

Greenstreets@Counters Creek SuDS retrofit pilot study

AECOM is leading Greenstreets@Counters Creek, a pilot study retrofitting a number of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into a range of streetscapes and communities in Central London.

SuDS represent a sustainable way of managing surface water runoff and preventing flooding and sewer overflows whilst also creating greener and more beautiful places to live. The value of SuDS has always been uncertain in dense urban areas however, mainly due to space restrictions.

As the largest SuDS retrofit project in the UK, the outcome of the project will inform the industry on how best to overcome the relevant technical and stakeholder challenges and will ensure that the wider social benefits of SuDS are realised. Unlike traditional network projects, Thames Water has no legislative powers to install SuDS, which have a visual impact in streets and involve changes to both private properties and public spaces. The challenge was therefore to engage with customers and action groups directly, and work in partnership with local councils to ensure the wider benefits of SuDS are understood.

Our team brings together a wide range of disciplines, including social researchers, planners, urban designers, landscape architects, ecologists, water infrastructure designers and community liaison specialists to drive a project that is much more than an engineering solution. We embedded community needs and ideas within design development, emphasising informal settings such as resident 'drop-ins', ward panel meetings and flooding forums to gain feedback from customers. We also worked closely with the Thames Water communications teams. This helped to ensure that clear and consistent messages are delivered to the community whilst also leaving room for inspiration and design creativity. More visual, less text-heavy materials, such as a design 'flipbook' and a physical SuDS model also helped communities to understand various important concepts.

The potential of this project has been recognised at Government level with funding secured from Defra. We are sharing this innovation across the industry through conference presentations, the production of CIRIA guidance, and blogging on Susdrain.org. The project will inform the industry on future investment approaches and how to overcome technical and stakeholder challenges in order to realise CAPEX, OPEX and numerous far-reaching social benefits.

Key Features

- Conceptual SuDS retrofit masterplanning
- Hydraulic modelling using Micro Drainage software
- Landscape design
- Production of visualisations
- Project management
- Cost benefit analysis

