

Mr Steve Mogford  
Chief Executive  
United Utilities Plc  
Sent via email

**Cllr Louise Gittins**

Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Council  
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**Date:** 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021

Dear Mr Mogford,

## **Storm Christoph**

I am sure you will have seen the extensive flooding that we experienced across the borough of Cheshire West and Chester Council last week, including areas of Northwich, Chester, Ellesmere Port, Acton Bridge, Winsford, Farndon and Tattenhall. I want to share with you the letter I have since written to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, which makes reference to matters that are the responsibility of United Utilities.

The floods that arose from Storm Christoph have caused significant damage to residential and business properties, many of which have been impacted by previous flooding events. This is particularly true for Northwich town centre. The Environment Agency has worked closely with the Council, leading to the installation of flood defences in 2016 that provide a good level of protection from flooding associated with the River Dane and River Weaver.

Despite those measures, Northwich town centre suffered a severe flooding incident in October 2019. Our officers have carried out a Section 19 investigation alongside the relevant authorities, including United Utilities. Our Interim Report has been published, and the full report will be published in early March.

I am grateful for the ongoing dialogue between our teams, and the work to establish the causes and solutions to the severe flooding we have experienced twice in just 15 months. A number of recommendations from the interim report have already been acted upon, without which we may have been in an even more dangerous situation last week. However, it is clear from the latest event associated with Storm Christoph that Northwich town centre remains susceptible to severe and unacceptable flooding from surface water, which in some places was as high as 4ft deep.



Urgent action is now required for the areas affected by Storm Christoph, and in particular Northwich town centre. I hope you are now able to commit the expertise and resources of your teams to work with us on the next stage of this review; identifying where significant investment may be necessary, and delivering that investment as quickly as possible. I also encourage United Utilities to immediately implement contingency measures, to provide assurance that surface water flooding will be mitigated as far as practically possible. I understand this is likely to require additional pumping apparatus at the Barons Quay and/or Dock Road sites.

I am sure you agree that, as climate change makes flooding events ever more frequent, we need to be prepared to work in partnership to upgrade our infrastructure in response. My council looks forward to working with you to bring forward solutions that the people of Northwich, and our wider borough, can have confidence in.

Yours sincerely

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

Councillor Louise Gittins  
Leader - Cheshire West and Chester Council

Enc: copy of letter to SOS for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs