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Our ref: ENG-19839

Your ref:

Date: 01 December 2023

Dear Robert Jenrick MP

### **Holme flooding - Sluice gates at Slough Dyke**

Thank you for your letter dated 15 November 2023 regarding the sluice gates at Slough Dyke. Our teams have been incredibly busy as part of our incident response and recovery and we thank you for your patience at this time.

Storm Babet brought heavy rainfall and flooding across the East Midlands. Significantly more than a month's rain fell in 24 hours overnight on Friday 20 October into Saturday 21, with up to 90mm falling in some areas.

We are now working with the relevant partners, including the Local Resilience Forums and local authorities, to verify reports of flooding ahead of formal investigations that will be led by the Lead Local Flood Authorities, and conducted under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

Slough Dyke Outfall is a counterbalanced outfall and is designed to operate using the pressure of that water against it. When the pressure of the water in Slough Dyke is greater on the upstream side of the flaps, this will raise the flaps and allow water to discharge. When the water pressure decreases the flaps will close with the change in pressure, which stops water flowing upstream. The outfall was checked by our specialist contractors in April 2023, and they were found to be operating as they are designed to do. A visit was due in October, but this has been delayed because of Storm Babet. In addition Our internal field teams also visit site on a regular basis to check for blockages and to ensure the outfalls are operating and would carry out any remedial work with regards to blockage or vegetation.

We were made aware of water surrounding Holme Village and responded alongside other professional partners and agencies to help assess and coordinate any response which may have been required. In the days and weeks following this event we have carried out investigation work around Holme and Slough Dyke to aid our understanding of what happened. These visits have led us to conclude that due to unprecedented rainfall in both the immediate and wider catchment, the land around Holme was already saturated and water levels in many rivers were already raised. There would also be an increase in surface water locally due to the heavy rainfalls. We also know that due to the high levels in the River Trent, water has overtopped causing water to spill into the quarry. This was evidenced on site by the way the grass and vegetation between the River Trent and the Quarry was laid. We believe

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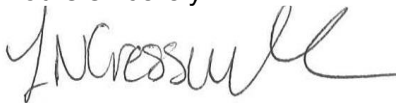
that once the additional water entered the quarry, there was no spare capacity which caused water to overtop into Slough Dyke, this has been evidence by viewing the area around Slough Dyke and the quarry.

Due to the high-water levels in the area once the water reached Slough Dyke it couldn't discharge through the outfall at its normal rate, resulting in the water level being equal on the up and down steam side of the outfall. This in turn resulted in the outlet flaps staying in the fully open position for a longer period. During the event we attended site on several occasions including the 28 and 30 October 2023. We have inspected the outfall since the event and still have no concerns over the operation of the outlet flaps.

The Environment Agency gets funding through the Government called Flood defence grant in aid. This contributes towards the development and building of new flood alleviation schemes (FAS) through our capital delivery programme. Government rules state that economic benefits need to be greater than costs for schemes to be approved and proceed. If the benefits do not outweigh the costs, then the scheme is not economically viable and cannot proceed. This is to ensure value for money for the taxpayer.

In addition, many schemes also require partnership funding, which requires additional funding to be sought for any viable scheme to proceed. The amount of Flood defence grant in aid a scheme is entitled to is based on a calculation of the scale and severity of flood risk in the area. Unfortunately, a FAS is not deemed viable in your area due to the very low benefit cost ratio - this is due to the limited impacts, low property numbers and lack of internal flooding.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Cresswell', written in a cursive style.

Louise Cresswell

**Area Director**  
East Midlands