



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

25 JUN 2018

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Parliamentary Under Secretary of State
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Your ref: ZA15334/A Bales
Our ref: MC2018/13318/CC

19 June 2018

Dear Marcus

Thank you for your letter of 8 June to the Secretary of State on behalf of your constituent about the group convened by Defra to discuss the issues around moored houseboats. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this policy area and apologise for the delay in doing so.

The working group was set up in response to concerns raised by several MPs and waterway users around a number of boats being used as rented accommodation on the River Thames, moored to publically accessible land without the landowner's permission. The Government recognises that the current and projected future uses of our waterways mean that there is a potential need to ensure that the rights of those who choose to live on our waterways and those who use them for recreation are suitably balanced.

The group has had one initial meeting and as such its potential role and purpose is not yet defined. That meeting, in December 2017, served as a platform for initial discussions to take place on a number of issues around moored houseboats. It was agreed at that meeting that user groups will be invited to attend any future meetings. There is every intention to ensure that the views of those who represent boat dealers are taken into account.

Defra officials are currently looking at the possible objectives of the group to ensure that, if needed, its purpose is clear and that a structured approach is taken going forward.

Yours sincerely,

Therese

DR THERESE COFFEY MP