

Landscape Institute calls for landscape-led flooding solution

9 December 2015, by Matthew Appleby, *Be the first to comment*

The incidence of flooding as experienced recently in the UK is likely to become the norm with climate change and will have a significant impact upon our cities and landscapes, says the Landscape Institute.



The Landscape Institute, in the week of the 2015 United National Climate Change Conference, has called on the UK government to have "a long term clear strategy to think about the way we manage, store and distribute our water".

LI says: "Through their training and expertise, landscape architects are well positioned to provide holistic approaches to the planning and management of the built environment and rural areas. The Government need to make our towns and cities

more resilient.

The Institute has called for:

- Climate change adaptation and mitigation action plans to be incorporated into planning policy at national, regional and local levels.
- Minimum regulatory standards for surface water run-off for all new residential development and non-domestic buildings regardless of where they are built.
- Retro fitting Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) throughout our towns and cities as an essential part of an integrated approach to water management.

Green infrastructure offers a solution in addressing the challenges of the 21st century. It is the network of natural and semi-natural features, green spaces, rivers and lakes that intersperse and connect villages, towns and cities. It is a natural, service-providing infrastructure that is often more cost-effective, more resilient and more capable of meeting social, environmental and economic objectives than simply 'grey' infrastructure.

Sue Illman, former president of the Landscape Institute and the Construction Industry Council's Champion for Flood Mitigation and Resilience said: "We require a strategy that recognises the importance of Green Infrastructure. Green responses civilise grey engineering solutions and make them more cost effective and visually acceptable. Although for major schemes it is unlikely to replace engineering, the two need to work together to make our towns and cities more liveable, attractive and useable.

"We need a mix of green and grey, with the proportions varying based on the scheme: land available, gradients, soil types and a range of other factors. Even what appears on the surface to be green schemes, still have engineering beneath them. Green and grey working together can deliver real placemaking.

"We need to look at the larger catchment management issues and how forestry, land management and soft engineered flood alleviation schemes can hold back water in the upper reaches of rivers. We need to comprehensively retro-fit Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and require it to be used for all new building schemes. SuDS are a simple and relatively inexpensive way to manage surface water by mimicking nature through absorbing water into vegetated surfaces. This slows down water movement and helps prevent flooding as well as supporting greater biodiversity.

"Finally we must consider carefully how and where we plan new development, and that all new housing is resilient when built."

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