

Sustainable drainage systems key to reducing flood risk – Hannah Blythyn

The Welsh Government's [Water Strategy for Wales](#) sets out our aspiration for sewerage and drainage infrastructure for both waste water and surface water to be well managed and maintained in an integrated way.

To help achieve this, the Welsh Government wants all new developments to incorporate effective sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). The SuDS approach aims to deal with rainwater using techniques such as infiltration and retention that mimic runoff from a site in its natural state.

SuDS schemes slow down the flow of water and remove pollution, typically using combinations of installations such as permeable paving, soakaways, green roofs, swales and ponds.

The Welsh Government has recently [consulted](#) on how its aim of seeing the SuDS approach used to deliver multiple benefits for society in all new developments should be implemented.

Between 2010 and 2015, the Welsh Government supported Dŵr Cymru Welsh Water in developing a series of SuDS projects, known collectively as 'Rainscape'. One of the largest of these is at Stebonheath Primary School, Llanelli, which uses a range of SuDS methods to divert or reduce the flow of rainwater to the sewerage network. These include permeable paving, water butts, planters, increased numbers of trees, grass and plant, and a large swale.

Stebonheath Primary is the first school in Wales to have a surface water removal scheme retrofitted into its grounds. The scheme has been used as an educational opportunity to enable pupils to understand more about water resource management.

Speaking during a visit to Stebonheath Primary, Hannah Blythyn said:

“Surface water flooding is a serious problem and a major cause of flooding. The Rainscape project, which I have seen today is an innovative and sustainable approach to dealing with rainwater, which reduces the risk of flooding and water pollution, while also providing a wide range of community benefits.

“It was great to hear how the pupils get involved in the design and ongoing maintenance of the Rainscape features. I was particularly interested to hear how they have been educating their parents on the benefits of the project. This, in turn, has led to a better understanding in the community about the subject of drainage, which, I think it's fair to say, is not usually a conversation starter.”

“Sustainable drainage schemes help to reduce surface water flood

risk, protect water quality and improve the local environment. We want to make them a requirement across Wales for all new developments and I am grateful to everybody that responded to our recent consultations.”