

Dear <INSERT MP NAME>,

As the Government considers its next steps on planning reform, it is vital that the urgent need to protect our chalk streams is addressed. Despite 85% of the world's chalk streams being located in England, current planning policy fails to grant these precious habitats appropriate protection.

Norfolk is home to approximately 10% of the world's chalk streams, which includes the Rivers Bure, Glaven, Stiffkey, Burn, Heacham and Gaywood. The longest, biggest and most significant of these is the River Wensum. These waters are home to bullhead and brook lamprey, water voles, white-clawed crayfish and kingfishers, making them our equivalent to the Great Barrier Reef or the Amazon Rainforest.

Last month, over 700 people responded to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) consultation to ask for change and speak up for chalk streams. Following this, I would be grateful for your support in raising this issue with ministers, in order to help ensure it is rightfully included in the final outcome.

The Government must do more to grant our chalk streams a bespoke protection, as previously called for in the CaBA Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy.

To protect chalk streams from direct harm associated with new development, planning policy must recognize the intrinsic value and wider natural capital benefits of chalk streams. This can be achieved through granting chalk streams, and their surrounding habitats, status as an irreplaceable habitat, alongside ancient woodland, to recognise their rarity and value. This should include the implementation of 50-100 metre 'no development' buffer zones surrounding chalk streams, as recommended by Natural England for vulnerable habitats.

Planning policy must also prevent wastewater pollution, by mandating Local Planning Authorities to take account of implications for water resources and sewerage systems of major housing developments in their Local Plans and when reviewing proposals.

These planning changes are an essential first step, but need to be supported by a suite of measures. These include mandating parallel investment in water infrastructure, including sustainable drainage systems in chalk catchments and introducing higher water efficiency standards, with a more ambitious minimum of 90 l/pp/d to combat over abstraction.

Given the poor ecological and chemical health of our precious chalk streams, I hope you may be able to kindly raise these concerns with ministers, in order to help ensure proper protections for chalk streams are introduced in the forthcoming planning policy reforms.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

<INSERT NAME>

<INSERT YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS>

<INSERT YOUR PHONE NUMBER>

<INSERT YOUR ADDRESS>