parkgate are two of 27 in the proposed South Yorkshire programme that complement each other and should be delivered together, in addition to the wider investments already under way and planned. All organisations involved have confirmed their commitment to delivering the whole programme should funding be made available by Government.

With this detailed proposal drawn up, what we need now is for Ministers to play their part.

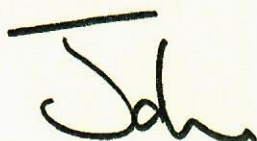
The Government's response to recent flooding has been inadequate. As Prime Minister, your absence from flooded communities in the North leaves us questioning your claims about "levelling up" and your Government has failed to show you have grasped the scale of the climate crisis. With extreme weather conditions set to become more frequent and severe, people in my constituency fear their homes, businesses and schools will be devastated over and over again.

I know from my experience as Floods Recovery Minister in 2007 that as the flood waters go away so does the media attention, but people have to live with the problems brought by flooding for months and sometimes years afterwards.

So now is precisely the time for you and your Government to confirm you will continue to stand with flooded communities, by making the funds for future floods protection and prevention available and bringing forward planned works to start this year.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John', with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

**JOHN HEALEY MP**  
Wentworth & Dearne