

## Schedule 3

A new approach to sustainable drainage has been announced by the UK government, following pressure from industry to act now.

The legislation relating to sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) will, according to the government, “reduce the risk of surface water flooding, pollution and help alleviate the pressures on our traditional drainage and sewerage systems”.

The move follows an open letter, sent to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak in December, where industry experts “strongly urged” him to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

### SuDS and Schedule 3

Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) have long been recognised by civil engineers as an important way to manage surface water, to lower the risk of flooding.

Schedule 3 of the act, which the experts urged the government to implement, established a process to ensure that any new development includes high quality SuDS, and removed developers’ automatic right to connect to public sewers.

“As experts and delivery organisations in construction, planning, water management and environmental management, we strongly urge you to implement Schedule 3 after many years working with alternative approaches.

“Implementation is essential to addressing growing surface water flood risk, tackling the sewage pollution problem and is complementary to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and nutrient neutrality.

“SuDS are internationally recognised as the most effective way of managing both surface water flood risk and storm-related pollution,” the letter to Sunak stated.

We need to ‘harness the full power of blue-green infrastructure’

The Flood and Water Management Act was passed in 2010 following serious flooding in the summer of 2007.

The floods affected 55,000 properties, led to 13 deaths, and left half a million people without mains power and water.

The SuDS requirement for new developments is also something that the ICE’s flooding community advisory board (CAB) has been calling for.

ICE flooding CAB chair Fiona Barbour said: “Implementing Schedule 3 is critical if we are to increase our resilience to flooding.

“Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) are not as complicated or as expensive as many developers fear and legislation is not at odds with housing requirements.

“Many developers welcome the clarity it would bring. Civil engineers have an important role to play in designing the most efficient systems to reduce the risk of flooding and sewage spills.”

‘Do not waste any more time’

According to the letter to the prime minister, the SuDS part of the act was “relaxed” in 2014 and high quality SuDS have not been made mandatory so far due to “misconceptions on cost and applicability”.

“The [SuDS] approach could have been normalised as standard good practice many years ago.

“Please do not waste any more time; implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 further to the current government review,” the letter ends.

As well as Balmforth, the letter has been signed by a large cohort of experts including Terry Fuller, chief executive of the Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management, Christine McGourty, CEO of Water UK, and Professor Jim Hall, professor of climate and environmental risks at Oxford University.

<https://www.ice.org.uk/news-insight/news-and-blogs/latest-news/news/ice-urges-rishi-sunak-to-change-flooding-law/>

Government press release

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-approach-to-sustainable-drainage-set-to-reduce-flood-risk-and-clean-up-rivers>