



Outlook

Request for information under Environmental Information Regulations – Marleigh incident

From Hilary Bannerman

Date Thu 2026-01-08 4:38 PM

To Liz Watts <liz.watts@scambs.gov.uk>

 1 attachment (1,018 KB)

2026-01-05 Letter to Emerg Plg Mgr.pdf;

Dear Ms Watts,

I am writing in connection with the January 2024 Marleigh water incident.

By way of background, I attempted to submit the attached letter directly to the Emergency Planning Manager via the City Council's online webform. That submission was not accepted on the basis that I am not a resident. As the request concerns decision-making, learning, and records arising from an environmental incident affecting public health, I understand that rights of access to information are not limited by residency.

I am therefore turning to you to request a response, or to ask that you obtain one from the City's Emergency Planning Manager, under the Environmental Information Regulations.

Specifically, I am seeking clarification of the statement that *"the key learning from this incident is that a major incident was not declared"*, including what was meant by this, how that learning was identified, and whether it was recorded or applied within emergency planning arrangements, as set out in the attached letter.

The wider correspondence and supporting documentation are available for reference on my website: www.beingvigilant.com

I would appreciate a written response for clarity and record-keeping.

I would also be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this email and the attached document.

Kind regards,

Hilary Bannerman

Sent online as webform

05 January 2026

Dear Emergency Planning Manager,

In your email of **25 February 2025** (attached), you stated:

“The key learning from this incident is that a major incident was not declared.”

I would appreciate clarification of what is meant by this statement, as it appears capable of being understood in more than one way.

By way of context, at the time of the January 2024 incident I was working for **the Land Trust** as the **Estate Officer and Community Centre Manager at Marleigh**, and was directly involved in on-site coordination, communications, and support to residents throughout the period of the Do Not Use notice.

In particular, could you please clarify whether the “key learning” refers to:

1. a retrospective reflection on whether the incident **ought to have been escalated differently**, or
2. confirmation that, based on the information available at the time, **the decision not to declare a major incident was considered appropriate**, including in what was an unusual and developing situation.

I would also be grateful for clarification on **how this learning was identified, recorded, and (if applicable) applied** within emergency planning arrangements.

In addition, I note that contemporaneous emails from **Hill** and **the Land Trust** describe the incident and responsibilities differently, including inconsistencies in the **identification of the responsible water company** (e.g. references to South Staffordshire Water / Cambridge Water versus Independent Water Networks). Given the relevance of accurate attribution to escalation decisions, clarification as to whether this affected the assessment would be helpful.

A written response for clarity and record-keeping would be appreciated.

Kind regards,

Hilary Bannerman

hilarybannerman123@gmail.com

Attached emails – sender and date

1. **Service Manager – Commercial & Licensing (Shared Waste and Environment), South Cambridgeshire District Council**
From: SCDC Service Manager
Date: 25 February 2025
Time: 2:59 PM
2. **Health, Safety & Emergency Planning Manager, Cambridge City Council**
From: Emergency Planning Manager (Cambridge City Council)
Date: 25 February 2025
Time: 3:29 PM
3. **The Land Trust**
From: Land Trust representative
Date: 22 January 2024
Time: 12:45 PM
4. **Hill (developer)**
From: Hill representative
Date: 22 January 2024
Time: 2:31 PM

From: Service Manager - Commercial and Licensing - Shared Waste and Environment

Sent: 25 February 2025 2:59 PM

To: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive); [redacted]; [redacted]

Subject: SCDC alleged failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024 (Case Ref: PH04021)

Hi [name]

Please see below a suggested response:

1. We can confirm that South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) was made aware of the incident at the Marleigh Estate (postcode CB5) in Jan 2024.
2. Whilst SCDC is not the regulating authority for mains water supplies, it took an active role in confirming that appropriate measures were being undertaken by the responsible bodies including the main water supply company IWN (Independent Water Networks).
3. SCDC also confirmed that the Drinking Water Inspectorate (DWI), whose primary role is to oversee the public water bodies, was also engaged.
4. Nevertheless in the interest of general public health/safety SCDC:
 1. Continually liaised with IWN to verify residents (especially the vulnerable) had been provided with an alternative wholesome water supply (through the supply of bottled water to all premises) while investigations were being undertaken.
 2. Continually liaised with IWN to verify investigations were being undertaken in line with DWI advice and for updates to be communicated to residents.
 3. Made direct contact (via the environmental health team) with two businesses/operations (Monkey Nursery and Marleigh Primary School Academy) to offer advice/assistance where needed.
 4. Confirmed all necessary agencies were made aware, including the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), County Council Public Health, the DWI and Cambridge Water. (NB IWN purchase their water from Cambridge Water).
 5. Continually updated lead/local councillors.
 6. Provided officer cover (environmental health) over weekends in the timeframe that residents were affected.
5. We can confirm the primary overseeing public body, the DWI, are in the process of providing a final assessment report which will reveal the overall outcomes of their investigations and we will share it once this has been formally released to us.

Kind regards

From: Health, Safety & Emergency Planning Manager, Cambridge City Council

Sent: 25 February 2025 3:29 PM

To: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive); [redacted]; [redacted]

Subject: SCDC alleged failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024 (Case Ref: PH04021)

Hi all,

1. I can confirm that South Cambridgeshire District Council's Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) was made aware of the incident at Marleigh in January 2024.
2. The key learning from this incident is that a major incident was not declared.
3. The situation was managed at a local level by the developer (Hill) and Cambridge Water (South Staffordshire Water), who held primary responsibility for addressing the disruption.
4. South Staffs Water confirmed that the situation was classified as 'Business as Usual (BAU)' and did not require escalation.
5. Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, local authorities, as Category 1 responders, have a key role when a major incident is declared.
6. This includes coordinating a multi-agency response, supporting affected communities, and leading recovery efforts.
7. However, in this case, Cambridge Water, as a Category 2 responder, confirmed that the situation was under control, and no additional support or mutual aid was required.
8. At the time, we contacted the duty officer to verify this.
9. Had the situation escalated to a major incident, the council was prepared to respond accordingly.
10. However, based on the available information, this was not deemed necessary.
11. It is also important to note that only seven properties were directly affected, some of which had not yet been handed over for habitable use.
12. The Do Not Use notice was issued as a precautionary measure, and drinking water was provided to all residents on the Independent Water Network (IWN), including those registered on the network providers Priority Services Register.

If any further clarification is required, please let me know.

Best regards

From: [Redacted]
Sent on: Monday, January 22, 2024 12:45:54 PM
To: [Redacted]
CC: Hilary Bannerman <hilarybannerman@thelandtrust.org.uk>; [Redacted]
[Redacted]
Subject: RE: CB5 - Cambridge, Water Quality incident

Good afternoon [Redacted]

With the continuing issues, please can you confirm you have full plans in place for communication with customers and businesses who are affected by this incident. I am sure well rehearsed plans are in place and that as appropriate the Local Authority Emergency Planning team is being asked for support for vulnerable people.

I note from your website that you have a database of customers who have additional needs and may need more direct supply of water bottles to be issued to them. I am again sure that arrangements are in place to make sure all households are in receipt of water not just those who come by to collect.

The Land Trust has provided access to the community centre as a base for IWN. As I am sure you are aware Hilary has an excellent relationship with many in the local community and her own channels of communication through which updates can be shared at your request. This incident however needs to be co-ordinated and managed by IWN not the Land Trust and its staff so I hope continued customer liaison presence on site is being allowed for.

Regards

[Redacted]



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The Land Trust is the operating name for the Land Restoration Trust

From: [Redacted]

Sent: Monday, January 22, 2024 2:31 PM

[Redacted]

Subject: Marleigh water issue

Importance: High

Some people who received this message don't often get email from

[Redacted]

[Learn why this is important](#)

Warning: This email was sent from outside the organisation.

Good afternoon both

You are probably aware that there is an ongoing water issue at Marleigh

Can I ask that you please don't make any comments on behalf of Hill Marshall in regards to this as we have our own statement

Marleigh's water supply and infrastructure is designed, installed, tested, connected, and managed by Independent Water Networks (IWN) a regulated water company.

Our team are here to offer their support to residents of Marleigh given the current advice from IWN relating to the reported water supply issue in the area.

We are doing everything we can to put pressure on IWN to get the network operational again. IWN has confirmed they will let you know directly when it is safe to use your water again, and we will keep you updated with any progress where possible.

With the exception of IWN using the Community building the issue must remain for them to conclude and communicate. There is much speculation regarding the issue and only IWN will be in a position to factually report

Many thanks in your cooperation

Redacted

 hill-housebuilder-of-the-year.png

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