

“The situation in Cornwall is another reminder of how ill-prepared we are to deal with the increased risk of flooding in future. We need to urgently make our communities more flood resilient, adopting a preventative approach rather than the traditional and unsustainable ‘defend at all odds’ approach.

In light of hefty cuts to Defra’s budget, this will require innovative thinking about alternatives that deliver long-term, low cost solutions. There is no time for complacency, climate change means flooding is set to become more frequent in the future and with one in six homes at risk, we must be prepared to cope with it.

“Extreme events like this also serve as a reminder of how vulnerable our critical infrastructure is. Infrastructure networks such as power, waste, water and transport services, are inter-dependent so when one system fails it has a domino effect, restricting access to basic public services and emergency services when they’re needed most.

“These networks are already pushed to their maximum capacity so when extreme events occur there is very little spare to cope. It is vital that even in these austere times we continue to invest in protecting and maintaining critical infrastructure to reduce the risk of system failure and ensure we are better protected against future crises.”