

## Introduction

Wessex Water support the use of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) to manage flood risk, sewer flooding and improve water quality and provide biodiversity and amenity benefits.

As legislation to create SuDS Approving Bodies (SABs) has not been enacted, a review of sewerage legislation has been carried out by water and sewerage companies. The review concluded that while water and sewerage companies can only adopt "sewers" - a term which is contained but not explained within legislation - some sustainable drainage assets could be designed as a sewer and adopted as such, provided they fulfil a sewerage function.

Subsequently Water UK, working with a wide range of stakeholders, has developed a new guide to adoptable surface water sewers. This is now Part C of the publication - Sewerage Sector Guidance (SSG). For many years Sewers for Adoption (the forerunner of SSG) has set out the standards to which drainage assets need to be built if they are to be adopted by the local water and sewerage company.

Sewerage Sector Guidance has now been published and you can find it [here](#).

This Policy provides an overview of surface water discharge and adoption arrangements, further detail can be found in our emerging "Wessex Water SuDS Guidance in relation to the adoption of Sustainable Drainage assets" available [here](#).

## Existing arrangements for the adoption of sewers

S104 Water Industry Act 1991 makes provision for sewerage undertakers to adopt sewers through a vesting declaration. The vesting of a sewer is normally carried out on completion of works in accordance with the terms of an adoption agreement.

Design guidance is available in Appendix C of the Sewerage Sector Guidance published by Water UK. This guidance is updated periodically to reflect technical and legislative changes.

Powers to retrofit sustainable drainage systems to existing public sewer systems are now available under S114A of the Water Industry Act. These measures will allow the undertaker to promote schemes to improve existing public sewers.

## Appendix C of the Sewerage Sector Guidance

We will approve new connections and adopt sewers downstream of sustainable drainage systems subject to the following points:

- the sustainable drainage scheme has been approved by the local planning authority in consultation with the LLFA.
- the scheme is in accordance with Appendix C of the SSG and Wessex Water's SuDS Guidance
- satisfactory arrangements for the maintenance of the SuDS scheme are agreed
- the upstream surface water drainage scheme complies with all flood risk measures required by the Local Lead Flood Authority and any other relevant Flood Risk Management Authority
- accepting and draining highway run-off and risk of groundwater inundation remain areas of concern and approvals will remain discretionary under these circumstances
- no connections will be permitted to the foul sewer.

We will be adopting:

- downstream connecting sewers from SuDS system
- attenuation tanks
- flow control chambers
- bypass sewers and outfalls associated with balancing ponds
- swales
- infiltration systems
- detention basins
- ponds and wetlands.

Specific current exclusions are:

- source control features within private property such as rain gardens, water butts, soakaways, etc
- permeable paving
- filter strips
- green roofs.

**To give practical guidance on the basic criteria that need to be met for a sewer to be “adoptable” to developers and those designing surface water drainage, the following positive and negative criteria have been identified.**

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Adoptable</h3> <p>A component is <b>potentially</b> adoptable as a sewer (or lateral drain) if <b>all</b> the following apply.</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">Unadoptable</h3> <p>The following components are excluded.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is <b>predominantly</b> constructed for the drainage of buildings and yards appurtenant to buildings</li> <li>• It services more than one building and associated yards</li> <li>• It has a channel (a depression between banks or ridges with a definite boundary)</li> <li>• It conveys and returns flows to a sewer or to a surface water body or to groundwater</li> <li>• It has an effective point of discharge which must have lawful authority to discharge into a watercourse or other water body or onto or into land.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• watercourses as defined in law (these include rivers, streams and can include some ditches)</li> <li>• components built predominantly for the drainage of surface water from highways or for the drainage of land</li> <li>• components built to manage groundwater</li> <li>• components which are part of the structure of a building or yard (eg, green roof, permeable driveway or guttering and rainwater pipes attached to the building)</li> <li>• components which form part of a private curtilage (ie, individual soakaways)</li> <li>• components which are an integral part of the structure of a highway (eg, a permeable street or the channel formed by a depression in the centre of a street).</li> </ul>
<p>NB: The system may allow for some infiltration and still be a sewer.</p> <p>As with conventional piped systems, the right to discharge must be secured by the developer and transferred to the water company on adoption.</p> <p>The term <b>predominantly</b> is defined as 75%, ie, if 75% or more of the areas draining to the system are from buildings and yards appurtenant to buildings then item 1 is satisfied.</p>	<p>The term <b>predominantly</b> is defined as 75%, ie, if 75% or more of the areas draining to the system are from highways or land, watercourses and groundwater then this is <b>unadoptable</b>.</p>

For further information please see [here](#)

We will normally also seek assurances from the LLFA that any surface water scheme has been designed in compliance and conformity with one or more of the following:

- national standards for SuDS
- CIRIA C697 SuDS manual
- local ground conditions
- groundwater levels.

We reserve the right to carry out further investigation where there is a risk of sewer flooding from extreme groundwater levels or other issues that will affect service levels.

This may require desktop appraisal and/or network modelling to confirm the impact of a new development on critical sewers and overflows. To complete this assessment a contribution towards reasonable costs of this appraisal may be required from the developer.

We recommend you talk to us before submitting any applications. We will also require consultation before any variations or alterations are made to any terms or conditions of approval that affect the rate of flow or discharges to the public sewer.

Above-ground features will form part of the SuDS system and suitable measures should be incorporated to ensure that debris is prevented from entering the downstream public sewer.

This policy will be reviewed and updated to reflect any changes made in design guidance or adoption procedures.

### **Further information**

Planning liaison team

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