

Evidence Pack: Transcriptions of Emails

			Page-
Table of Contents			1
Email sent	From	To	
05 Feb 2025	Hilary Bannerman	Pippa Heylings MP; cc BBC	2-3
21 Feb 2025	Pippa Heylings MP caseworker	Liz Watts	4
25 Feb 2025	SCDC officer	Liz Watts	5
25 Feb 2025	Liz Watts	SCDC officer	5
25 Feb 2025	SCDC officer	SCDC officer	5
25 Feb 2025	Service Manager - Environment	Liz Watts; others	6
25 Feb 2025	Emergency Planning Manager	Liz Watts; others	7
26 Feb 2025	Liz Watts	Pippa Heylings MP	8
26 Feb 2025	Pippa Heylings MP	Hilary Bannerman	8
26 Feb 2025	Pippa Heylings MP caseworker	Liz Watts	9
27 Feb 2025	Hilary Bannerman	Pippa Heylings MP; cc BBC	9-10
10 Mar 2025	Pippa Heylings MP caseworker	SCDC officer	11
10 Mar 2025	Pippa Heylings MP caseworker	Hilary Bannerman	11
17 Mar 2025	SCDC officer	Liz Watts	11
17 Mar 2025	Liz Watts	Pippa Heylings MP	12
07 Apr 2025	Pippa Heylings MP	Hilary Bannerman	12
07 Apr 2025	Hilary Bannerman	Liz Watts; cc Pippa Heylings & BBC	13
07 Apr 2025	Liz Watts	Hilary Bannerman	13
07 Apr 2025	Hilary Bannerman	Liz Watts; cc Pippa Heylings MP	14
08 Apr 2025	Liz Watts	Hilary Bannerman	15
09 Apr 2025	Pippa Heylings MP caseworker	Hilary Bannerman & Liz Watts	15
15 Sep 2025	Hilary Bannerman	Liz Watts; cc Pippa Heylings MP	15
15 Sep 2025	Liz Watts	Hilary Bannerman	16
20 Sep 2025	Hilary Bannerman	Josh Dean MP	16
23 Oct 2025	Josh Dean MP caseworker	Hilary Bannerman	17

Transcription Approach

Emails are reproduced with full headers and complete message bodies.

[Square brackets] used for clarity or to reflect redactions.

Minor typographical and obvious name-spelling errors have been corrected.

Black boxes highlight important sections of transcribed emails.

From: Hilary Bannerman

Sent: 05 February 2025 5:09 PM

To: Pippa Heylings MP

Cc: Phil Shepka, Investigations Reporter (BBC Look East)

Subject: Please write to SCDC re failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Good afternoon Pippa

Given your prerogative under Section 9 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and for the community at Marleigh who have been denied emergency assistance, I ask that you:

- **Write to the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to enquire why they did not respond to the emergency at Marleigh in January 2024.**

320 households and 7 non-domestic properties (including a primary school and private nursery) were issued with a DO NOT USE water notice for five days 18–22 January 2024.

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 this constituted an emergency because it involved a) disruption of water supply to an area; and b) caused and had the potential to cause serious damage to human welfare.

No one came to help me when I called them, so I remained on site alone directing the water company. As a direct consequence I was sacked for gross misconduct. I am taking my employer to Tribunal under whistleblowing legislation. Many vulnerable residents remain deeply impacted by what occurred despite my mitigation efforts. No one is looking into what happened and what could have been done better. This is what worries me the most.

The emergency response should have been led by the local authority as the Category 1 responder. The actual emergency response involved only two Category 2 responders: the water company and myself as the estate manager (in an unofficial capacity). SCDC made a stated decision to not respond because it is 'private land'. This is incorrect. Marleigh is part of Fen Ditton parish, and the Parish Council has the responsibility for preparing an emergency plan that includes Marleigh. If SCDC believed the developer to be responsible they did not check if the developer (Hill) was responding: they weren't.

L&Q the housing association were uncontactable throughout. They had a responsibility for 100 households, all publicly housed and vulnerable by default, who should have been triaged for evacuation.

The incident highlighted **a vacuum of responsibility** that remains. It presumably exists on all other SCDC new housing developments.

It is my duty as the former estate manager to advise that you have a duty of care to this community to ask the local authority to formally evidence their non-response.

Please keep me updated on your actions in response, for my peace of mind.

I cc Phil Shepka from the BBC who has been following this story.

Kind regards

Reference Material:

Under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004:

Section 9:

A Minister of the Crown may require a person or body listed in Part 1 or 3 of Schedule 1—

- (a) to provide information about action taken by [SCDC] for the purpose of complying with a duty under this Part, or
- (b) to explain why [SCDC] has not taken action for the purpose of complying with a duty under this Part.

Section 1:

It was an “emergency ” because it was:

(1) an event or situation which threatened serious damage to human welfare in a place in the United Kingdom

(2) it involved, caused or might have caused:

- (a) loss of human life [vulnerable people were told not to drink the water and no one checked they all knew of the Order or that they were able to access alternatives]
- (b) human illness or injury [chlorine at five times the safe limit was pumped through the pipes yet many people had no choice but to use the water]
- (c) homelessness [around 100 households should have been triaged for evacuation by L&Q housing association, but L&Q were not contactable throughout]...
- (e) disruption of a supply of...water...
- (h) disruption of services relating to health [water for personal hygiene]

From: Pippa Heylings MP (via caseworker)

Sent: 21 February 2025 10:56 AM

To: [SCDC officer]

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

Dear [name of SCDC officer],

Pippa has asked me to follow up with you on a letter she has received from a constituent [sic] Hilary Bannerman with a request that Pippa asks South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) why they did not respond to an emergency at Marleigh in January 2024. Further details are below and I would be very grateful if you could obtain a response to this that Pippa can share with the constituent.

The letter informs her that 320 households and 7 non-domestic properties (including a primary school and private nursery) were issued with a Do Not Use water notice for five days 18–22 January 2024.

The constituent [sic] asserts that under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004 this constituted an emergency because it involved (a) disruption of water supply to an area and (b) caused and had the potential to cause serious damage to human welfare. She says that many vulnerable residents remain deeply impacted by what occurred despite her mitigation efforts. She is concerned that nobody is looking into what happened and what could have been done better.

The constituent [sic] asserts that the emergency response should have been led by the local authority as the Category 1 responder. The actual emergency response involved only two Category 2 responders: the water company and the constituent as the estate manager (in an unofficial capacity). She tells Pippa that SCDC made a stated decision to not respond because it is private land but that this was incorrect.

Thank you very much for looking into this for Pippa.

Best wishes,

From: [SCDC officer]

Sent: 25 February 2025 1:23 PM

To: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive)

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

Hi, Not sure where to go with this one. Do we have a 1st responder/Category 1 responder?

From: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive)

Sent: 25 February 2025 1:39 PM

To: [SCDC officer]

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

Hi all,

We did respond – [name] will be able to tell you how. It wasn't declared an emergency, and by copy I'm asking [name] to draft a paragraph for the response that explains how/when emergencies are declared and why this one didn't qualify (which I think is the case).

Best

From: [SCDC officer]

Sent: 25 February 2025 1:42 PM

To: [SCDC officer]

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

Hi [name]

Re the MP enquiry below and Liz's response are you able draft a response on what action we took and we responded to this.

Thank you,

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: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive)

Sent: 26 February 2025 10:26 AM

To: Pippa Heylings MP

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

Hi all,

Please see email below [above] from our Emergency Planning Manager, which explains how/when emergencies are declared.

I have also included a response from our service Manager for Shared Waste and Environment which details the actions taken.

I hope this addresses the concerns.

From: Pippa Heylings MP

Sent: 26 February 2025 5:44 PM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Subject: Re: Please write to SCDC re failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024 (Case Ref: PH04021)

Dear Hilary

Thank you for writing to me with a request to write to South Cambridgeshire District Council to put your enquiry to them as to why they did not respond to the emergency at Marleigh in January 2024.

I have been provided with responses from the Emergency Planning Manager and from the Service Manager for Shared Waste and Environment which outline their response and details of action taken and I am copying these responses in full for you below.

Yours sincerely,

Pippa

Response from Emergency Planning Manager

[Inserted here is the email sent on 25 February 2025 at 3:29 PM, which has already been reproduced above. However, the version of the email provided by Pippa omits the fourth and final paragraph, which is factually inaccurate and appears to offer reassurances that are not warranted:

'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. 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.'

Response from Manager for Shared Waste and Environment

[Inserted here verbatim from the email sent on 25 February 2025 at 2:59 PM, which has already been reproduced above.]

From: Pippa Heylings MP caseworker

Sent: 26 February 2025 5:44 PM

To: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive)

Subject: Re: Please write to SCDC re failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024
(Case Ref: PH04021)

Dear [name]

Many thanks indeed for this. I have conveyed these responses to the constituent.

From: Hilary Bannerman

Sent: 27 February 2025 6:29 PM

To: Pippa Heylings MP Cc: Phil Shepka, Investigations Reporter (BBC Look East)

Subject: Re: Please write to SCDC re failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024
(Case Ref: PH04021)

Hi Pippa

Their response is revealing. It shows SCDC failed in their duty to respond. As a consequence, people's lives were at risk and I stood in for SCDC.

What to do next? Might you be willing to ask the Chief Exec for an investigation into why a major incident was not declared? Particularly given her Emergency Planning Manager advises that *"the key learning from this incident is that a major incident was not declared"*. The goal must be to avoid a of this catastrophe and to reassure residents and me that lessons have been learnt and applied district-wide.

Many residents on site remain damaged and not confident in their water supply and continue to use bottled water. They have never had a formal response to what happened because Hill asked IWNL to refrain from doing so because of where the blame lay. I have been told that Hill's site team was supervising the connection of two major pipes on site on 17/18 Jan and in doing so the supply was contaminated. The work was to link the mains from the north and south of Marleigh, the site previously only being supplied from the south.

The following are my detailed observations on the SCDC responses:

1. Cambridge Water (and their owner South Staffs Water) only deals with wastewater for Marleigh residents not mains water.

[sic – The above statement is incorrect as wastewater services at Marleigh are provided by Anglian Water. Mains water to Marleigh is supplied by Independent Water Networks (IWN). This arrangement is an anomaly in Cambridge, established for this new community, because Cambridge Water has supplied mains water to the rest of the city for 170 years. IWN operates entirely independently of Cambridge Water and specialises in new developments, which understandably contributed to the emergency planning manager's confusion about responsibilities during the incident. (This clarification is included to avoid any misunderstanding of the water and wastewater responsibilities at Marleigh.)]

When SCDC asked [Cambridge Water] about an incident, they replied all was Business as Usual - because it was as far as they were concerned. **This is perhaps the principal, critical error on the part of SCDC.**

2. It was a major incident so the following raises red flags: *"Had the situation escalated to a major incident, the council was prepared to respond accordingly. However, based on the available information, this was not deemed necessary."*

3. Ofwat undertook market research at Marleigh in March 2024 to capture the impact of the incident and IWN's response to it. The critical problem is that the market researchers were not told that there were 100 publicly housing units at Marleigh, who's residents are vulnerable by default. In Slide 40 [<https://bluemarbleresearch.co.uk/news/ofwat-ccw-january-2024-do-not-use-and-do-not-drink-notices-in-marleigh-cambridge/>] they ask what could have been done better at Marleigh and in doing so **fail to realise that they had failed to consider the actual context of this affected area:** "Companies should consider individuals who may 'slip through the net',...The incident happened in an area where most had the disposable income to cover the incident and unexpected costs that arise. ...These circumstances made it more manageable for residents, but companies managing these kinds of incidents need to keep in mind that had an area where people were less likely to have a disposable income and/or had more vulnerable been impacted the severity of the impact may have been vastly different." The impact was severe, just hidden.
4. Critically, market research of Marleigh and five other incidents commissioned by Ofwat in 2023-24 concluded that *"support offered during incidents was not responsive to customers' actual experiences and needs"* (Slide 7 of https://www.ofwat.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/Incidents_research_Blue_Marble_overview_of_findings.pdf)
5. Bottled water only arrived 12 hours after concerns were first raised and seven hours after I was first informed. In the meantime I used my local network to triage supplies donated from residents who had purchased bottles of water from supermarkets.
6. The residents of Marleigh were abandoned: and along with residents of all new housing developments they remain at risk from organisations and agencies who sidestepped their responsibilities. SCDC did not attempt to contact L&Q, the housing association. At the time I was told by a Council Officer that SCDC's inaction was because Marleigh is private land - this is not mentioned in their response below. No one from SCDC came on site during the incident. If they had they would have seen me desperate for help. Why not? I was telling my immediate contact at SCDC and she went back twice to her boss who refused me help. Why? Did people not believe me? If not, why not?
7. The Hill site project manager informed me of the incident on 18 Jan. I rang Hill senior management on 22 Jan asking for help and found them unaware of the incident. They seemed to panic, sent me one member of Hill staff over 24 hours later, and argued it was not their problem to solve, which it was not, but it was their job to lead the mitigation of the consequences. On 22 Jan they ordered me and my chief exec not to speak to anyone and provided us with the following as their formal response: "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."
8. Single handedly I managed the response to this major incident and it broke me - I remain traumatised particularly as it is unresolved. I lost my job as my employer did not believe me when I whistle blew and the consequences on my physical and mental health have been catastrophic. I will never work a responsible job again and am having to seek compensation at employment tribunal.

All the best, kind regards

From: Pippa Heylings MP via caseworker

Sent: 10 March 2025 3:05 PM

To: SCDC officer

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

Dear [name]

I am writing in follow up to our exchange below, attaching a letter from Pippa to Liz Watts at the request of the constituent.

Please could I ask you to convey this letter to Liz/her team, along with the background of the correspondence to date, below? Please could you also inform Liz that the emails that Pippa has received from the constituent [sic] have copied in Phil Shepka from the BBC and so we are assuming that Pippa's replies are being forwarded to them also.

Thanks very much indeed

From: Pippa Heylings MP via caseworker

Sent: 10 March 2025 3:06 PM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Subject: Re: Please write to SCDC re failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024 (Case Ref: PH04021)

Dear Hilary

Thank you for your response to Pippa below. I am writing to let you know, with apologies for the delay in you receiving a reply, that Pippa has now written to the Chief Executive of SCDC to convey your request for an investigation into why a major incident was not declared and she has asked for a response that she can share with you.

Best wishes

From: SCDC officer

Sent: 17 March 2025 12:59 PM

To: Liz Watts (SCDC Chief Executive)

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

Hi Liz,

I had passed this to [name], in your absence. Pippa is asking for a response.

I haven't heard back from [name] and she may pick it up with you as part of any handover you may have.

Pippa is asking for a response

From: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Sent: 17 March 2025 1:19 PM

To: Pippa Heylings MP

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

Dear Pippa

The declaring of a major incident has clear criteria. These are:

The criteria to be applied are whether:

- i) The incident is likely to seriously affect the Council's ability to perform its functions;
or
- ii) The Council would consider it necessary or desirable to act to prevent, reduce, control, or mitigate the incident's effects, or otherwise take action;

and

The Council would be unable to act, without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.

Since these criteria did not apply, we did not declare an emergency. However, I do not believe that this affected the actions of the Council in responding to the situation, as described in our previous correspondence.

Best

From: Pippa Heylings MP caseworker

Sent: 7 April 2025 3:59 PM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Subject: Failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Dear Hilary

Apologies for the delay in getting back in touch with you.

Pippa has now received a reply from the Chief Executive of the Cambridgeshire County Council which responds as follows:

[Inserted here verbatim from the email sent on 17 March 2025 at 1:19 PM, which has already been reproduced above.]

I think that Pippa has now taken this as far as she can at this stage with the responses she has received from SCDC, and would advise that you write to Liz Watts directly to seek any further comments or clarifications. Do, however, feel free to copy Pippa in to any further correspondence.

Best wishes

From: Hilary Bannerman

Sent: 7 April 2025 4:16 PM

To: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Cc: Pippa Heylings MP ; Phil Shepka, Investigations Reporter (BBC Look East)

Subject: Failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Good afternoon Ms Watts

I have been in email correspondence with Pippa Heylings MP and received an email today containing your reply as to why an emergency was not declared.

I wish to review the document from which you quote so ask that you provide me with a reference to it.

Kind regards

From: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Sent: 7 April 2025 6:23 PM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Cc: Pippa Heylings MP ; Phil Shepka, Investigations Reporter (BBC Look East)

Subject: Failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Good afternoon Ms Bannerman

Thank you for contacting me.

All local authorities (and other public sector organisations) follow the JESIP guidance. Everything can be found on their website here: Home - JESIP Website [<https://www.jesip.org.uk/>]

By the way, just for clarification, I am not the CEO of Cambridgeshire County Council (as the email below suggests). I am the CEO of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

If I can be of any further assistance, please let me know.

Best

From: Hilary Bannerman

Sent: 7 April 2025 11:12 PM

To: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Cc: Pippa Heylings MP ; Phil Shepka, Investigations Reporter (BBC Look East)

Subject: Failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Dear Liz

Thank you for promptly directing me to JESIP. I have reviewed it but remain unable to reconcile it with your response to Pippa Heylings MP.

Under JESIP, the Marleigh water crisis clearly constituted a major incident, for it was: *an event or situation with a range of serious consequences which requires special arrangements to be implemented by one or more emergency responder agency.* (see

<https://www.jesip.org.uk/webapp/major.html>)

In your reply to Pippa MP, you say SCDC did not declare an emergency because all three of the following criteria "did not apply":

- 1) The incident is likely to seriously affect the Council's ability to perform its functions; or
- 2) The Council would consider it necessary or desirable to act to prevent, reduce, control, or mitigate the incident's effects, or otherwise take action;
- 3) The Council would be unable to act, without changing the deployment of its resources or acquiring additional resources.

Yet, your Emergency Planning Manager confirmed in writing to Pippa Heylings MP that each of these three criteria did apply:

- It is the role of SCDC, as Category 1 responder 'to coordinate a multi-agency response, support affected communities, and lead recovery efforts.'
- 'South Cambridgeshire District Council's Emergency Planning Officer was made aware of the incident at Marleigh in January 2024. They took direction from Cambridge Water, as a Category 2 responder, who confirmed that the situation was under control, and no additional support or mutual aid was required, and contacted the duty officer to verify this. The key learning from this incident is that a major incident was not declared. 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. South Staffs Water confirmed that the situation was classified as 'Business as Usual (BAU)' and did not require escalation.'
- 'Had the situation escalated to a major incident, the council was prepared to respond accordingly. However, based on the available information, this was not deemed necessary.'

I can only reconcile your response with JESIP if your team did not pick up on the fact that IWNL (and not Cambridge Water) was the Category 2 responder hence the incident was not escalated because of erroneous reassurance from Cambridge Water.

Was the initial decision made in error? Was it revisited at any point during the week-long incident?

As you can imagine, Pippa Heylings MP and myself will require more information or further explanation before we can confidently close out this issue.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

From: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Sent: 8 April 2025 7:03 PM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Subject: Failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Dear Liz

For clarity, not all three criteria apply. It's i) or ii) and iii). From my review of the situation, and the response by the Shared Waste and Environment Manager to your first enquiry (found at the bottom of this email trail), it's clear that the Council was not unable to act without changing the deployment of our resources or acquiring additional responses. Had the Waste and Environment team required escalation having assessed the situation, they would have had no hesitation in calling for further support. However, it is clear from the extensive list of activities they undertook that they were closely involved and supporting, without the need to declare a major incident.

From: Pippa Heylings MP via caseworker

Sent: 9 April 2025 6:55 AM

To: Hilary Bannerman; Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Subject: Failure to respond to an emergency at Marleigh in Jan2024

Dear all

Apologies for the small error in Pippa's email of 7 April, which Liz points out. As you will see this was correct in earlier emails and was just a typo on my part when writing an email in some haste.

From: Hilary Bannerman

Sent: 13 September 2025 5:50 PM

To: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC); Cc: Pippa Heylings MP

Subject: Marleigh Water Emergency – Second Request for Action

Dear Liz and Pippa,

I wanted to write again to remind you both when this matter last passed across your desks. On 7 April 2025, Liz responded to me directly and Pippa, your office forwarded that reply. It is now five months on, and more than a year and a half since the Marleigh incident itself in January 2024.

As you know, I am pursuing aspects of this through the employment tribunal, and just last week I gave Hill formal notice of potential future action via the county court. My main concern, however, remains the lack of resolution and reassurance for residents. There is still a real opportunity for you both to step back in, to ensure lessons are learned, and to provide visible support to those affected.

I hope you will take this second chance to reconsider, to investigate more fully, and to demonstrate public commitment to safety, justice, and good governance. I would be happy to discuss this further should that be helpful.

With kind regards,

From: Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Sent: 15 September 2025 10:27 AM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Subject: Marleigh Water Emergency – Second Request for Action

Dear Hilary

Thank you for contacting me. Having gone back to look at our correspondence I don't have anything further that I can add.

Best

From: Hilary Bannerman Liz Watts (Chief Executive, SCDC)

Sent: 20 September 2025 11:24 PM

To: Office of Josh Dean MP

Subject: Marleigh Water Emergency – Request for Support and Escalation

Dear Josh,

I live at [address]. As you are my local MP, I'm writing to ask for your support regarding the Marleigh water incident (January 2024).

Please see the forwarded correspondence below.

- On 13 September 2025, I sent a second request for action to Liz Watts (CEO, SCDC) and Pippa Heylings MP.
- On 15 September 2025 at 10:27, Liz Watts replied to say she had reviewed the matter and had nothing further to add.
- Pippa Heylings has not yet replied.

Given the continuing absence of a clear investigation or lessons-learned process, I would be grateful if you could:

- 1) Seek an explanation from SCDC for the decision not to declare a major incident and for the lack of further action;
- 2) Encourage an independent review and publication of the incident log and decision-making record; and
- 3) Support transparency and reassurance for residents.

For context, I am pursuing aspects of this through the employment tribunal, and last week I gave Hill formal notice of potential county court action.

I would be very happy to discuss this further if helpful.

Kind regards,

From: Josh Dean MP caseworker

Sent: 23 October 2025 11:24 AM

To: Hilary Bannerman

Subject: Marleigh Water Emergency – Request for Support and Escalation (Case Ref: JD09465)

Dear Ms Bannerman,

Thank you for your email. I am sorry that you have not been satisfied with the response received by South Cambridgeshire District Council in response to the concerns you raised around their handling of the Marleigh estate water incident. I can see from the information provided that you have already had the involvement and assistance of Pippa Heylings MP, in whose constituency the Marleigh estate is located.

Based on the information provided, Ms Heylings' office have carried out inquiries to the same extent that Josh would be able to, and has indicated a willingness to remain included in future correspondence.

As such, Josh would not be able to assist above and beyond what Ms Heylings has already done, and as the estate in question falls within her constituency, it would not be appropriate for Josh to act on behalf of the residents as strict parliamentary protocol dictates that an MP is only able to act on behalf of their own constituents.

I am sorry that we are not able to be of more assistance in this matter.
