Advanced WINEP Sustainable Water Fund

Technical Support Guide

April 2025

United Utilities

Water for the North West

Contents

1. Context

1a. Sustainable Water Fund – Pilot Launch

Our Sustainable Water Fund offers the opportunity to deliver rainwater management solutions in partnership with United Utilities, in specific areas. It is funded by our Advanced WINEP programme which unlocks early investment into delivering storm overflow enhancements. Before proceeding with an application, please **check that your location is in an eligible area** by submitting the easting and northing coordinates to rainwater@uuplc.co.uk. We will endeavour to quickly triage your location and respond with an initial eligibility.

This process provides a mechanism for projects to access funding to enhance schemes and integrate rainwater management. It is targeted at local authorities to support schemes such as active travel, town regeneration, highways improvements, flood risk management, parks and recreation.

If you are not a local authority, or require significant input from UU to develop, co-design and deliver, please get in touch with our team at rainwater@uuplc.co.uk and we can support establishing next steps.

The £9m pilot launch will close on 1st June 2025 and applications for funding will re-open in September 2025 until 2029. The pilot launch prioritises projects with an earlier completion date. Further details will be announced prior to the fund re-opening.

Through this guide there is reference to key information and supporting information. **Key information** is mandatory for submission and UU assessing the value of the scheme. **Supporting information** ensures that the wider benefits are also being captured and minimum expectations have been set for them. Subject to demand and if required, the information provided, including value, will be used to support prioritisation.

1b. Advanced WINEP

Our Advanced WINEP (Water Industry National Environment Programme) unlocks earlier, innovative investment to maximise partnership working. It focuses on delivering rainwater management solutions in catchment areas where storm overflows need to be improved to meet regulatory commitments. This is separate and must not be within areas already funded in our 2025 – 2030 Better Rivers programme. Within the Water UK Storm Overflow Plan you can see which overflows are within our Better Rivers programme (not eligible for Advanced WINEP) and those that have a target date for completion between 2031 and 2050 (eligible for Advanced WINEP).

This programme provides an opportunity to demonstrate how greater regulatory flexibility can allow us to increase co-funding and wider benefits in addition to improving river water quality through a reduction in the activation of storm overflows and the conventional storage required to deliver statutory targets. Rainwater management interventions can deliver a range of benefits to the environment and society that conventional grey infrastructure solutions do not. Additional value can include, but is not limited to sequestering carbon, reducing flood risk, enhancing drought resilience, increasing biodiversity and improving access to amenity and recreation.

Through the Advanced WINEP, we are building on our previous “Green Recovery” scheme by offering funding to the whole North West region to mature how local authorities and water companies can collaborate to deliver rainwater management. The Advanced WINEP aims to:

- Evolve future WINEPs to unlock **greater value** for customers and the environment.
- Grow and share **experience of delivering nature-based solutions**, integrating with the Mainstreaming Nature-based Solutions project.
- **Scale up rainwater management** in the North West, a key strategy in addressing storm overflows.
- Unlock a flexible approach to **delivering an Integrated Water Management Plan**.

2. Guidance

2a. Timeline and Key Dates

	Milestone Date
Sustainable Water Fund Pilot Launch	**1st April 2025**
Support drop ins	**Launch Webinar – 7th April 2025, 11am.** Join the webinar here. **Council "Drop In" Sessions – weekly on Thursday mornings** DoodlePoll - Sustainable Water Fund Drop In (First come first serve)
Pilot Launch Close	**1st June 2025**
Application Evaluation	**Monday 5th May – Monday 16th June** During this period, the eligible applications will be evaluated by a team of assessors using the criteria in Section 2d. This is to understand the value and wider benefits of the project.
Application Feedback	**1st August 2025** We will provisionally inform you via email on the outcome of your application by 1st August 2025. If successful, you will be asked to complete and sign a funding agreement and further discussions will take place to progress funding. If unsuccessful, we will inform you on why it did not meet the required criteria.
Contracts	**Stage 1** The standard template contracts are shared with partners at the outset of the application process for review. Standard Contract Template **Stage 2** By September 2025 – we expect for the applicant's authority to have agreed to sign up to the terms of the fund. **Stage 3** On review of the project, appropriate payment milestones are reviewed and payments issued after these are met.
Deadline	Pilot funding must be spent by 31/03/2029. If your project is likely to go past this date, please contact rainwater@uuplc.co.uk to discuss the opportunity.
Sustainable Water Fund Full Launch	The fund will reopen from September 1st 2025. All projects must be delivered by 31/03/2029. These dates may change subject to demand.

2b. Case Study – Green Recovery / Mayor's Walking & Cycling Scheme - Oldham

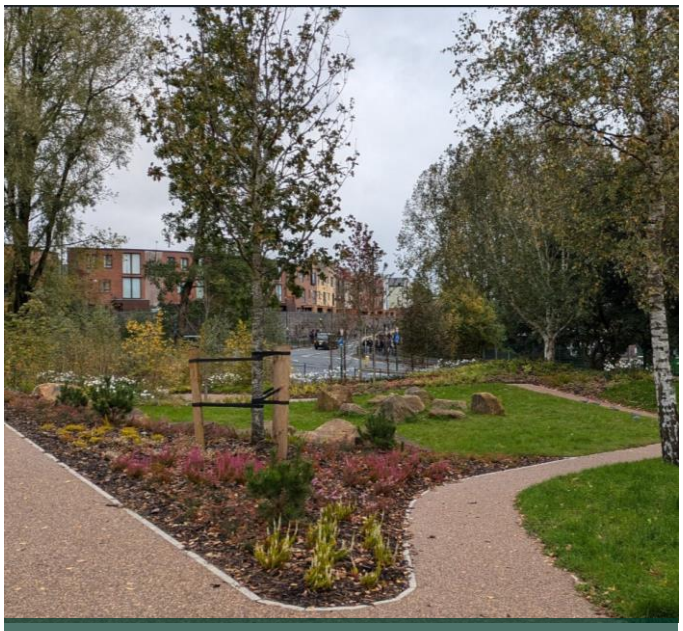
In 2020, Ofwat approached water companies to submit a business case to accelerate future spend or propose innovative solutions to contribute towards a green economic recovery following covid-19. United Utilities Water had a £9m business case approved to deliver SuDS and NFM in Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Fylde and Eden catchments.

The key investment objectives were:

- Increase natural capital value in the North West
- Increase resilience of catchments to the impacts of climate change through blue and green infrastructure
- Mature the systems, tools and processes used to install and deliver blue and green infrastructure
- Incorporate the learnings into PR24 and future business cases

A Call for Schemes was launched, and Oldham submitted requests for funding as part of their emerging Mayor's cycling and walking challenge funded projects. These were Rock Street, West Street, Market Place, Curzon Street and Snipe Gardens. The funding was provided as an allocation to increase sustainable drainage capacity and reduce surface water volume entering the combined sewerage system, increase amenity spaces, improving connectivity for disabled and vulnerable road users i.e. pedestrian/cycle provisions and increasing soft landscaping infrastructure to facilitate a new public amenity space in the form of a park.

West Street, Oldham – Bioretention features with integrated cycleway



Rock Street, Oldham – SuDS enabled park with disability access, swales and raingardens

UU contributed towards 45% of the project costs across these schemes and it has delivered c. £9m of natural capital benefit. The work now avoids over 4 olympic sized swimming pools worth of rainwater entering the system every year! Working with Oldham in this way has developed good working partnership relationships, where common visions have aligned to deliver a transformative project for the community. It has created the opportunity to further promote opportunities into Oldham as part of the Advanced WINEP, taking the learning of what we have done.

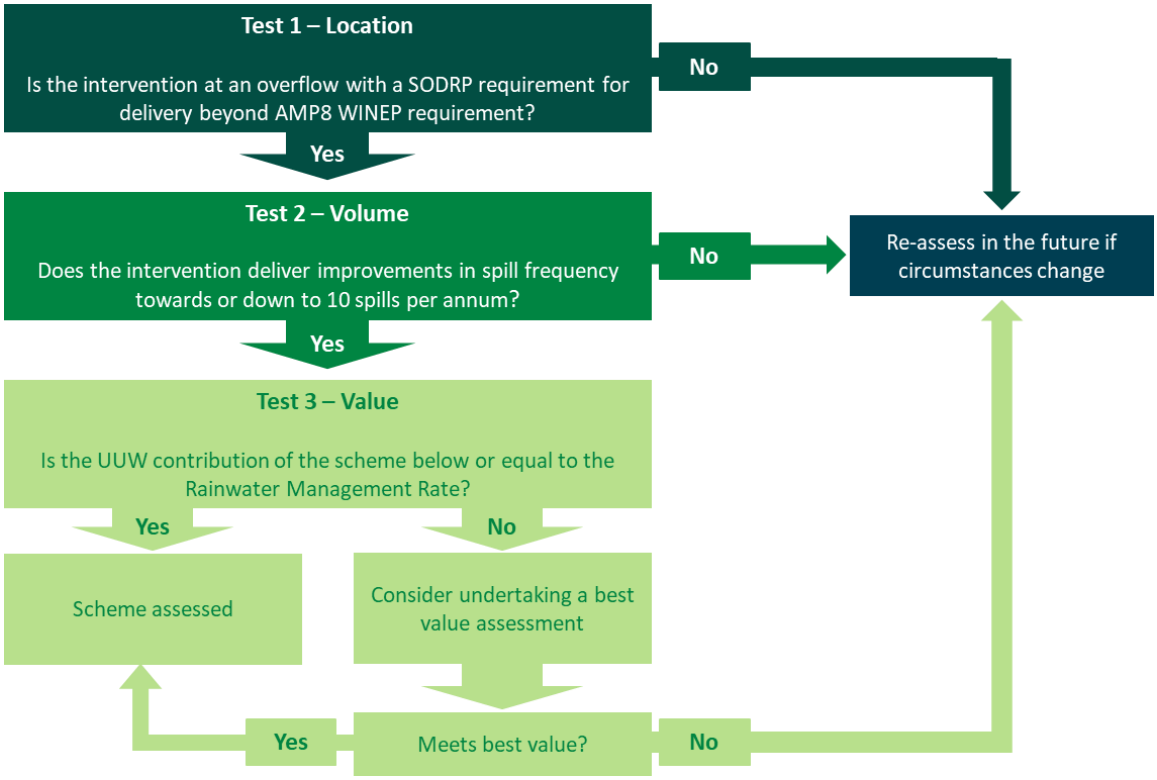
Key Learning from Green Recovery for applications:

Some of the key learning we have taken, and how we have embedded them into this fund are:

1. *Don't provide a single opportunity to apply with short notice* – The pilot phase will provide early learning for the price review so we will get eligible projects mobilised. We will then *leave the fund open*
2. *Keep funding rules simple* - This fund prioritises *disconnecting rainwater from combined sewer systems*.
3. *Make the fund available for us* - We have opened the fund to all local authorities across the North West.

2c. Key information – Eligibility and Rules

All projects must meet essential criteria set out below. Test 1 will be assessed prior to your full application being submitted. Test 2 and 3 will be assessed using the answers provided in the application form.



Test 1 – Using your answers within Q1-2 in Part 1 of the form, we will assess whether the location is within an overflow with a 2031-2050 target date in the Storm Overflow Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP)[1], and is not within the drainage area for an overflow with a 2025-2030 target date.

Test 2 – Using your answers within Q1-9 in Part 1 of the form, we will ensure the intervention is driving an improvement towards a 10 spill target.

Test 3 – Using your answers within Q3-12 in Part 1 of the form, we will assess your ask of funding against our rainwater management rate of £50/m2 alongside any attenuation factors and the cost of the solution to review whether the scheme is viable.

To be eligible for funding, projects must also align to the rules of the Sustainable Water Fund (Pilot). Questions relating to these rules are covered in the application form (see Part 2 of the form).

1. Projects must be co-funded
2. Projects must be submitted by a local authority
3. Projects must be delivered by 31/03/2029
4. Projects must not already be in construction / fully funded.
5. Projects must use approved solutions (Natural Flood Management/ Disconnection / Sustainable Drainage Systems)
6. Projects must publish information to support industry learning
7. Projects must use the standard commercial templates enclosed to claim funding

UU holds the discretion to decide what to fund, and the value of funding on a case by case basis.

If you would like to discuss any of these criteria and flexibility, please contact rainwater@uuplc.co.uk or attend a drop in session (see timeline and key dates).

Detail on the supplementary information required to support the business is within the next section.

[1] Storm overflows discharge reduction plan - GOV.UK

2d. Supporting Information - Scoring Guide

If the essential criteria are met, then the project may be eligible for funding under the Advanced WINEP. We're looking for supplementary information to review the eligibility of a project against the scoring criteria. These will be used to evidence the multiple benefits of working in partnership and inform funding decisions if required. We are looking for scores to be at least 20 to secure funding.

The maximum contribution per hectare of disconnected impermeable area is **£500,000/ha**, or £50/m2 for projects that meet the necessary requirements.

If the scheme cost is higher than what funding can be raised, including partnership, a best value analysis at the specific overflow could be completed to optimise the proposed solution.

The information requested as part of the application will be used to support assessments on funding and evidence the wider benefits and outcomes delivered as part of a more flexible and agile approach to partnership working. We will score the projects using the information provided to support prioritisation where required.

Section Question	Scoring Category	Criteria	Total Score Available
S1 **Q3,4**	Disconnection priority	10 – Disconnection 5 – Attenuation 1 – NFM	10
S1 **Q10,11,12**	Co-funding (by the local authority and project partners)	10 – 50% and above 5 – 20%-49% 1 – 1%-19%	10
S1 **Q3**	Delivering at Scale	Total project area (up to 10 Ha)	10
S1 **Q1,3,4**	Spill Reduction	Quantified by UU as a product of the proximity to an eligible storm overflow and its activation. 10 - High impact, 1 - Low impact	10
S3 **Q4**	Partnership	1 – IWMP 1 - Additional Partner(s)	2
S3 **Q10,11**	Timescale for completion	6 – 2026 5 – 2027 1 - 2028+	6
S4 **Q1**	Multiple Benefits	Qualitive score out of 10 assessed by UU using evidence around water quality, water quantity, amenity and biodiversity impacts.	10
S4 **Q3**	Learning	1 – Yes to disclaimer	1
S4 **Q4**	Community Engagement	1 – Yes to disclaimer	1
	Total		**60**

2e. Application Form Support

Part 1 – Key Information - Advanced WINEP Eligibility

Test	Question	Data Type	Guidance
1 **T1/2**	What is the location of the project?	Number	Eastings and Northings Please submit shapefiles of the location and the areas to be addressed during the project. The proximity to storm overflow locations, and their associated spill frequency will impact its score.
2 **T1/2**	Have you confirmed the location is eligible with the RWM team?	Tick Box	At the outset, please submit the location of your project to rainwater@uuplc.co.uk so we can make sure that the project is in an eligible location for this programme. **If not, we will re-direct it to the appropriate team.**
3 **T2/3**	Pre-project area draining to the combined sewer (m2)	Number	Please outline in m^2 the area that has a current positive connection to a combined sewer, or surface water sewer that discharges to a combined sewer. Sewer records are available to all local authorities. If you do not have access, please contact us at rainwater@uuplc.co.uk.
4 **T2/3**	Post-project area draining to the combined sewer (post development) (m2)	Number	Please outline in m^2 the area that post-project, will have a positive connection to a combined sewer, or surface water sewer that discharges to a combined sewer. The new discharge location should be referenced within the application. Disconnections will have a significantly higher value.
5 **T2/3**	Pre-project flow rates (in l/s for 1,2,5,10,30 year events)	Number	If you are disconnecting surface water from the combined sewer, population of this field is not required.
6 **T2/3**	Post-project flow rates (in l/s for 1,2,5,10,30 year events)	Number	If you are disconnecting surface water from the combined sewer, population of this field is not required.
7 **T2/3**	Maximum total storage volume created for new SuDS attenuation features (m3)	Number	If you are disconnecting surface water from the combined sewer, population of this field is not required.
8 **T2/3**	Attenuation Betterment	Text	If you have any other supporting information to support the betterment, please attach the evidence.
9 **T2/3**	Natural Flood Management Area	Number	Natural Flood Management schemes should be used in a complementary fashion with disconnection and attenuation to further improve flood risk and water quality at a catchment scale.
10 **T3**	What is the total cost of your project?	Number Text	Please provide an idea of the accuracy of the estimates. Estimate classification (class 1-5) based on level of project definition in a percentage. (Class 1 50% -100% project definition at Tender stage after detailed design using unit costs) - class 5 (0%-2% project definition at Feasibility stage - using Judgement / high-level parametric models).
11 **T3**	What is the cost of the rainwater management features?	Number Text	Estimate classification (class 1-5) based on level of project definition in a percentage. (Class 1 50% -100% project definition at Tender stage after detailed design

			using unit costs) - class 5 (0%-2% project definition at Feasibility stage - using Judgement / high-level parametric models).
12 **T3**	What is the contribution requested from UU?	Number Text	Please provide the funding amount being requested for as part of this project.

Part 2 – Key Information - Sustainable Water Fund Rules

	Question	Data Type	Guidance
1	Co-funding has been or will be secured	Yes/No	By providing the agility and flexibility around location and timescales, it is expected that a minimum of 20% of the project will be co-funded by the local authority.
2	Are you submitting as a local authority?	Yes/No	If you are not part of a local authority, please get in contact with rainwater@uuplc.co.uk and we will engage for a bespoke agreement.
3	Can you commit to delivery by 31/03/2029?	Yes/No	Our priority is to get early delivery to facilitate industry learning.
4	Is the project already fully funded or in construction?	Yes/No	We will not fund projects that we do not have any ability to review and influence or are fully funded. We want to co-design to maximise the benefits for rainwater management.
5	Is this scheme to deliver SuDS, NFM or disconnection?	Yes/No	We can only fund these solution types.
6	Are you willing to publish learning to the sector?	Yes/No	This programme will share lessons of its work to regulators and the wider sector.
7	Standard contractual terms	Yes/No	Have you downloaded and read the standard contract template that will be used for the purposes of all the call for schemes projects? We advise that you share this upfront with your legal teams for review and sign off so we can be agile once the approvals are made.

Part 3 – Project Details

	Question	Data Type	Guidance
1	Solution Types	Tick Box (1 of each item)	**SuDS -** Rainwater harvesting, Green roofs, Infiltration systems, Proprietary treatment systems, Filter strips, Filter drains, Swales, Bioretention systems, Trees, Pervious pavements, Attenuation storage tanks, Detention basins, Ponds and wetlands **NFM** - Upland peat management, Soil and land management, Runoff management, Runoff storage, Catchment woodland, Cross slope woodland, Riparian woodland, Floodplain woodland, Leaky barriers, Offline storage, Floodplain reconnection, River channel restoration, **Separation** - Disconnection of surface water from combined sewers to ground, waterbody or surface water sewers.
2	What stage of the project is it in?	Drop down	We want to understand what maturity the project has. If it is at early stages, please indicate so and provide us with a high level view of what the project aims to

			deliver, so that we can review and work further with you to develop the proposals.
3	Evidence of connectivity (site photographs, GIS records, drainage plans, connectivity surveys, dye tests or any other evidence clearly demonstrating the above)	File	We will need to physically confirm positive connections to the combined sewer to fund projects, so please attach any existing information that confirms assumptions.
4	Which other partners or funding sources are being utilised? Details of other agreed partners and their statement of support	Text	If you are in the GMCA or LCR areas, please contact your respective IWMP contacts to get support for your project. We would like to record and understand the other funding sources being considered, so that we can align and support in finding more.
5	Will you own the rainwater management asset(s)?	Text	Are you intending on retaining ownership of the features in the land as it is currently?
6	Will you maintain the asset? If Yes, please attach a maintenance statement	Text	Are you intending on maintaining the features in the land as it is currently? Which function within the council is maintaining the assets and is any support required?
7	If not, landowner provide details of who landowner(s) are and intended agreements / agreements already in place.	Text	
8	Is planning permission required for this project? Is it anticipated any other consenting may be required for the project	Text	
9	When is the anticipated completion of detailed design?	Date	Please provide confidence of the estimates.
10	When is the expected construction start on site date?	Date	Please provide confidence of the estimates.
11	What is the expected construction period?	Date	Please provide confidence of the estimates.
12	What are the anticipated risks and opportunities to meeting the expected project end date? How might partnering with UU overcome any of these?	Text	We want to consider the risks around deliver at the outset, so we can support you to put the best mitigation plans in place.

Part 4 - Wider Benefits and Learning

	Question	Data Type	Guidance
1	What additional benefits will the project provide relating to water quality, water quantity, biodiversity and amenity?	Attachment	For example, evidence of any sewer, surface water, fluvial or coastal flooding that may improve as a result of the scheme or present a risk to the construction of the proposed solution. For example, what biodiversity will be delivered by the scheme? Will the project require Biodiversity Net Gain or demonstrate No Net Loss. If this is the case will a

			Baseline and NET Gain Calculation be provided using the DEFRA Metric
2	We (the Local Authority) will share information and learnings from this project with the wider sector?	Tick box	The Advanced WINEP is “open book” and therefore we will look to share the lessons learnt of this project with the sector during the progress of the project and following it in terms of benefits realisation.
3	We (the Local Authority) will support engagement of the local community with the purpose and benefits of the project	Tick box	The Advanced WINEP must recognise communities when developing projects, and so we will engage at an early stage to co-create opportunities wherever possible.

Part 5 – Administrative Information

	Question	Data Type	Guidance
1	Project Name	Text	
2	Project Description	Text	Please provide a detailed description of the project including any relevant attachments such as plans, sketches or visual recreations of proposed plans.
3	What local authority do you belong to?	Drop down	If you are not a local authority, please get in touch to discuss the opportunity and find out how we can support further.
4	Lead Contact Full Name	Text	
5	Lead Contact Email	Text	
6	Lead Contact Department	Drop down	
7	Lead Contact Role / Relation to Project	Text	
8	Lead Contact number	Text	
9	Lead Contact Address of organisation	Address	
10	Additional Contact Full Name	Text	
11	Additional Contact Email	Text	
12	Additional Contact Department	Drop down	
13	Additional Contact Role / Relation to Project	Text	
14	Additional Contact number	Text	
15	Additional Contact Address of organisation	Address	

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Water for the North West