Nature
protecting and enhancing
the natural environment

Our business is inherently circular: we abstract water from the natural environment to provide our customers with a vital resource, before taking away their wastewater, treating it and safely recycling the water back into the natural environment. Our ambition is that our services always contribute to a flourishing natural environment.
Floods are becoming more frequent and severe due to climate change. SuDS can help manage this risk.

SuDS can reduce flooding by reducing the peak discharge and slowing the flow. They can also reduce pollution by filtering out sediment carried in storm flows, provide increased amenity and reduce the cost of site drainage. We will retrofit SuDS where this helps to reduce the risk of flooding and facilitates storm separation.

We will gradually transform the sewerage network by taking every economically viable opportunity to disconnect surface areas from existing combined sewers, for example when laying a new storm sewer to service a new development. In many locations this will help free up capacity in combined sewers for new connections without having to lay new or combined sewers.

We will actively promote the use of green infrastructure such as sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) in new developments by providing clear guidance to developers. SuDS have the potential to reduce flooding by reducing the peak discharge and slowing the flow. They can also reduce pollution by filtering out sediment carried in storm flows, provide increased amenity and reduce the cost of site drainage. We will retrofit SuDS where this helps to reduce the risk of flooding and facilitates storm separation.

We will contribute to the development and implementation of flood risk management plans where this aligns to our roles and responsibilities. We will seek to increase the rate of maintenance of the network so that it is more robust and reliable. We will increase and improve our long term investment in extending and improving the networks by working with the government to introduce an approach similar to the Water UK ‘Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan Framework’. Under the ‘Living With Water Programme’ we will work in collaboration with stakeholders to develop and implement a strategic plan to upgrade the wastewater networks that discharge into inner Belfast Lough.
Towards zero carbon

Operational emissions from the water industry account for nearly 1% of the UK’s total carbon emissions. This is because water treatment is energy and chemical intensive and transporting water requires a great deal of pumping. Grid electricity accounts for the vast majority of our carbon emissions. As Northern Ireland’s single largest electricity consumer, our goal is to fully exploit innovative approaches to energy and new technology to reduce our carbon footprint and ultimately become carbon neutral. We will achieve this by a wide range of actions that will affect almost every aspect of our business, including:

• improved instrumentation, automation and control of plant and equipment;
• investing in new treatment processes and pumping systems to reduce their energy demand and the emission of other greenhouse gases;
• increasing our self-generation of renewable energy; and
• procurement of more renewable energy.

Solar farm at Dunore water treatment works, County Antrim.

We completed our first solar farm to supply electricity to the Dunore water treatment works in South Antrim. Dunore water treatment works is our third largest site in terms of energy consumption accounting for 7% of our annual usage (enough electricity to power around 1,500 homes). As well as meeting the energy needs of the Dunore water treatment works, the farm also enables us to contribute spare capacity to the grid.

Other 5%