

Sustainable Urban Water Management Workshop

February 15th 2019, 9.30am-4pm

Radisson Blu Hotel Durham, Frankland Lane, Durham, DH1 5TA



Workshop Overview

The Environment Agency (EA) and Northumbrian Water Group (NWG) jointly funded this Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) workshop focusing on sustainable urban water management, which was organised by North East CaBA.

North East CaBA formed a working group of partners from NWG, the EA, The Water Hub and Tees Rivers Trust, and engaged partners more widely in planning the session, including meeting with developers. Partners agreed to focus on sustainable drainage schemes (SuDS), and develop a workshop which would act as a catalyst for implementation of more sustainable drainage approaches across the North East, linked to the 2019 Year of Green Action (YOGA) as proposed in the government's 25 year plan to improve the environment.

One of the recommendations from partners was to target decision makers in the SuDS chain, including landowners, developers, designers and Local Authorities including Planners, Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and Highways, and get all these key players involved in a conversation to discuss challenges and opportunities. This approach allowed the North East region to hold a very stimulating, useful and successful day engaging a wide range of partners. This is demonstrated in the feedback received from the workshop.

The session brought together over 80 partners from 36 organisations, including 11 of our North East Local Authorities, developers, designers, eNGOs and businesses, with national CaBA leads, to think about the barriers and challenges of implementing more SuDS within our region, and activities that could be undertaken within YOGA to support sustainable water management.

The session had 3 aims:

1. To stimulate discussion and thinking around catchment sustainable drainage approaches and partnership working;
2. To showcase opportunities and successes in North East;

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3. To initiate the Year of Green Action (YOGA) challenge for sustainable drainage.

This event has highlighted the desire and need for SuDS activity to be led and championed regionally. **The North East CaBA group which organised this workshop will now become a North East CaBA SuDS group. The involvement of other partners will strengthen this partnership and support and drive recommendations from this session.**

Agenda

The agenda is shown below. There were two speaker sessions, an interactive table discussion session, and a group discussion session. A Marketplace session also ran throughout the day. Summary notes are provided for the discussion sessions, the speaker sessions are not summarised but the presentations are available to [view here](#).

Time	Agenda Item	Presenter	Organisation
09.30	ARRIVAL AND REGISTRATION – MARKETPLACE OPEN		
10:00	Welcome and aims of the day	Clare Deasy	CaBA Urban Water Group/ NWG
10:05	Setting the scene: CaBA opportunities	Ben Lamb	Tees Rivers Trust/ Tees Catchment Partnership
10:25	Partnership planning – realising the potential	Richard Robinson	Environment Agency/ NWG
10:45	Follingsby Max	Gayle Wilson/ Peter Shield	Gateshead Council
11:05	General discussion (open to the floor)		
11:25	Marketplace pitches		
11:35	REFRESHMENT BREAK – NETWORKING – MARKETPLACE OPEN		
12:00	Discussion session – 4 x 2 tables each of 12 minutes: 1. Finance and value; 2. Adoption and management; 3. Access, recreation and safety; 4. Natural environment and wildlife		
13:00	LUNCH – MARKETPLACE OPEN		
14:00	SuDS opportunities and challenges: a developer's perspective	David Abercrombie	Taylor Wimpey
14:10	A water company perspective on SuDS	Les Hall	NWG
14:20	A manufacturers view of the WM Hierarchy	Chris Griffiths	Marshalls
14:30	Working with local communities to empower citizen action for nature	Nick Paling	Westcountry Rivers Trust
14:40	REFRESHMENT BREAK – NETWORKING – MARKETPLACE OPEN		
15:00	Implementing more sustainable water management in the North East – the 2019 Year of Green Action challenge and discussion	George Gerring/ Rob Carr	The Water Hub/ Environment Agency
15:50	Summing up	Clare Deasy	CaBA Urban Water Group/ NWG

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16:00	CLOSE
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Marketplace

To support the event and add interest to the day, we included a 'Marketplace' showcasing projects, approaches and organisations all working to support sustainable water management. Marketplace stall holders were invited to pitch their stall to the room ahead of the first refreshment break.

The Marketplace stalls were: Capability North East; Catchment Based Approach; Marshalls; Northumbria Integrated Drainage Partnership; SuDS House; SuDS Planter Ltd.; Tees Rivers Trust Sand Box; The Water Hub; Wear Rivers Trust.

Roundtable Discussion Session

The aim of this session was to identify challenges and opportunities to increase implementation of more sustainable urban water management designs.

Despite many years since they began to be incorporated in developments, exemplar SuDS are still the exception rather than the norm. We asked attendees to discuss the main challenges to integrating and retrofitting SuDS into new and existing developments, and consider the opportunities to address these challenges.

The session was organised into 2 table rotations of four themes, with 12 minutes allowed per table. The four themes were: Finance and value; Adoption and management; Access, recreation and safety and Natural environment and wildlife.

The notes from the discussion session, which include 324 comments from attendees, have been written up and are available on the [CaBA website](#).

27 recommendations for North East CaBA SuDS activity came from this spreadsheet which are summarised here:

1. Develop a system to rate quality of SuDS integration at development level

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2. Explore establishing SuDS approval bodies
3. Improve the process for adoption of SuDS
4. Influence better integration and design through planning and highway policies
5. Influence better integration and design through the planning process
6. Influence local planning policy
7. Influence national policy
8. Influence uptake of SuDS through provision of information on affordability issues
9. Promote mechanisms to secure maintenance arrangements - legal
10. Promote positive impact of SuDS on affordability
11. Promote property level SuDS options
12. Promote the incorporation of SuDS into wider landscape Biodiversity Opportunity Mapping
13. Promote the integration of SuDS into landscape scale partnerships
14. Provide affordability information
15. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - amenity
16. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - biodiversity
17. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - flood risk
18. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - general
19. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - health and wellbeing
20. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - landscape
21. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - neighbourhoods
22. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - recreation
23. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - safety
24. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - viability
25. Provide and encourage application of best practice design guidance - water quality
26. Raise awareness of multiple benefits of SuDS and minimisation of risks
27. Share best practice and expertise

The North East CaBA SuDS group will consider these recommendations and identify actions to be taken forwards by partners and partnerships within the region.



Awareness of Catchment Leadership Network

After the lunch break, we took the opportunity to introduce the Catchment Leadership Network to attendees and raise awareness of the Catchment Management Declaration. Alex Adam,

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CaBA Head of Water Stewardship, presented a slide on this topic. We asked businesses, Local Authorities and catchment partners to review the declaration and consider whether they could sign up to its ambitions.

Catchment management: the declaration

This builds on the work of existing Catchment partnerships. It is designed to bring together businesses from across sectors with stakeholders from UK governments and NGOs to tackle the collective challenge of water stresses through catchment management. It aims to positively respond to the 25 Year Environment Plan; to create connections between existing initiatives; and to create real practical actions.

The declaration consists of six principles. It acknowledges that change cannot be achieved by a few regulatory tweaks, nor can any single sector or government agency, working in isolation, deliver this change. Catchment solutions are multi-sector and highly interconnected.

Fundamentally, this Declaration aims to demonstrate the commitment of all parties involved in catchment management to resolving the barriers that impede its effective and widespread delivery

Sustainable Water Management in the North East and YOGA

Sustainable water management is a challenge for all of us. It is not a future problem, but a present one. Adaptation to climate change and accounting for growing urban populations and pressures on the environment mean traditional management systems are under pressure and new and more innovative approaches are needed, which deliver multiple benefits including for economic growth, health and wellbeing, communities and biodiversity.



The Sustainable Urban Water Management Workshop was held as a Year of Green Action 2019 event. This session introduced YOGA, and the ambitions of the government's 25 year environment plan. Rob Carr and George Gerring asked attendees to consider what we could do together to use YOGA to make progress on sustainable drainage in the North East in 2019.

Actions for 2019

General ideas to take forward in 2019 suggested by attendees include:

- Sewers for Adoption Launch, 4th April
- Catchment visions, early engagement
- Very local plans
- Landowner/agent engagement plans
- CPD for planners, include SuDS element
- Highways SuDS adopters agreement
- Focus group with Local Authorities – regional/catchment partnership level
- Homebuyers guide to SuDS – endorsement
- Campaign – 1000 raingardens north east, similar to 10000 raingardens Scotland
- Database of north east case studies, public and professional
- Elected member awareness raising

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- Adoption partnerships to explore liability sharing

A number of YOGA pledges were made by attendees on the day, including: offering a developer-led guided tour of Newcastle Great Park, days of time to support environmental activities through the region, undertaking conservation projects (linked to the YOGA catalogue held by the North East EA Area Team), and participation in zero carbon emissions activities.

There is scope to make greater or more significant pledges including at corporate/organisational level, and we asked attendees to consider what YOGA pledges they could make. Now there has been time to consider activities, we welcome suggestions from partners to develop activities in 2019 which will help support sustainable water management – **please send suggestions to the North East CaBA SuDS group.**

North East Sustainable Urban Water Management Award

In order to make the north east a better place for people, communities and wildlife and to support economic growth through sustainable development, we proposed an award scheme for SuDS to promote more sustainable water management in our region. This would allow us to showcase opportunities and successes in the region, and use YOGA as an opportunity to drive new thinking and activity around sustainable drainage in the North East.

The intention would be to provide recognition and encouragement to the 'SuDS Vanguard', those innovative and forward thinkers who recognise and promote the true value and multiple benefits of SuDS to society, increasing more widespread understanding, awareness and uptake, and helping to mainstream the inclusion of SuDS schemes in developments.

An award would provide an incentive for partners to address the SuDS challenges discussed earlier in the day, and help drive action to identify opportunities to work together towards delivering more sustainable drainage approaches in our region.

We asked attendees for suggested categories for an award. After group discussion, these were proposed as:

- Innovation
- Perfect Partner
- Champion
- Wider Benefits

Suggested criteria could also include:

- Flood Risk
- Environment
- Access and Recreation

Other suggestions for the awards include:

- Best housing SuDS development aimed at developers
- Link to 'flood and coast' award criteria
- Link to Local Authority initiatives
- Best engagement tool or process to engage public
- Young person award
- Group/volunteer

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- Best biodiversity SuDS scheme
- Best amenity SuDS scheme
- Best landscape architect award
- Best drainage planner award
- Best landowner award
- Worst scheme

All agreed the awards should have regional visibility, with a high-profile key note speaker invited to the awards event.

When asked how attendees could help, most attendees were happy to promote the awards through their organisations. Local Authorities could offer a portfolio voice (via elected members and officers) to engage with communities. Organisations leading on SuDS, including CIRIA, NEENP, TVNP and NWG were proposed as judges. It was recognised that the involvement and endorsement of CIRIA would be beneficial, for example the winners could be included in CIRIA best practice guidance. Regional events such as the Tees Valley Nature Conference on 21st June could help promote the award.

The next step for the 'award' development is to develop a draft proposal/outline business case to sponsoring organisations. A working group will be established through North East CaBA to work on this – **partner volunteers are needed to get involved in this activity.**

Closing Remarks

Clare Deasy closed the session with some key messages and next steps.

Catchment Based Approach (CaBA), for those who are new to the concept, is about two things, partnership working, and catchment/systems thinking. CaBA is important to many partners, and offers an excellent opportunity for making progress in areas such as sustainable drainage.

There are some excellent examples of SuDS and sustainable drainage activity in the North East. The session has highlighted that there are particular challenges around land owner/agent engagement, and Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs), planners and highways working together effectively within Local Authorities towards sustainable water management.

Engaging with Catchment Partnerships to work more closely together, and partner organisations agreeing to adopt the principles of the catchment management declaration will help support progress in this area.

The next steps were to:

1. Summarise the outputs of the workshop and circulate these to partners;
2. Progress the ideas for YOGA activity in 2019 and the North East Sustainable Urban Water Management Award.

The attendees agreed overwhelmingly through a show of hands that they wanted more events like this one. Others should have the opportunity to get involved in these type of discussions, including other landowners, designers and Local Authorities (planners, highways, flooding and biodiversity).

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Dom Martyn offered support through his role as Integrated Catchment Delivery events Programme Manager at the Rivers Trust/Environment Agency to hold follow-on sessions to promote sustainable urban water management in the North East.

If any attendees have any further suggestions, for activity, follow-up events, or engagement opportunities, please email these through to North East CaBA.

The session ended with thanks to the speakers, discussion session chairs, organisers and funders for an excellent session.

Feedback

The organisers did not formally ask for feedback from attendees, but some comments were received on the day and by email and are included here:

'Really enjoyed the event and want to pass on learning'

'Excellent event – well organised and very informative'

'It has certainly been the most useful networking and information event in my new role'

'I've attended and arranged lots of workshops, this was one of the best. Very well thought out, chaired and inclusive, well facilitated discussions. I thought your presenters gave an excellent blend of perspectives responding to live urban challenges from CaBA to water company, developer and contractor. Feedback I heard from others on the day was equally positive... 10 out of 10'