Policy EM5: Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

1. All development must apply SuDS and should ensure that surface water runoff is managed as close to its source as possible.

2. SuDS are the preferred way of managing and conveying surface water. All developments will consider and demonstrate how the following hierarchy for the discharge of surface water from a site will be applied:
   a)Discharge by infiltration and water reuse technologies.
   b)Discharge to a watercourse allied with water reuse technologies.
   c)Discharge to surface water sewer allied with water reuse technologies.

3. All development should carry out infiltration tests and a ground water risk assessment, including seasonal groundwater monitoring, to demonstrate whether infiltration is possible, and that ground water would not be polluted to Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority requirements. Where it is proven that infiltration is not possible, allied with water reuse technologies, surface water should be discharged into a watercourse (in agreement with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority) at a rate no greater than Qbar greenfield runoff, or an appropriate minimum rate for small sites, agreed by the Lead Local Flood Authority. If there is no watercourse available then, allied with water reuse technologies, surface water should be discharged to a surface water sewer at a rate no greater than Qbar greenfield runoff.

4. In exceptional circumstances, where a sustainable drainage system cannot be provided, it must be demonstrated that it is not possible to incorporate sustainable drainage systems, and an acceptable means of surface water disposal is provided at source which does not increase the risk of flooding or give rise to environmental problems and improves on the current situation with a reduction in peak and total discharge.

5. The long-term maintenance arrangements for all SuDS must be agreed with the relevant risk management authority. A separate SPD will be produced to detail how SuDS schemes will be designed in accordance with the technical standards set out by the Coventry Lead Local Flood Authority and by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

SuDS involve a range of techniques that mimic the way that rainfall drains in natural systems and avoids any increase in flood risk and improves water quality. Many existing drainage systems can cause problems of flooding, pollution or damage to the environment and are not proving to be sustainable in the long term. The key objectives in the use of SuDS are:

- reducing flood risk and mitigating the impacts of climate change;
- maintaining and restoring natural flow routes together with the rate and volume of surface runoff to reduce the risk of flooding;

- improving the water environment quality;
- minimising diffuse pollution;
- reducing pressure on the sewerage network;
- improving habitat, biodiversity and local amenity;
- harness opportunities to incorporate multi-functional uses such as green space play areas.

The Council is also the Lead Local Flood Authority (or LLFA for short) with responsibility for developing, maintaining and monitoring a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy in partnership with other relevant bodies in the area. In addition, the LLFA is a statutory consultee on all major planning applications and a consultee on a non-statutory basis on all minor applications whilst also advising on the approval of all sustainable drainage and related systems, surface flooding and ground water for all planning applications.

In respect of SuDS, it is important to emphasise the need for a management train where drainage techniques can be used in series to change the flow and quality characteristics of the runoff in stages. For a management train to work effectively the train must contain the right type of SUDS. The detail for this would be set out in the SPD, but all consideration should be given to the principle by ensuring developments implement source controls as part of the management train. In environmental terms this approach is good for water quality. With respect to future maintenance, it places the responsibility with the development owner and reduces or eliminates runoff from the small rainfall events which constitute the majority of rain events.