

Rochford leader says home owners must protect homes from flooding

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Self-reliance – Rochford Council leader Terry Cutmore said it was down to residents to look after themselves

THE leader of [Rochford](#) District Council has made it clear that protecting homes from flooding is the responsibility of homeowners not his council.

Terry Cutmore stunned residents during a TV interview when he said it wasn't down to the council to provide protection.

He spoke out after residents complained they had rung the council and been advised to visit B&Q or builders' merchants to buy sandbags.

Mr Cutmore said: "While I understand people's frustration, in line with other councils we aren't able to supply sandbags and it is up to the householder to provide their own personal flood protection equipment.

"Even if we had the budget to issue sandbags, there would have been no way we could have got them to residents quickly enough with such a large amount of rain falling so quickly."

Residents took to Facebook to voice their disapproval. One said they didn't stand a chance against blocked drains and asked how people would be able to get to B&Q while water rushed into their homes.

Another said the floods showed how woefully unprepared the council were in dealing with such an emergency.

The flooding, which particularly hit [Rayleigh](#) and Rochford, adds further ammunition to the Rayleigh Acton Group, who recently submitted more than 5,000 signatures against plans to build 772 homes in that area.

Linda Kendall, group member, said: "It's absolutely shocking. I went to some of the affected roads on Monday, and some people still hadn't had any help from the council. People were asking me where to go for help. They were just distraught.

"People's possessions were out in the gardens and on the footpaths.

They didn't know where to turn to. I left in tears."

MrCutmore said: "Our officers have been out and about in the district to identify the areas that have been affected by flooding and we are looking at what practical assistance we can offer to residents who have found themselves in this situation."

comment

- "Perhaps in its core strategy, RDC could insist from the developers that they love so much that as part of the developer's infrastructure contribution, they should provide a half dozen free sand bags which each new property. That would be 1,800 extra sand bags for the Hall Rd Development and 1,500 for Hullbridge. My, what a difference that would make...

To some degree, I actually agree with Cutmore that it is up to the homeowner to protect his or her property. However, if RDC insist on concreting over 80 acres of prime rain-absorbing arable land right on the edge of Rochford, then RDC and particularly those in charge of its planning, must accept responsibility themselves for the inevitable consequences.

The awful weather last Saturday and the sad and well publicised damage that it caused, must serve as a wake-up call for the likes of Cutmore, Cllr Hudson and Mr Scrutton, to review their rash planning decisions in the core strategy. They should stop trying to steamroll over any dissenters and take a long, fresh look at what needs to be done BEFORE more concrete lorries arrive to cover over our Greenbelt. In other words, look at the infrastructure (yes, that includes drainage) and transport requirements over the next ten years and stop tripping over yourselves to built new towns on the edge of existing towns!"

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