

SuDS Adoption Guidance

v2 April 2024

Background

Since the introduction of the sewerage adoption code April 2020 there are obligations for water and sewerage undertakers to adopt SuDS meeting the definition of a sewer, providing they meet the requirements of the Sewerage sector guidance.

The purpose of this document is to outline the approach specifically to the adoption of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) under Section 104 of the Water industry Act 1991. The document confirms the types of adoptable SuDS and the standards for assessment, it clarifies the extent of adoption and permitted private SuDS connectivity

The policy also describes any known exceptions in approach or technical standards to the sewerage code sector guidance and outlines the internal approach to ownership & maintenance

SuDS Adoption criteria

To be adoptable under Section 104, Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) need to meet the following criteria:

- Needs to function as a sewer (see Design & Construction Guidance C3.4 for definition)
- It is constructed for the drainage of buildings and the land appurtenant to buildings
- Not be located in private gardens
- Not include land drainage or off-site connectivity

The following SuDS would **not** be adoptable;

- Property level SuDS such as green roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, water butts, single property soakaways
- SuDS components forming part of a highway drainage system such as permeable pavements, filter strips, proprietary treatment systems (such as oil separators) & tree pits
- Geocellular tanks (for attenuation only)
- Offline overflow exceedance SuDS features
- SuDS providing a water quality benefit only

Important: We will not adopt piped sewers that discharge to or through privately owned SuDS.

Private SuDS connectivity

Private property level SuDS which incorporate source control or water re-use are encouraged and can drain to the adopted system provided there are arrangements for their ongoing maintenance.

(Storage calculations cannot be included i.e. these areas must still be assumed to be 100% impermeable contributing area)

Highway drainage SuDS i.e. tree pits or permeable highways may drain to the adopted network but early discussion is recommended to secure agreement.

Demarcation & extent of adoption

(For diagrams ref. appendix 1 – SuDS adoption extent examples)

All Section 104 adoption applications must include any SuDS that are acting as sewers that form part of a continuous in-line network up to the effective discharge point. (This can include SuDS intended to provide storage in excess of the 1 in 30 year event)

Any offline storage feature providing a flood exceedance management function intended to operate above the 1 in 30 year event from SuDS will not form part of the adopted network.

Company specific exceptions to the Sewerage Code Sector Guidance

1. United Utilities adopt the function of SuDS only, we do not adopt the land that the SuDS resides.

(Ref. Easement local practice & Appendix 3 SuDS Deed of Grant)

2. Geocellular products will only be adopted if part of an infiltration solution.

(Ref. DCG Geocellular attenuation tank briefing note)

Design Standards

Adoptable SuDS must be designed to the standards in the Sector Guidance & CIRIA SuDS Manual, if the standards are deemed unsuitable this could render the full onsite sewerage network un-adoptable. UU guidance in the SuDS technical Library on our website gives further clarity and information on company specific requirements or approach.

Ownership & Maintenance

Adoption is limited to maintaining the SuDS function as a sewer. All management of the amenity, including grass cutting and litter picking remains the responsibility of the landowner or developer as well as all planning conditions associated with open space and landscaping features which may be through a management company which is common on new development sites.

We secure the relevant rights to access sewers (including SuDS) in private land through a deed of grant easement with the land owner.

If United Utilities need to step in to undertake work that was intended to be carried out by landowner or Management company we will first give reasonable notice of works and charge back any associated costs via a third party reclaim

Health, Safety & CDM relating to SuDS designs

United Utilities do not form any part of obligations under CDM as such we undertake a due diligence assessment only, the checks relate to the future operability for UU maintenance only and not the general public (these responsibilities rest with the principal designer which is the design consultant or developer)

SuDS Inspection

Will be carried out by Developer Services Inspectors and confined to the following defined stages; Pre start meeting, Pre maintenance inspection (pre-landscaping), Final Inspection. Inspections will also be undertaken to check any completed remedial works are satisfactory.

SuDS Monitoring

If United Utilities require provision for remote monitoring we will highlight this at the design assessment stage, any monitoring equipment would be provided at United Utilities expense.

Other useful information and related documents:

- Water Industry Act 1991 (as amended) (Section 104)
- Sewerage adoption code sector guidance
- Easement local practice & Appendix 3 SuDS Deed of Grant
- Appendix 1 – SuDS adoption extent examples
- DCG Geocellular attenuation tank briefing note

Appendix 1 – SuDS Adoption extent examples

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Inline SuDS (Discharging to watercourse or sewer)

We must adopt the full inline system (blue) including any SuDS (purple). We will adopt up to and including the headwall structure to a watercourse or up to and including the manhole on an existing sewer. On culverted (piped) watercourses, the manhole will remain part of the riparian owned watercourse. Any overflow SuDS (grey) will not be adopted.

Appendix 1 – SuDS Adoption extent examples

Communal Infiltration Solution (Discharging to ground)

We must adopt the full inline sewerage system (blue) including the infiltration solution (purple)

Note: In all the above scenarios, the system being offered for adoption must be designed with sufficient flood protection for the worst case 30 year event. If the Local Planning Authority requires more volume, we can assess upsized networks on a case-by-case basis.

