

Sustainable Drainage Systems

An introduction to ABG geosynthetic systems
for use in SuDS applications

● The increasing need for SuDS

In addition to the ever increasing need to minimise the catastrophic impact of extreme flooding events, a much more sustainable approach to how we manage surface water is necessary in order to create a more balanced and natural ecology in both our urban and rural areas.

By embracing the core principles of SuDS, we will help to minimise the impact of flooding, whilst also facilitating a much more attractive and sustainable landscape in which we work and live.

This new strategy to manage our surface water more effectively and minimise the risk of flooding is based upon implementing the following measures:

- Installing sustainable drainage systems on new and existing development.
- Use of forestry and land management to hold back water in the upper reaches of rivers, as well as dredging for the lower reaches.
- Buildings and land that cannot be properly protected to be made to withstand flooding.
- All new housing on flood plains must be resilient when built.
- More cooperation between experts, the water companies, internal drainage boards, local authorities, the Environment Agency, SEPA and Natural Resources Wales.

Historically, new development has involved the construction of large areas of impermeable surfaces, creating heavily polluted stormwater run-off which has been drained into our already overloaded and decaying sewerage systems. This total disregard for source control, and in particular natural infiltration, has significantly contributed to the ongoing problems of extreme flooding, whilst also causing extensive river pollution and limiting groundwater recharge.

A much more creative and sustainable approach is necessary, involving the design of innovative hybrid (both above and below ground) SuDS solutions where our stormwater is effectively managed and when viable utilised as a valuable natural resource.

SuDS source control techniques such as porous paving and green/blue roofs play a significant role in reducing flood risk by managing our stormwater naturally and alleviating the burden on our existing failing drainage infrastructure.

In addition to incorporating SuDS into all new development, the greatest challenge is the clear need to retrofit SuDS within the existing built environment. This is essential if we are to achieve our objectives of effective flood risk management and water quality, as well as using water as a resource to improve the environment, promote biodiversity and adapt to ongoing climate change.

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• The advantages of geosynthetics in SuDS

For more than 50 years, geosynthetics have been used extensively throughout the world helping deliver innovative, technically assured and cost-effective solutions across an increasingly diverse range of civil engineering problems. Their use offers many advantages over 'traditional' construction techniques helping deliver sustainable solutions.

Geosynthetics continue to be used as the standard method of optimising the structural load carrying capacity of paved areas, leading to improved pavement performance, water treatment, reduced costs and increased longevity.

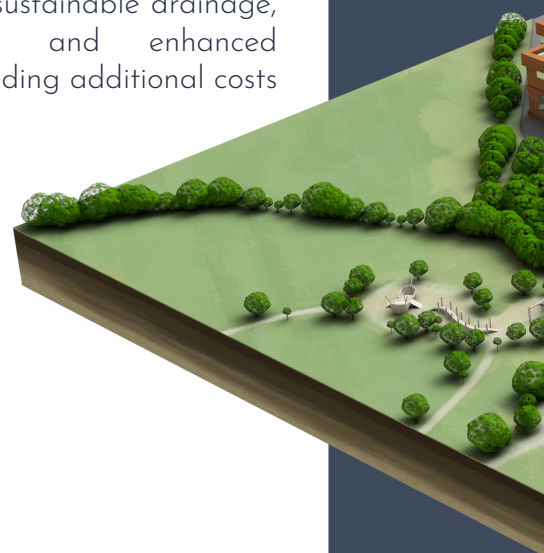
As a consequence, both the structural and stormwater treatment benefits of geosynthetics have been recognised and universally adopted in the development of a comprehensive range of SuDS solutions that deliver source control - both above and below ground.

All the stakeholders in any new development have a collective duty of care to deliver a CDM compliant solution, and one of the primary benefits of incorporating geosynthetics is that a more sustainable, shallow solution can be achieved which minimises both the risk and cost of construction. This reduced depth of construction also limits the use of natural materials and off-site disposal, which optimises the environmental credentials of a project.

Another prime benefit in the use of geosynthetics is their ability to enhance the water treatment capability of a SuDS system. Source control solutions rely upon a series of treatment stages in order to achieve an acceptable quality of discharge water, and geotextiles and geocomposites in particular have an important role to play in achieving this increasingly onerous requirement.

In addition; geotextiles, geomembranes, geocomposites and erosion control mats (ECMs) are essential components for the installation, protection and continuing function of the increasingly diverse range of infiltration and attenuation systems.

Hence, the role of geosynthetics is fundamental in delivering good urban design which embraces 'garden city' principles to deal with the ever increasing challenges of flooding; through building resilient high quality, well designed places - providing space for sustainable drainage, green infrastructure and enhanced biodiversity without adding additional costs to development.



Green and blue roofs and podium decks

Geosynthetics are an integral element of green and blue roof construction, allowing the build to be thinner and lighter, whilst maintaining building performance.

The use of geosynthetics contributes to the drainage and storage capacity whilst having a positive impact on quality of water discharged from the roof.

Trench soakaway systems

Geotextiles have long been an integral element of soakaway systems, providing a vital treatment process as collected water is filtered through the fabric.

Swales and channels

Geosynthetics can contribute to the construction of efficient swales and conveyance channels by providing resilient protection from damage caused by erosion.

Steep banks on swales can be constructed using geosynthetics, reducing the land take required and releasing valuable space for development.

Porous paving systems

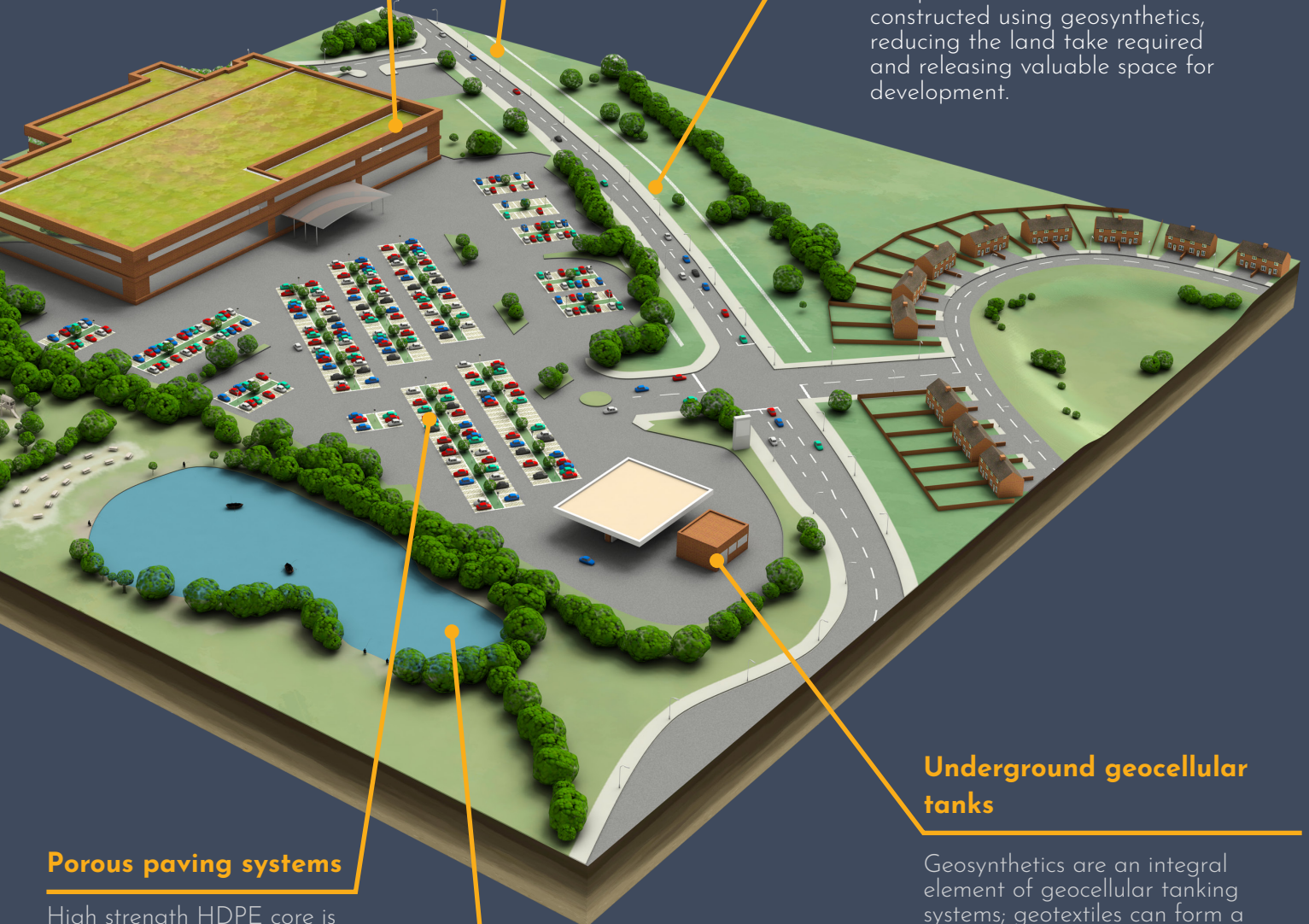
High strength HDPE core is capable of withstanding loads applied by backfill materials. Cusped core profile forms a void through which collected water can freely flow. Double cusped structure allows flow both sides whilst forming an impermeable central barrier.

Ponds and basins

Geosynthetics provide a convenient method for the effective lining of SuDS retention ponds and basins. Where suitable, steep banks can be constructed using geosynthetics making land available for development.

Underground geocellular tanks

Geosynthetics are an integral element of geocellular tanking systems; geotextiles can form a highly efficient filtration material in infiltration systems, whilst geomembranes make effective tanking systems where attenuation is required.



SuDS Paving

ABG offer a range of complementary components to create an integrated porous paving system designed to effectively manage the safe collection, treatment, management and dispersal of surface water.

The ABG Sustainable Paving system is configurable to individual project requirements and offers a range of surface solutions to meet aesthetic and performance requirements. A range of geogrids and geocells can both minimise construction depths and meet structural requirements. In addition, high performance geotextiles help treat collected water to meet quality expectations. Finally, geocomposites can allow the formation of a free storage void across the paved area to attenuate surface water during storm events.



Truckcell porous paving system for HGV traffic

SuDS Blue / Green Roofs

ABG green and blue roofs (constructions that have the ability to attenuate collected water within the roof/podium deck structure) have been used extensively across many leading sustainable developments across the UK. Offered as a full turnkey solution, including PI covered design through to installation and on-going maintenance, they provide an integral element of any holistic SuDS solution.

The final design of the system is dependent on the project specific requirements, with a number of final surface finishes available including extensive, intensive and biodiverse vegetation along with paved finishes. The drainage/storage capacity is also project specific to meet the requirements of the SuDS design. A blue roof is often more cost effective than a SuDS tank.



ABG Green Roof installation as part of a SuDS scheme

SuDS Ponds and Basins

Geosynthetic lining systems such as GCL and HDPE are useful and long-lasting methods of forming ponds. Liners can be pre-fabricated to size before delivery, or welded on site to the required profile.

The Webwall system offers a solution in many SuDS applications, with its primary use being in the construction of steep embankments on SuDS structures such as swales, channels and attenuation basins and ponds. Constructing steeper embankments minimises the land take of the structure, freeing up more land for development and allowing developers to maximise return whilst meeting statutory SuDS requirements.



Webwall around SuDS attenuation pond

SuDS Tree Root Protection

Abweb TRP is a no-dig, or a reduced-dig geocellular tree root protection alternative to traditional methods of constructing paths, roads and parking areas in and around trees. It is designed to protect the root structure of the tree from damage caused by the compaction of local soils as a result of vehicular traffic. The porous surface ensures water and air can carry essential nutrients to the tree roots. A nonwoven geotextile is positioned beneath the Abweb TRP to prevent any fines washing through and ultimately clogging the system, preventing the water and air from reaching the roots over the lifetime of the tree.



Geocellular SuDS Tank

SuDS Erosion Control

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Erosion control on flood alleviation channel

SuDS Subbase Reinforcement

ABG offer a complete range of high performance geogrids and geotextiles for use in many SuDS engineering applications. The geogrid range comprises both uniaxial and biaxial configurations and are suitable for use in many applications, including the construction of reinforced earth systems and the strengthening and reinforcement of weak sub soils allowing the construction of thinner pavements.

Porous paving systems require an open graded stone sub-base such as MoT Type 3. These layers are weaker than well graded MoT Type 1 and consequently thicker layers are required. However, Geocells reinforce and confine MoT Type 3 to give greatly increased strength, and hence thinner layers can be used.



Geocell sub-base reinforcement over filter geotextile

About ABG

ABG is a market leader in the design, development, manufacture and technical support of high performance geosynthetic systems for use in a wide range of civil engineering, environmental and building projects.

Formed in 1988, based in Meltham, in the heart of the Pennines, ABG have developed an excellent reputation for developing quality products and delivering outstanding service. The ability for rapid product development ensures that the most innovative, up to date and cost effective solution can be found for many engineering problems.

ABG's involvement in creating sustainable drainage systems goes back over thirty years and we have wide engineering expertise, coupled with a complete range of geosynthetic products developed specifically for use in this technically demanding application.

Technical support is provided by our trained and experienced staff, many of whom are Chartered Civil Engineers. This extensive support extends to full design, design validation, feasibility studies, cost advice and advice on meeting regulatory requirements.

Part of this technical support includes developing and driving knowledge within our active markets including working with both international and local regulatory bodies on developing guidance and best practice in the use of innovative geosynthetics to solve complex engineering issues.

A full installation and maintenance service for many ABG systems is available through our Geogreen installation teams.

To discuss your project specific requirements contact our SuDS Team.

t 01484 852096

e enquiries@abgltd.com

For the latest information and developments in SuDS visit www.susdrain.org

ABG are supporters of Susdrain





ABG Geosynthetics

E7 Meltham Mills Road, Holmfirth, HD9 4DS

T: +44 (0)1484 852096 **E:** enquiries@abgltd.com **W:** www.abgltd.com

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