



Thames Water Utilities Ltd

## Surface Water Source Control

Good environmental management is central to the activities of Thames Water Utilities Ltd. The company actively seeks to limit the environmental impact of its business and to enhance environmental quality in areas where it has influence.

The collection and disposal of wastewater is one of our primary duties and a vital service that we provide, treating effluent to keep rivers healthy. However, our surface water and combined sewerage systems also accept surface water runoff which at times of heavy rainfall can sometimes lead to local flooding and pollution problems. *Surface water source control* (also known as Sustainable Drainage Systems, or SUDS) is the control of runoff at or near its source which can reduce the risk of flooding and pollution, and can help restore the natural flow regimes in rivers.

This policy sets out the objectives by which Thames Water, having regard to our obligations as a water and sewerage undertaker, is committed to surface water source control:

- In the management of surface water, we will seek to ensure that new connections to the public sewerage system do not pose an unacceptable threat of surcharge, flooding or pollution.
- We recognise the environmental and economic benefits of surface water source control, and encourage its appropriate application where it is to the overall benefit of our customers and the environment.
- In line with the National SUDS Working Group's *Interim Code of Practice for Sustainable Drainage System*, we will encourage, wherever practicable, sustainable infrastructure development which does not involve discharge to the public sewerage system, for example, in the form of soakaways or infiltration areas on free draining soils.
- We will make a presumption in favour of developers' proposals in which surface water source control is employed, provided that all site-specific factors have been considered and agreed between the planning authority, the Environment Agency and the Company.
- We also recognise that surface water source control may pose a risk to the quality of groundwater resources. To avoid this, together with the Environment Agency, we will assess and ensure the most appropriate methods are employed. We recognise that in certain circumstances surface water source control will not be appropriate and that discharge into the combined/surface system will be required.
- We will ensure, for example, via Building Regulations, that in new developments the foul and surface waters are dealt with separately at least to the site boundary. Where no surface water sewer exists, we will seek to maximise the use of watercourses, with attenuation, or soakaways to minimise the amount of surface water entering combined sewerage systems.



- We will encourage the separation of foul and surface water drainage from existing sites where practicable as this can reduce the amount of flooding from combined sewers. We also recognise that it is preferable to use locally available watercourses, with attenuation, or soakaways to drain the surface water runoff from sites.
- We will encourage all Thames-side developments in London to discharge their surface water directly to the River Thames to minimise the amount of flooding that occurs during inclement weather.

**Thames Water Utilities Ltd**  
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