Folkestone & Hythe District Council

Minutes

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Held at:	Council Chamber - Civic Centre, Folkestone
Date	Tuesday, 25 April 2023
Present	Councillors Miss Susan Carey, Michelle Keutenius (Chairman), Connor McConville, Rebecca Shoob (Vice-Chair) and John Wing
Apologies for Absence	Councillor Terence Mullard and Councillor Patricia Rolfe
Officers Present:	Olu Fatokun (Low Carbon Senior Specialist), Ewan Green (Director of Place), Amandeep Khroud (Assistant Director), Lydia Morrison (Interim S151 Officer), Adrian Tofts (Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist) and Jemma West (Democratic Services Senior Specialist)
Others Present:	

1. **Declarations of Interest**

   There were no declarations of interest at the meeting.

2. **Minutes**

   The minutes of the meeting dated 14 February 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Minutes of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Sub Committee**

   The minutes of the meeting dated 7 March 2023 were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Southern Water Presentation - Storm Water Overflows**

   Southern Water representatives John Mealey, Stakeholder Engagement Manager and Jon Yates, Delivery Lead for Clean Rivers and Sea Task Force, gave a presentation which provided the committee with an update on the practical solutions being implemented to reduce the frequency of storm overflows.

Councillor Whybrow, Cabinet Member for the Environment outlined her motion to Council of 28 September 2022 which asked for this matter to be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. She then asked for clarity on the following:

- When would network reinforcement be delivered.
- What measures are being put in place to create capacity for the Folkestone seafront development?

Committee Members commented on various aspects of the presentation and made points including the following:

- The presentation covered measures undertaken in Whitstable and Deal. The Committee were keen to know what was happening in the Folkestone and Hythe District.
- In terms of misconnections, where rainwater and foul water are mixing, were Southern Water investigating this issue for new builds?
- Car parking and driveways must be an issue in terms of drainage.
- The smart water butts would be a tremendous save. Measures such as this could be added to the planning framework in future.
- Do Southern Water have any idea as to how long the interventions referred to will take to make an impact in the FHDC district area?
- In terms of communication, what data was used to decide whether data fell within the genuine releases or non-impacting category?
- In respect of the 20% reduction target, was that a stepping stone, or was this target enough to eliminate the problem for the time being?
- In terms of the greywater re-use in future developments, would water re-use make a significant impact?

John Mealey and Jon Yates from Southern Water responded to the issues raised, and made points including the following:

- In terms of network reinforcement, the information would be sought and provided to the Committee at a later date.
- The Task force role was to forge links with developers and planning authorities to create closer working relationships and a working group.
- Not just with new builds, but on a local and independent level, work was taking place with new plumbers, this included engaging with colleges. Many misconnection issues tended to be local, specific to a home and it was important to get this right from beginning. The aim of the Task Force was to sustain change.
- Property misconnection was often a result of white goods being incorrectly plugged into surface water drainage in a home.
- There was also a St Mary's Bay investigation group meeting which took place on a monthly basis, with the Environment Agency and FHDC. They discussed measures that can be taken to improving bay water quality. There had been some good results in the Enbrook Valley, Dymchurch and St Marys Bay area, where misconnections had been identified in

homes and the Task Force had worked with the home owners to resolve these issues. .

- Car parking/driveways needed to be permeable or other, rather than just hardstanding and this matter should be communicated more.
- Water butts were great and the team were working with the housing development industry to see how they could be utilised in a more pro-active way.
- Southern Water were looking at plans for the FHDC area now. There is significant work going on within the FHDC area, planned for the new investment period. Unfortunately, this information could not be discussed as yet, but the Committee would be updated on the timelines.
- The communication tool, Beach buoy sat within the task force team. This took information from the monitoring systems and when an event happened, it was checked and verified, before the information was disseminated. Improvements were being sought on the way this information was communicated to make it more speedy.
- When looking at a catchment, there was not one solution to fit every situation. Part of the conversation to be had was grey water use. Implementation and practicalities were the next step.
- The 20% reduction target was a challenging target to show intent. It could be argued by water users and local economy that there were some areas where there shouldn't be any. As an example, Brook Road in Whitstable was sensitive in ecological impact, and therefore the Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) was closed. This could not be done in every area. CSO's prevented flooding and operated as a release point. It was important to use CSO's appropriately and EDM monitors and sewer monitors were being used in order to work more intelligently, looking at catchment based input and usage.

The Chairman thanked the representatives from Southern Water for their attendance at the meeting.

5. **Update on the Council's Climate Change and Ecological Emergency Work**

The Cabinet Member for the Environment introduced the report which summarised the council's work on climate change for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It followed the main points set out in the climate emergency declaration that was unanimously agreed by full Council on 24 July 2019. She also drew attention to the Sustainable Future forums event which was taking place in Folkestone on Saturday 29 April.

Members commented on various aspects of the report and made points including the following:

- How was progress being measured? There was no figure for 21/22 as yet. A consistent measurement was important to ensure accuracy.

- If there was a commitment to net zero on 2030, was there an indication of how this would be achieved, such as an action plan on carbon emissions?
- It was hoped to achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C for the council housing stock. There were lots of noticeable improvements already.
- In terms of Biodiversity, how would the green and blue infrastructure strategy feed into the local nature recovery strategy?
- In respect of the Otterpool Park development, it was important to consider active travel infrastructure in order to connect the development to other villages.
- Did the Council take part in 'No mow in May', and could social media be used to encourage residents to take part?
- The next four years would be key in determining whether these targets would be met. More detail in terms of longer goals would be useful in informing the plan. Additional resource may be needed in order to deliver.
- The report mentioned reducing use of Peat, but surely the council should be eliminating this altogether?
- In respect of new national development management policies, referred to in paragraph 3.10, it was a concern that it was not clear whether local authorities will have scope to push for environmental policies that exceed national standards under the new system.

The Strategy, Policy & Performance Lead Specialist responded to some of the matters raised, and made points including the following:

- In respect of monitoring, this was quite a process, which involved collating a lot of invoices and receipts from across the council and converting them into carbon emissions. It was hoped to get these results in the next few weeks, but there was a need to improve this process for future years.
- Carbon Descent had been commissioned to create a Carbon Reduction Plan. Part one of the work they had been commissioned for was complete, and it appeared the council could achieve almost net zero with existing actions from the 2021 Carbon Action Plan. They were moving on to part two of the work, which would have much more detailed actions along with costings.
- There had been a good response to consultation on the Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy and a colleague was analysing the comments. The results would be considered by Cabinet in June.
- There was also a new requirement coming from the Environment Act to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Although this was a responsibility for KCC, FHDC would work closely with them on this issue. The guidance and detail were still being finalised.
- The Grounds maintenance team had worked with KCC to manage open spaces in a better way to benefit wildlife and pollinators. The

Communications Team would be approached to see if the message around 'no mow May' could be further promoted.
In terms of planning standards, the government would be introducing new national policies which would take precedence over local policies. All local authorities would be consulted on this, but no drafts had been sighted as yet. The council would have an opportunity to comment on the policies and could call for tougher policies if minded to.

The Cabinet Member for the Environment also added that information on which areas grounds maintenance were managing was already available on the council's website.

The Chairman thanked officers for their work.

6. **Overview and Scrutiny work programme 23-24**

The Democratic Services Senior Specialist introduced the report which set out a proposed work programme for Overview and Scrutiny work for the municipal year 23/24.

A Member commented that it did not seem fair to be agreeing a work programme for the new Committee, and the programme needed to be flexible in order to allow new Committee Members some input.

The Democratic Services Senior Specialist confirmed that the programme was designed to allow some flexibility, and would not be rigid, so other members would be able to put other suggestions forward.

RESOLVED:
1. **To receive and note report OS/22/11.**
2. **To recommend <u>to Full Council</u> that the proposed Scrutiny work programme set out in paragraph 1.3 of the report, for the municipal year 23/24, be adopted.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

7. **Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2022-23**

The Chairman introduced the report which set out the work that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Finance and Performance Sub-Committee have completed during 2022/2023.

The Chairman thanked all Committee Members for their input over the last year, and thanked all officers for their work. She stated that the Committee had gone through many positive changes in the last four years, and she hoped the further improvements would continue.

A Committee Member thanked the Chair and the Vice-Chair for their work over the last four years.

The Director of Place thanked members on behalf of the Corporate Leadership Team and officers for their contributions to the Committee over the four year term.

RESOLVED:

1. **That report OS/22/10 be received and noted.**

(The recommendations were agreed by affirmation of the meeting).

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee

25 April 2023

Jon Yates, Programme Delivery Lead, Clean Rivers and Seas Task Force

WATER for LIFE

from Southern Water

Clean Rivers and Seas Task Force

- We agree the use of overflows is no longer acceptable.
- The task force is responsible for delivering at least six pathfinder projects over the next two years. The task force will seek to establish strong partnerships to ensure their success.
- In parallel, we will build and deliver a regional plan to reduce storm releases between now and 2030.
- Weblink - [Storm Overflows (southernwater.co.uk)]

WATER for LIFE from Southern Water

There are broadly 3 main types of intervention to reduce flooding and storm overflow use:

1. **Source control** (removing and slowing the flow of rain water)

   Rainwater harvesting, Permeable paving, Green roofs, Soakaways (includes tree pits), Rain garden (swales), Planters

2. **Optimisation of existing infrastructure**

   Optimisation, tweaking of connected systems and interface, Different mechanical and electrical equipment (e.g. pumps), Improvements in pumping station and storm tank use and control, Smart network control with increased digitalisation

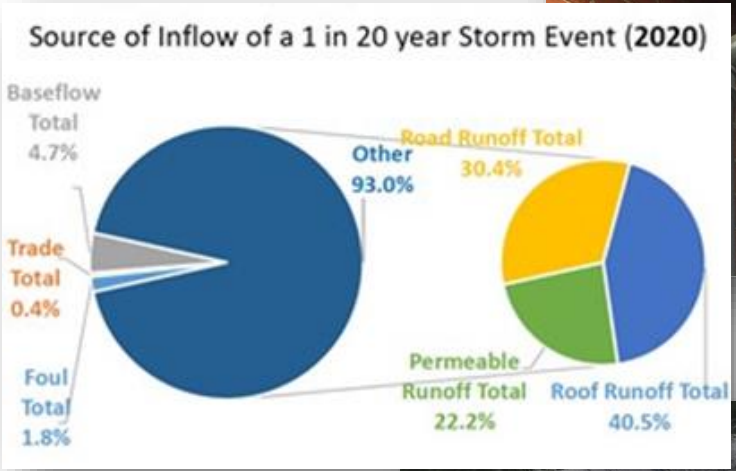
3. **Build bigger infrastructure** (building larger pipes, pumping stations, etc.)

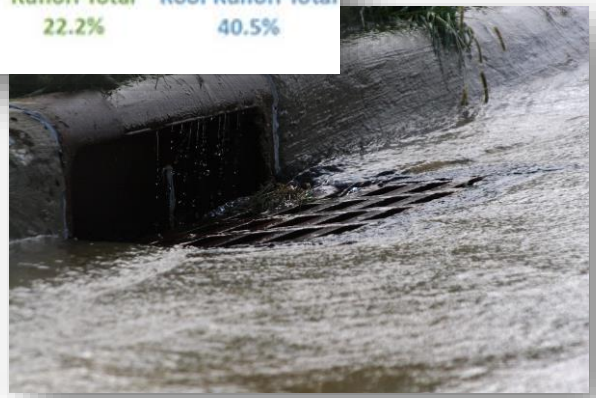
   Wetlands treatment (Groundwater), Sewer lining/sealing (Groundwater), Larger sewers, Large storm tanks, Large treatment works

Exhausting the first two options through pathfinder approach

Manage and slow the flow of water

- A storm release can be up to 95% rain water. The main sources are roof and road run off. We need to remove and/or attenuate this water.
- We must look to slow the flow of excess rain water into the system.





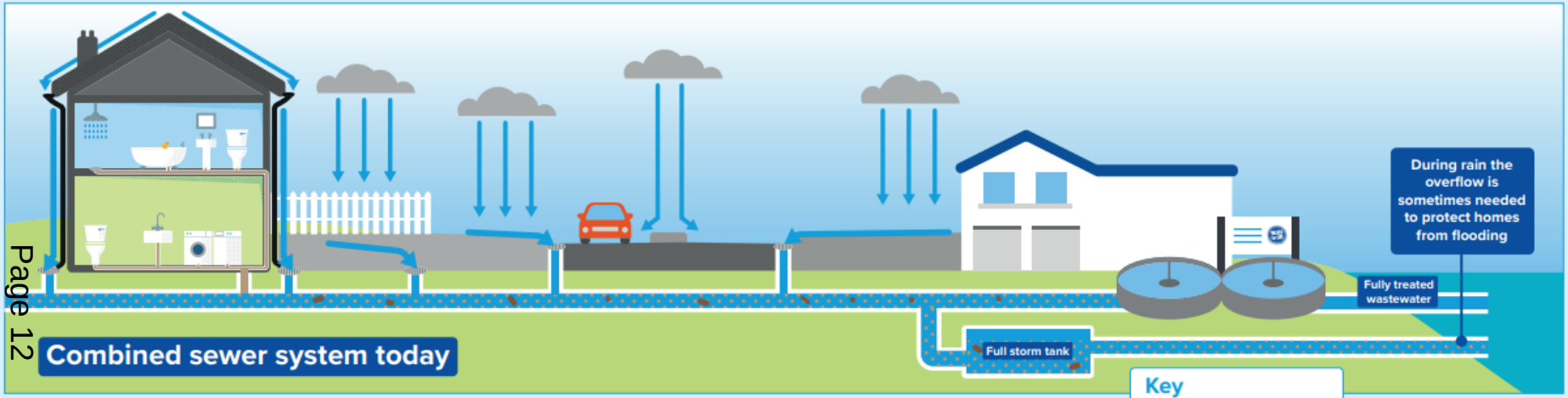
What might the solutions look like?

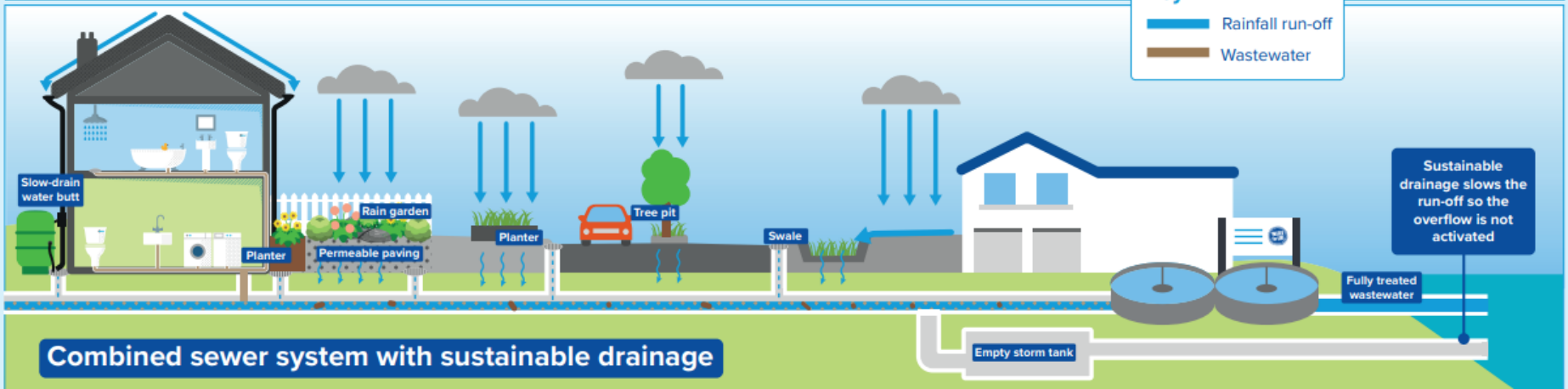
Working in partnership

- We want to work in **collaboration** with a range of partners at all levels and across industries to achieve this.
- We also want to promote the simple actions that everyone can do to help such as installing water butts to recycle rain water or reducing the amount of pavement in gardens.

WATER for LIFE from Southern Water

Reducing the use of storm overflows





Pathfinder programme

Accelerating our Pathfinder projects

- To date, working on 6 Pathfinder projects (Deal, Margate and Whitstable in Kent, Sandown on the Isle of Wight, Pan Parishes near Andover Hampshire and Fairlight in East Sussex
- Due to early success with trials and partnerships, we are stepping up our Pathfinder work
- Up to £50m funding to reduce storm overflows before 2025

How we're tackling storm overflows

The Harbours and the South Downs

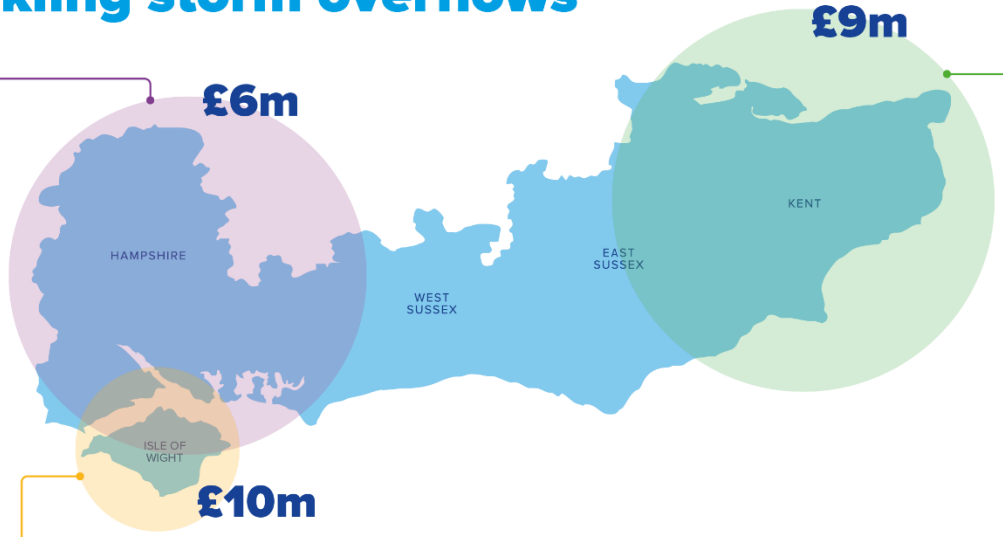
We plan to target four areas where we know that groundwater is getting into our network. Exact locations will be chosen after we've completed local surveys.

We'll be sealing around five kilometres of private and public sewers and constructing up to four wetlands.

This work will reduce releases entering Chichester Harbour and other water sites and is part of our wider WINEP environmental programme for the next investment period 2025–30.

Main driver: High number of storm releases into the Harbours, enhanced knowledge of wetlands.

Root cause: groundwater getting into the network.



North Kent and the East

We'll expand our projects in Kent: Deal, Margate and Whitstable and introduce a new project at Fairlight East Sussex.

Main driver: Impact to shellfish waters, frequent spills, customer interest.

Root cause: large volumes of rainwater (surface water).

The team will target five overflows with the following:

- 1 Treatment works optimised
- 2 pumping station optimised
- 8 surface water misconnections redirected
- 2,000 household downpipes fitted with slow the flow measures
- 200 non-household downpipes fitted with slow the flow measures or redirected
- 10 roadside sustainable drainage schemes installed

These measures will help to reduce rainwater run-off from a non-permeable area of 15 hectares. In turn, this will reduce the volume of water entering the sewer system, leading to a minimum 20% reduction in spills by April 2025 (based on 2020 baseline).

The Solent, the Isle of Wight

This includes large parts of the Sandown area, which includes around 90% of the wastewater treatment for the island. We'll be specifically targeting 22 storm overflows with projects in Gurnard, Cowes, Fishbourne, Wotton, Yarmouth and Freshwater.

Main driver: Impact to shellfish waters, frequent spills, customer interest.

Root cause: large volumes of rainwater (surface water).

- 15 pumping station improvements
- 10 surface water misconnections redirected
- 6,000 household downpipes fitted with slow the flow measures
- 600 non-household downpipes fitted with slow the flow measures or redirected
- 30 roadside sustainable drainage schemes installed
- 1 wetland constructed

These measures will reduce rainwater run-off over a non-permeable area of around 35 hectares. In turn, this will reduce the amount of water that enters the combined sewer system, leading to a minimum 20% reduction in storm releases by April 2025 (based on 2020 baseline).

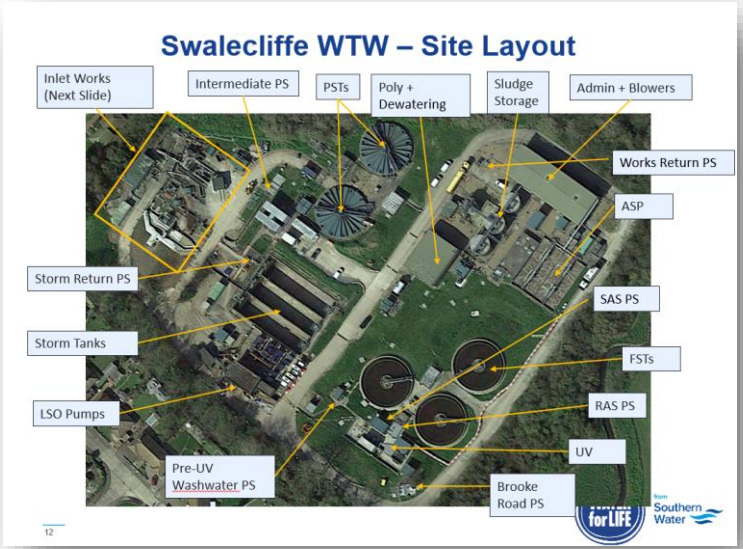
Optimisation

Deal highways gullies

What approach was taken

1. Southern Water complete technical report
2. KCC surveyed assets in Albert Road and surrounding area
3. Deal-Water Action Taskforce discuss interventions required in the area
4. KCC carried out works to increase the number of road drains and upsize pipes into the surface water pipe in Albert Road

Swalecliffe - Amend permit use control



Misconnections – surface water going into the foul

21 potential opportunities identified via GIS analysis

Aim:

To investigate locations where surface water pipes connect into the combined system to identify opportunities for re-connection.

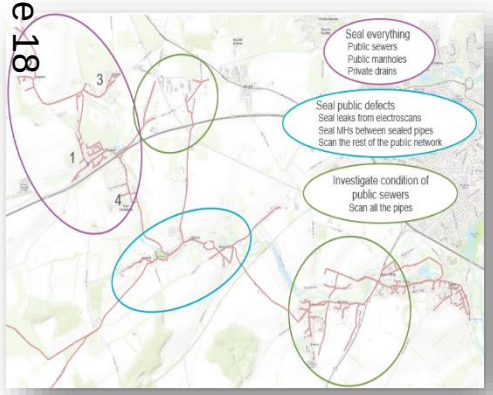
Next Steps:

- Confirm impermeable area contribution
- Arrange for further surveys where required
- Further investigation into possible re-connection points (e.g. rivers, surface water pipes, water butts)
- Refine prioritised list of opportunities based on outputs from analysis above

Keeping groundwater and rainwater out

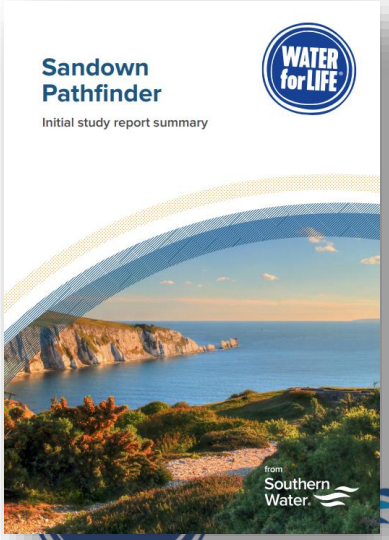
Pan Parishes

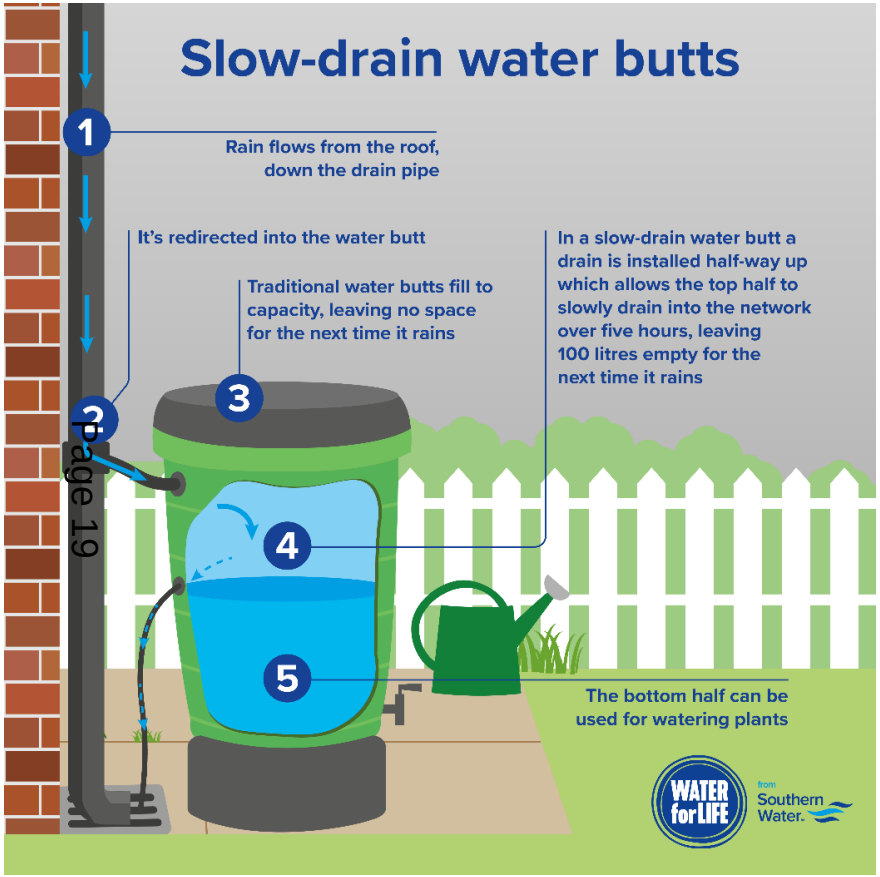
Groundwater infiltration and Tubogel – sealing private laterals



Havenstreet (Isle of Wight)

Surface water management – installing slow-drain water butts





70 'Slow the Flow' products installed

51 properties installing device(s) –

43% property install rate

Devices installed across the 4 pilot streets:

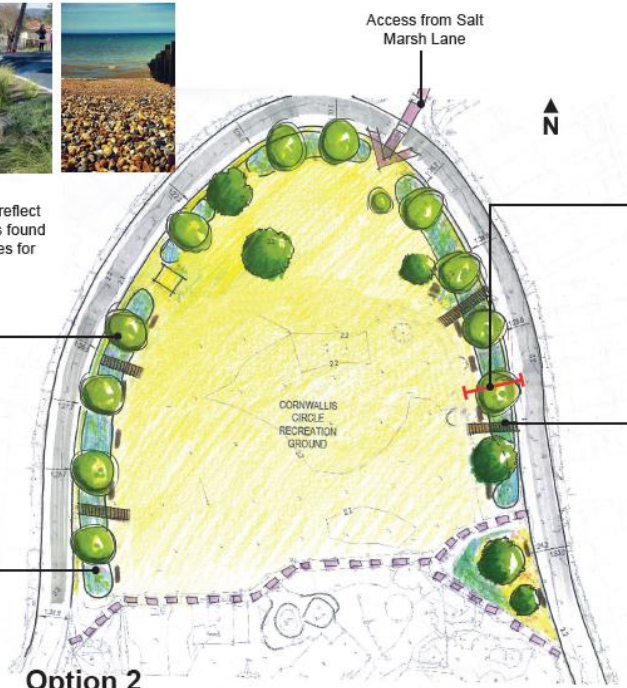
- 15 SuDS Planters (at 15 properties)
- 8 Passive Water Butts (at 7 properties)
- 47 Smart Water Butts (at 34 properties)

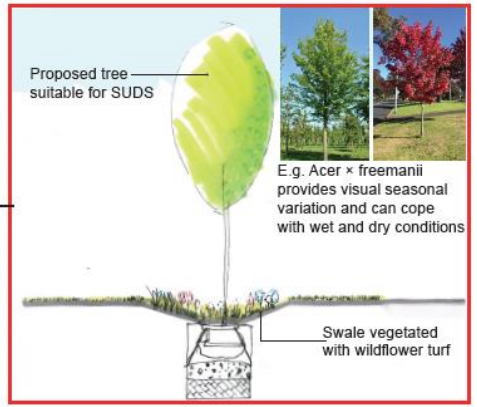
WATER for LIFE from Southern Water

Whitstable community scheme

Cornwallis Circle Recreation Ground

Ornamental planting with gravel / boulder base:
Boulders and gravel to line the base of the swale, to reflect the coastal location and mirror materials and textures found on the nearby beach. Planted with ornamental grasses for year-round structure and visual interest





Design for ecology
Use of flowering perennials within swales will attract pollinating insects with further opportunity to provide 'bug hotel' shelters areas using logs and other organic materials.

Option 2

- Perimeter swales with tree planting
- Rain garden / wild wet meadow
- Open space retained with connecting board walks / bridges

Amenity use
Timber board bridges span the swales linking to the central open space to improve permeability and access to the park from the east and west. These would create new permanent connections and would affect existing balustrade fencing

Key updates/progress

- Pathfinder update
- Task Force 6 monthly update and Pathfinder progress
- Bathing water season report
- Secretary of State letter
- Infiltration Reduction Plan
- Deal, Margate, Swalecliffe, Sandown and Fairlight Technical and Summary reports published
- Early interventions in delivery
- SuDS in schools partnership with the Department for Education; £1.6m project
- Insight programme underway to ensure we're listening to our customers
- Further partnerships being explored
- Jargon busting to make educational materials accessible to all, such as our FAQ document and animation.

WATER for LIFE from Southern Water

Additional slides

1 Improving our sites and networks

- **Making improvements** to pumping stations and equipment controls and storage.
- **Asking for permission** to change regulatory permits, where these limit capacity. By doing this, we are going beyond compliance – what we 'have to do'.
- **Using existing infrastructure** to speed up the process and limit the need for new construction.
- **Working with partners** to improve their infrastructure, such as highway gullies.

CASE STUDY

Swalecliffe, Kent

The problem

Swalecliffe's storm tanks were not being used to full capacity because of the permits in place. As a result, the site is using its long sea outfall around 100 times a year.

Action

We worked with the Environment Agency to change the way the site works to to use around 1,800m^3 of storage. New chambers and pipework are being installed at a cost of £750,000 which enable us to redirect 450 litres of storm water per second during heavy rainfall.

The benefit

We estimate the work will reduce the spills by over 30% (12% of spills avoided altogether and 20% will be reduced in duration). This work will be finished by May 2023.

CASE STUDY

Appley and Fairlee, Isle of Wight

The problem

During a heavy storm, more than 650 litres per second can enter Appley pumping station on the Isle of Wight. The pumping station is permitted to pump 122 litres per second. The site released 136 times in 2020 and 108 times in 2021.

Fairlee released 89 times in 2020 and 73 times in 2021. The site spills into the River Medina which is a SSSI and a popular water sports venue.

Action

Working with the Environment Agency we think the Appley pumping station could deal with 300 litres per second. More than 2.5 times the current flow.

By building a small pumping station at Fairlee, we can pump into existing storage areas on site (currently not in use) in excess of 14,000m^3.

The benefit

We expect to reduce releases at Appley to around 30. By using existing storage at Fairlee, we expect to see a 95% reduction in annual releases.

2 Misconnections

- **We are finding misconnections** in local communities. This is typically where clean, already separated surface water, has been connected back into the combined sewer.
- Where we find them, we can divert this rainwater back into the environment.

CASE STUDY

Lower Church Road, Isle of Wight

The problem

A development of about 50 properties covering 3.1 hectares connected stormwater from roads and roofs into the combined sewer.

As a result, the pumping station at Woodvale released 79 times in 2020 and 91 times in 2021 into a bathing water.

Action

We have submitted a flood risk assessment to the Environment Agency to redirect the flow and install a flow restriction device to reduce the likelihood of flooding in the area.

The benefit

We estimate the work will reduce the spills by over 30% (12% of spills avoided altogether and 20% will be reduced in duration). This work will be finished by late summer 2023 assuming all goes well.

3 Businesses and community buildings

☑ **'Slow the flow'** sustainable drainage measures to manage rainwater run-off from large roof areas (above 200m²) and other hardstanding areas on non-household or commercial properties.

"A unique educational opportunity for pupils to engage in the importance of saving and protecting water, and the impact of doing so, as we all work to do more for the environment."

A Department for Education spokesperson

CASE STUDY

Schools

The problem

Rainwater running off school roofs, playgrounds and hard surfaces can overwhelm the combined sewer system, causing localised flooding and storm overflows.

Action

We partnered with the Department of Education to work with 47 schools to install raingarden planters, free of charge, on school roof downpipes to remove or slow the flow of rainwater.

With four schools in south, we've also designed large sustainable drainage solutions to completely separate surface water from their site.

This £1.7 million project includes working with schools that experience flooding, as well as areas where the network experiences pressure from excess water.

We have agreed to work with another 50 schools between April 2023 and March 2024 (an additional £1.2m project).

The benefit

We are currently monitoring the exact levels of water the project has removed and we'll be producing a report in 2023 to outline our findings and lessons learnt from the first year.

from Southern Water

4 Homes

☑ **Slow the flow'** sustainable drainage measures to manage rainwater run-off from household or domestic roof areas. Typically, we use slow drain water butts and encourage customers not to pave over gardens.

"This work is bringing fresh thinking and investment to our area that makes us a national leader in the issue of tackling storm overflows and sewage discharge prevention."

Natalie Elphicke MP

CASE STUDY

Deal, Kent

The problem

In Deal, Kent, residents have suffered from internal flooding for many years. This is in part due to the way water flows in the town and we're exploring solutions to slow the flow of water in the area.

Action

Working closely with Deal Water Action Taskforce, we offered smart water butts, planters and slow-drain water butts to residents of Claremont Road, Grange Road, Cowper Road, and The Grove. We've already installed 50 smart water butts.

We also completed an upgrade to a surface water pipe which will redirect flows away from Albert Road to Matthews Close Dyke during heavy rain.

The benefit

Reduced flooding for residents in Deal.

CASE STUDY

Havenstreet, Isle of Wight

The problem

Havenstreet pumping station released 17 times in 2020 and 28 times in 2021. It discharges into a SSSI and a brook that is failing according to the Water Framework Directive.

Action

We offered every property in Havenstreet a free, slow-drain water butt. A total 142 properties accepted (72%). We also managed the stormwater of large roofs such as the community centre and care home with planters.

The benefit

70% reduction in spills from the nearby storm overflow site, by controlling the amount of surface water reaching the ground at any one time.

5 Roads

☑ **Sustainable drainage** features like rain gardens, swales (channels) and tree pits to redirect and slow the flow of rainwater run-off from roads entering the sewer.

"Additional funding will allow more island residents and visitors to experience necessary improvements in reducing storm overflows."

James Brewer, Planning Team Leader, Isle of Wight Council

Cornwallis Circle, Kent

CASE STUDY

The problem

Whitstable contains 74 hectares of non-permeable area.

Action

Working with Canterbury City Council and Kent County Council we're developing a scheme that could manage over 1 hectare of non-permeable area. Designs are being prepared for public consultation and we hope to implement the scheme later in 2023. This will be one of many across the town.

The benefit

One hectare of non-permeable area is 10,000m^2 or a 100m x 100m square. A 10mm rainfall event will produce 100 tonnes of water or 100,000 litres.

Newport and Ryde, Isle of Wight

CASE STUDY

The problem

The town centres are problematic drainage areas with large impermeable areas such as car parks, roads and buildings.

Action

We're working in partnership on two Local Authority projects to improve the town centres and install green designs. We will co-design, co-fund and co-deliver tree pits, rain gardens, permeable paving and other sustainable drainage features.

The benefit

Not only will the town centres look more green, and attractive, they will also reduce storm overflows by holding back and slowly releasing stormwater.

from Southern Water

Our task force is exploring ways to reduce storm overflows via our pathfinder projects

The Clean Rivers and Seas Task Force is a dedicated team that is working to significantly reduce the use of storm overflows by 2030. **It is delivering six pathfinder projects over the next two years.**

Pan Parishes

- Sealing private pipework with an innovative chemical called Tubogel, as well as sealing the public sewer network to reduce groundwater infiltration.
- Exploring the creation of a local wetland.

Swalecliffe

- Working to reduce Swalecliffe's 74 hectares of hard surfaces.
- Separating the surface water and sewer network.
- Hotspot mapping shows us where to target solutions.

Margate

- Finding opportunities to increase surface water drainage with local councils. For example, reducing the amount of hard surfaces across Margate.
- Looking at opportunities to separate the surface water and sewer network and improve drainage.

Sandown

- Enhancing wastewater pumping station control, surface water removal and storage solutions.
- Trialling slow-drain water butts in Havenstreet.

Deal

- Installing smart or passive water butts or rain planters.
- Working with the local councils and highways to introduce roadside verges, parks and gardens and more green spaces.
- Engaging with schools.
- Surveying surface water connections.
- Introducing rainfall monitors and tracking the flow of surface water.
- Improving our Golf Road pumping station.
- Increasing our storm tank capacity.