

AECOM report outlines a water sensitive Yorkshire

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Engineering design giant AECOM has published a document that identifies a more sustainable approach to urban and rural water management in Yorkshire. The publication of the document arose from a workshop AECOM hosted earlier this summer which included speakers from Yorkshire Water, the Environment Agency (EA) and City of York Council.



The workshop focused on using sustainable multi-functional space and infrastructure

Urban planners and developers, water managers and drainage engineers from across the region contributed to ideas that formed the basis of *Visioning a Water Sensitive Yorkshire*, which set out the views of the workshop participants on how "integrated, smart and sustainable approaches to water management" could be developed to mitigate the fluctuating challenges of flooding and water shortages and "reinvigorate the community's connection with water".

The report, funded by AECOM, notes the water sensitive urban design (WSUD), a concept that is still in its infancy in the UK, could, for example, contribute to greening neighbourhoods, improving biodiversity, reducing urban heat island effects and making more public spaces available for recreational as well as functional use.

Although the report focuses on Yorkshire, it is believed other areas of the UK are also closely looking at WSUD, which put simply, is the process of integrating water cycle management with the built environment through planning and urban design.

It comprises managing all elements of the water cycle and consideration of the water cycle from the outset and throughout the design and planning process.

The key issues identified at the workshop focused on using sustainable multi-functional space and infrastructure. They included:

- Good quality public open space which could be used for flood storage during extreme events
- Green streets with trees, plants and permeable surfaces – reducing surface water run-off and improving water quality
- Increased connectivity and access to rivers and canals
- Maintaining good water quality through in-situ pre-treatment
- Ecological improvements through better water quality, green networks and catchment management.

Actions agreed by those present was to reconvene in six months to discuss progress, develop a water sensitive case study library and develop a mission statement.

Brian Smith, Yorkshire Water's drainage strategy manager, said development of a WSUD approach could not be considered or delivered in isolation. Partnership working, cooperation and collaboration were essential and Yorkshire Water would work with others to create a strategy that was all encompassing.

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