

Stroud Valleys Rural Sustainable Drainage Partnership

DRAFT three year plan

Vision for RSuDs on the Frome:

To create a river catchment where water management is fully integrated into land management practices. Where public bodies, private companies and local communities work together to manage water within the landscape, creating valuable habitat for wildlife and people, and limiting flood risk downstream

Background

A report commissioned by the Environment Agency (EA), produced by Atkins, reviewed the physical nature of the Frome catchment as well as the feasibility and potential benefits of rural Sustainable Drainage Solutions (rSuDS) throughout. The key drivers for the study involved the consideration of:

- **Flood risk:** localised flooding has occurred within Stroud and the Lower Frome and 63 properties in Slad are at High Risk of flash flooding
- **Diffuse sediment pollution:** land use changes can release large quantities of sediment into watercourses
- **Water quality and pollution:** phosphates levels in river water and rising levels of artificial chemicals in groundwater systems

The study recommends that in order to address the issues above in a rural catchment like the Frome, management techniques such as RSuDS should be promoted and implemented where possible. In order to do this extensive liaison, cooperation, engagement and partnership working between national and local bodies will be needed to align and achieve flood risk objectives whilst contributing to the achievement of other objectives, such as Water Framework Directive & Biodiversity conservation for the Frome catchment to provide a more effective, catchment based approach¹.

Acting on the findings of the study, a group of stakeholders have established a formal partnership project for the Frome catchment. The group consists of representatives of the following organisations:

- Gloucestershire County Council
- Stroud District Council
- Environment Agency
- Severn & Wye Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)

¹ Atkins Rural SuDS – River Frome Catchment (Gloucester) Scoping Study, May 2013

The group agreed to develop a project in line with the vision above. The project will use funding secured from the Severn & Wye RFCC to fund a project officer who will be employed by the Stroud District Council, under a collaborative agreement with the Environment Agency. This document sets out the agreed aims for the project and describes the Governance structure for the work.

Project Aims

The overall aims of the project will be to:

- Work with local communities, land managers and farmers to promote the implementation of rural sustainable drainage throughout the Stroud Valleys
- Increase awareness of the scope to align land management, WFD and flood risk objectives towards a catchment management approach
- Facilitate partnership working throughout the catchment to support the implementation of sustainable catchment management
- Identify site specific opportunities to align land management, WFD and flood risk objectives towards a catchment management approach
- Establish a protocol to ensure that implemented measures are appropriately maintained.
- Establish a protocol to ensure that the benefits/impacts of implemented measures are appropriately monitored and evidence disseminated to relevant parties.

Governance

The group agreed to the establishment of both a strategic level steering group and a tactical or working group to provide oversight and support for the project. The agreed governance structure is detailed below:

Strategic Group

This group will be formed with senior members of key partner organisations and will meet every 6 months or as required. They will agree the overall vision for the project, set out the projects aims and will steer the project on the strategic level. This group will be responsible for:

- Setting overall project vision and scope
- Establish project aims
- Securing core & identify project funding for project
- Gain support from key stakeholders for the project approach
- Maintain a strategic overview of the project and any other related work

Individual members should ideally identify a substitute to attend in their absence.

Members of the Strategic Group: (The exact membership is still flexible, with some organisations waiting to see if they should focus efforts on the working group)

- Gloucestershire County Council representative (Dave Graham)
- Stroud District Council representative (Chris Uttley, Maria Hickman, Barry Wyatt)
- Severn and Wye RFCC member (Cllr Phil Awford)

- Two representatives of Flood Action Groups from the Stroud Valleys (Tim Davies, Cllr Sarah Lunnon)
- Environment Agency Flood Risk Manager – Anthony Perry
- National Farmers Union representative – Paul Collington)
- Natural England representative – (Peter Holmes)
- Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust (Roger Mortlock)
- Country Land and Business Association (CLA) (Graham Clarke)
- Lower Severn Drainage Board (James Druett)
- National Trust (Simon Larkins)

Working Group

This group will act as a support to the project officer and will aid delivery of the project on the ground. The group will meet every two months or as required. The group will:

- Establish practical project objectives
- Act as point of contact into relevant partner organisations
- Ensure day to day running of project is in line with strategic objectives
- Input technical advice and support to project staff
- Assist in securing project funds

Members of the Working Group:

- Gloucestershire County Council – Dave Graham
- Stroud District Council – Chris Uttley, Dave Lesser
- EA representatives – Brian Smith and others as needed.
- NE representative – Peter Holmes (corresponding member)
- Wildlife Trust rep – Richard Spyvee,
- Rivers Trust rep – Tony Bostock,
- Major land owner organisations (As required)
- National Trust (Dave Armstrong)
- Representatives of other organisations as appropriate