STATE OF LIFE

SuDS+

SuDS+

Outcome Development Framework

September 2026

The context

- SuDS+ is testing whether sustainable drainage systems can do more than manage flood risk. The aim is also to improve residents' quality of life in Stanley South, through features co-designed with the community.

- Until now, schemes like this have mainly been judged on environmental and flood measures. There has been no consistent way to show whether the "+" makes a difference to people's lives.

- As one of 25 Defra/Environment Agency innovation projects, SuDS+ needs to show what works and why, so the case for the approach can be made and repeated elsewhere.

- This framework gives SuDS+ a robust, shareable way to measure that social value. It is a proof of concept that other sites and local authorities can adapt.

Wellbeing, the WELLBY and Social Value

- **Wellbeing as the headline outcome:** We measure how residents feel about their lives using the four ONS wellbeing questions (life satisfaction, happiness, anxiety, worthwhile).
- **The WELLBY**: One WELLBY is a one-point change in life satisfaction (on a 0 to 10 scale) for one person for one year. HM Treasury's Green Book guidance values one WELLBY at £13,000 (2019 prices).
- **From wellbeing to social value**: Social value can be estimated using the WELLBY, where a change in life satisfaction attributed to SuDS+, multiplied by the value of a WELLBY, is the estimated social value (£) per person, per year.
- **Pathways explain the "why"**: Outcomes like belonging, nature connectedness and flood anxiety show which routes drive any wellbeing change, and therefore what to design for elsewhere.
- **What the framework sets up**: The survey collects the data needed for this calculation. The estimate itself depends on data collected in Phase 2.

SuDS+ social value questions

1.	a) Is **participation / involvement with the SuDS+ process** (e.g. opportunity walks) associated with an increase in subjective wellbeing, and if so, by how much? b) Is **visiting / engagement with the SuDS+ site** associated with an increase in subjective wellbeing, and if so, by how much?	Core question that everything else flows from and anchors the work to the WELLBY. 'Participation', 'engagement' etc need to be defined (visited the site, volunteered, involved in co-design etc). This question addresses the question of 'dose-response'.
2.	Which specific pathways, aligned to the SuDS+ vision statements (e.g. perception of resilience, access to green space, nature connectedness, community cohesion) most strongly mediate any wellbeing effect of SuDS+?	This moves towards understanding the mechanism, which is what makes the framework reusable by other sites. It also maps directly to the associated outcomes and helps prioritise what to measure in the survey. Understanding which pathway matters most could reshape how similar schemes are designed elsewhere.
3.	Are any benefits or disbenefits associated with SuDS+ distributed equitably across the local population in terms of: a. spatial distribution - how close individuals live to the site b. sub-groups - e.g. older residents, those who live alone,	This addresses the distributional effects that the Green Book increasingly requires. It has real policy relevance as nature-based infrastructure schemes are sometimes found to benefit more engaged or mobile residents rather than those most in need. Answering this could significantly strengthen the case for the approach with Defra.

SuDS+ vision statements

These are the seven vision statements, which the SuDS+ project is working towards
1. Enhance community resilience to flooding 2. Create a sense of pride and ownership over the local environment 3. Create beautiful, vibrant and diverse public spaces accessible to all 4. Strengthen local community-led networks, groups and services 5. Provide training and education for the workplaces of the future 6. Help to create local job opportunities and support existing & new businesses 7. Support affordable living costs and improve the quality of housing

This outcomes framework can help to evaluate the social value associated with vision statements 1-4.

Suggested outcomes

Outcomes of interest	How do we measure it?	Related SuDS+ vision statement
Overall wellbeing	Standard, prevalidated questions from national data sets	1-7
Loneliness		4
Physical activity levels		3
Belonging		4
Trust		4
Nature connectedness		3
Access to green space		3
Pride in place		2
Safety / perception of crime		4
Perceived flood resilience		1

Wellbeing outcomes

	Outcomes of interest	Measure	Response options
1	Overall wellbeing	On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is 'not at all' and 10 is 'completely' **(ONS4)**	1. Overall, how satisfied are you with your life nowadays? 2. Overall, how happy did you feel yesterday? 3. Overall, how anxious did you feel yesterday? 4. Overall, to what extent do you feel the things you do in your life are worthwhile?
2	Loneliness	How often do you feel lonely?	• Often/Always • Some of the time • Occasionally • Hardly ever • Never
3	Physical activity	In the past week, on how many days have you done a total of 30 minutes or more of physical activity, which was enough to raise your breathing rate?	0-7

Individual & community development outcomes

	Outcome of interest	Measure	Response options
4	Belonging	- I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood - The friendships and associations I have with other people in my neighbourhood mean a lot to me	Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree/disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
5	Trust	To what extent do you agree or disagree that most people in your local area can be trusted?	
6	Nature connectedness	How much do you agree or disagree with the following: - Being in nature makes me very happy - Spending time in nature is very important to me - I find being in nature really amazing	Completely disagree, Strongly disagree, Disagree, Neither agree nor disagree, Agree, Strongly agree, Completely agree
7	Access to green space	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements relating to your nearest greenspace areas (not including your own garden)? - My local greenspaces are within easy walking distance - My local greenspaces are a high enough standard to want to spend time in	Strongly agree, Agree, Neither agree/disagree, Disagree, Strongly disagree
8	Pride in place	I am proud to live in my local area	Definitely agree, Tend to agree, Neither agree nor disagree, Tend to disagree, Definitely disagree

Individual & community development outcomes

	Outcome of interest	Measure	Response options
9	Personal flood anxiety	On a scale where 0 is "not at all anxious" and 10 is "completely anxious", overall, how anxious do you feel about the risk of flooding?	0-10
10	Safety / perception of crime	How safe would you feel walking alone in this area after dark?	Very safe, Fairly safe, A bit unsafe, Very unsafe.
		How much do you worry that you might be a victim of a crime?	A big worry, A bit of a worry, An occasional doubt, Not a worry at all
		(How common in your area is...) Vandalism and deliberate damage to property?	Don't know, Very common, Fairly common, Not very common, Not at all common

Engagement / participation with SuDS+

	Outcome of interest	Measure	Response options
11	Visiting / using the site	Have you visited the SuDS+ site? If so, how many days in the last month have you visited or spent time at a SuDS+ site?	Yes / No 0 days, 1-3 days, 4-6 days, 7-14 days, more than 14 days
12	Type of participation	Have you taken part in any of the following?	We recommend that a 'core' list is agreed but it can be tailored for different sites where different activities may be happening. 1. Visited a stall, pop-up or community event 2. Joined an opportunity walk or site tour 3. Filled in a survey or questionnaire 4. Added to a community map (e.g. marking places you like or want to see change) 5. Taken part in a co-design workshop or shared ideas for the site 6. Helped collect data or monitor wildlife (citizen science) 7. Volunteered to look after the site (e.g. planting, clearing, litter picking) 8. Taken part in a school or educational visit 9. Other (please specify)
13	Attribution	Did you use this green space before the SuDS+ improvements were made? If so, how often (days in the a typical month)?	Yes / No 0 days, 1-3 days, 4-6 days, 7-14 days, more than 14 days
14	Bringing people together	If you visit the site, who do you typically visit with?	Tick all that apply: my child/ren, spouse / partner, family member, friend, dog, on my own, other.

Demographics

Demographic	Question	Response options
Date of birth	What is your date of birth?	DD MM YYYY
Gender	What is your gender?	Female, Male, Other, Prefer not to say
Employment	What is your current working status?	Retired, Employed / Self-employed, Unemployed, Looking after family or home, Long-term sick or disabled, Student (full or part-time), Prefer not to say, Other
Marital status	What is your current marital status?	Single, Married / in a legally recognised Civil Partnership, Living as a couple but not legally married, Separated, Divorced or former civil partner, Widowed or surviving civil partner, Prefer not to say
Ethnic group or background	Which one of the following best describes your ethnic group or background?	White, Mixed, Asian or Asian British, Black or Black British, Prefer not to say, Other
Religion	What is your religion, even if you are not currently practising?	No religion, Christian, Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Prefer not to say, Other religion
Self-reported general health	In general, would you say your health is...	Excellent, Very good, Good, Fair, Poor
Disability	Do you have any physical or mental health conditions or illnesses that have lasted or are expected to last 12 months or more?	Yes, no, prefer not to say
IMD / proximity to site	Postcode	

SuDS+ social value considerations

The counterfactual or ‘what would have happened anyway’

A core challenge in any wellbeing assessment. We want to identify, as far as possible, the impact of the SuDS+ project rather than picking up the effect of anything else. There are options of how this can be accounted for within the research design

- **A matched comparison group from national data** (e.g. Understanding Society), matched on certain variables, for example, demographics, health and baseline wellbeing. This can provide a defensible external benchmark even when there's no local ‘untreated’ group available.
- **A local comparison group** - residents living further from the site, or in a similar neighbourhood without a SuDS+ project. This can work well where local group is similar enough on key characteristics.
- **Simple pre/post at the same site** - this is the weakest option but is sometimes all that's feasible. The limitation should be stated up front.

Time - collecting data at multiple points in time help to monitor change and / or persistence of outcomes

- **When to measure** - wellbeing effects from environmental/place-based interventions often take time to build (people need to discover, trust and start using a new space) but can also show an initial novelty spike that fades. A single measurement point risks catching either the novelty effect or be ‘too early’. Where possible, collect a baseline before the SuDS+ works are complete, then follow up at more than one point afterwards (e.g. 6 and 12 months).
- **How long to keep measuring** - flood resilience perception in particular may only really shift after residents have lived through a particular season or flood event since the scheme was built, so a single early follow-up could understate that outcome specifically.

SuDS+ social value considerations

Seasonality - the time of year the data is collected should be factored into the research design
Several of the framework's outcomes are seasonally sensitive; green space visiting, physical activity, and perceived flood resilience. Wherever there's a baseline and follow-up wave, they should ideally fall in comparable seasons so any change isn't just picking up seasonal differences. Regardless, the month of data collection should always be recorded and considered within the analysis.

Selection bias
Those who choose to respond to a survey tend to be more engaged, may already be out and about and perhaps under-represent those who stay at home, work long hours, or are just less engaged. It is worth considering data collection options such as door-to-door, include translated materials where helpful and offer multiple response modes e.g. emails, whatsapp groups, QR codes.

Other factors to consider
Differences between sites and local contexts, statistical power, other local events or interventions, consistency of data collection across sites, data protection / consent.