



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government  
Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Reference No. HW70565

2 February 2026

Dear Steve

**Lack of infrastructure for new housing**

Following the recent water outages across my constituency I am calling on the Government to significantly reduce the housing numbers for Maidstone and Swale – the two planning authorities that cover my constituency.

**These outages showed there is not enough water for the population of Faversham and Mid Kent** and that is before the extra 20,000 plus houses planned for my constituency have been built.

The water supply is so inadequate that we still have a hose pipe ban, over six months since it was initially imposed.

The new developments in the pipeline will increase the number of residents in my constituency by approximately twice the population of its largest town, Faversham, and by far more than any other constituency in the county. The current water supply cannot be sufficient for this expanded population, and the new Kent reservoir won't be operational until the mid 2030s.

These water outages were not just a minor inconvenience. Many elderly or vulnerable people were left without water. Businesses were unable to trade, schools had to close and the emergency water supply for livestock was grossly negligent.

On top of the planned 20,000 plus extra houses planned for Faversham and Mid Kent the Government's new National Planning Policy Framework establishes an '*in principle*' support – a "*default yes*" – for *suitable proposals that develop land around rail stations within existing settlements*. This policy will compound the problem as I have several rural stations surrounded by green fields and farmland.

I want to make clear that I am not against sensible-scale developments in or adjacent to cities and towns, but we can only do this if we have the infrastructure needed. The cumulative impact of new developments being built or planned should be taken into consideration.

The recent water outages are a wakeup call to look again at housing numbers for this area.

**Can you tell me how Government intends to take these recent water outages into consideration in Government planning policy and decisions?**

I should flag to you that soon you will be presented with a decision to take on Highsted Park, two planning applications which total 8,500 new properties. Without a substantial plan to increase the water supply for my constituency, I foresee that this new development will lead to serious water shortages for this area.

Is Mid Kent to have a permanent hose pipe ban, for instance? And will my constituents have to maintain a continuous back up supply of water in anticipation of the frequent water shortages which will surely be the result of even more building?

**I would also like to reiterate my invitation to you to visit my constituency. I would like you to meet residents who suffered during the recent water outages and hear from local representatives about their serious concerns about water contamination and shortages.**

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Helen Whately', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Helen Whately MP  
Member of Parliament for Faversham and Mid Kent