# WRITTEN STATEMENT

# BY

# THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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| **TITLE**  | **Flooding following Storm Ciara** |
| **DATE**  | **11 February 2020** |
| **BY** | **Lesley Griffiths, Minister for Energy, Environment and Rural Affairs** |

The impacts of Storm Ciara have been felt across Wales, and I greatly sympathise with those communities who have been affected. In particular I would like to thank our emergency responders, Local Authorities, the emergency services, and Natural Resources Wales, whose staff have worked tirelessly in poor weather conditions to provide help, support and to keep our communities safe across Wales.

We have seen communities affected right across Wales, with a significant number of homes and businesses flooded in and around Llanrwst, Llanfair Talhaiarn, Trefriw, Denbigh, Colwyn Bay and St Asaph as well as isolated incidents elsewhere, both inland and along the coast. I will be visiting some of the affected communities later this week to see and hear first-hand the problems people have faced and are now dealing with.

In many parts of Wales our network of flood defences has proven effective at protecting communities. Along with the high tides and winds around the coast, early indications show river levels were higher than during previous flood events in places like St Asaph and Ruthin, yet we avoided the widespread flooding witnessed in recent years. This is an indication of how our investment in flood risk management, totalling over £350m during the course of this Assembly, is helping to protect people’s homes.

It is vital to investigate the flooding that did occur and learn lessons to further protect our communities. It is now for Local Authorities to investigate and report their findings and recommendations, in collaboration with Natural Resources Wales and other stakeholders. I understand Conwy and Denbighsire are already preparing their investigations.

It is important flood alleviation schemes already planned for communities affected are delivered and any new requirements identified as quickly as possible. I will be happy to consider requests for funding from Risk Management Authorities to support emergency repairs, as well as improvements or proposals for new schemes to further reduce risk.

I am also considering options to further support Local Authorities and NRW in carrying out their flood activities and in delivering projects to reduce flood and coastal risk.

Responding to climate change remains at the forefront of my agenda, as risks from flooding and coastal erosion are the very real impacts that Wales will feel from rising sea levels and more extreme weather events. I will continue to work with Local Authorities and Natural Resources Wales to manage this risk effectively and for the long term, and to direct investment in flood risk management to the communities most in need.