

Highways news podcast

Highways and pollution

A joint meeting was held between the ADEPT Engineering Board and the ADEPT Flood and Water Management Group to discuss enhanced ways of working between flood & highway professionals. Several interesting topics were discussed including the issue of pollution from highways.

Nick Mills, Southern Water talked about the Clean Rivers and Seas Task Force, whose aim is to reduce storm overflows to ensure a healthy environment and water resilient future. The task force is responsible for **delivering pathfinder projects** through an **accelerated programme** to reduce the use of storm overflows over the next two years. One way to do this is through **Source control**: removing or 'slowing the flow' of water entering the sewer system to prevent it from becoming overwhelmed and needing to use storm overflows. For example, using sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). They're collaborating across industries as well as with local authorities and the public. Nick gave some great examples of where they are slowing the flow of water by installing 'slow drain' water butts for households and 'slow the flow' planters in schools and care homes

Jo Bradley from Stormwater Shepherds opened our eyes with the toxic cocktail of chemicals that run off from our roads and untreated can cause devastating impacts on plants and animals

Across England's 189,700 miles of road, runoff surface water polluted with microplastics, trace metals, hydrocarbons and other organic pollutants enters our rivers every time it rains.

Chemical pollutants in our stormwater have various negative effects on the plants and animals in river systems. They can prevent plants from photosynthesising, hinder insects from reproducing, and travel up the food chain to wreak havoc on larger organisms present in the waterbody.

Mark Stevens, Chair of ADEPT Engineering Board & Highways Sector Council rep and Assistant Director Direct Services, Haringey Council gave us an insight into some of the work they are doing in Haringey on Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. SuDS features – such as rain gardens, swales, wetlands, green roofs and permeable paving – filter and clean rainwater at its location. This helps ensure that better quality water enters sewers and drains that discharge into rivers by removing oil and pollutants which can harm wildlife.

[Sustainable drainage systems \(SuDS\) | Haringey Council](#)

[CIWEM awarded funding to investigate highway pollution entering our rivers - CIWEM](#)

[Stormwater Shepherds – Zero Pollution Ambassadors](#)

[The Impact of Stormwater – Chemicals – Stormwater Shepherds](#)