

Environment Agency
Rivers House
East Quay
Bridgwater
TA6 4YS

28th August 2025

Re: Withdrawal of maintenance from the Washford River

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have been delegated to write on behalf of Watchet Town Council in response to the recent correspondence sent to residents regarding the Environment Agency's proposed withdrawal of maintenance services on the Washford River.

Watchet Town Council wishes to register a formal objection to this decision. The Washford River is a designated Main River from Luxborough through to Watchet. As such, it falls unequivocally within the Environment Agency's responsibility for management and maintenance. Withdrawal of support would represent a fundamental shift away from these duties, with serious implications for flood prevention, public safety, and the resilience of our community.

Watchet is a coastal town already vulnerable to tidal and surface water flooding. Continued maintenance of the Washford River by the Environment Agency is therefore not a discretionary service but an essential safeguard. To withdraw this support risks undermining long-term flood protection and places an unreasonable burden on a small town council and its residents, who neither have the statutory powers nor the financial resources to assume such responsibility.

Accordingly, the Council urgently requests:

- A clear statement of which specific services the Environment Agency intends to withdraw.
- Confirmation of who will assume responsibility for these services, should the Agency step back.
- A detailed explanation of the justification for this withdrawal, given that management of Main Rivers is a core function of the Environment Agency.

Watchet Town Council therefore strongly urges the Environment Agency to reconsider this proposal, and to confirm its ongoing commitment to the full maintenance and management of the Washford River as a designated Main River.

Yours faithfully,

Annie Robinson – Deputy Town Clerk
On behalf of Watchet Town Council