At Greenbelt, we’re serious about protecting your home from flooding. That’s why we have Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, or SUDS, on many of our new home developments.

SUDS are systems of interconnected ponds, swales, basins and zones of specialised vegetation providing temporary storage of the excess rainwater. Greenbelt manages sites that feature SUDS right across the UK, and they’re instrumental in helping to reduce urban flooding.

SUDS efficiently intercept and retain excess rainfall before releasing it back into local waterways, which is done at a limited rate to prevent flooding. SUDS can retain more water than traditional pipe systems, and discharge it at a predefined rate – meaning that local watercourses can easily cope with the system’s water output all year round.

Because of their ecological composition, SUDS are very green: a degree of natural filtration occurs while the water is retained, meaning a proportion of the run-off is negated and water departing the system arrives in streams and rivers all the cleaner for it.

SUDS can be made up of a combination and number of different structures and landscape features, for example:

- Retention ponds – with appropriate aquatic plants which hold and treat the surface water and discharge it in a managed way to the receiving watercourse (river/burn/beck/stream), rather than it rushing through the traditional piped network and into a nearby watercourse.

Greenbelt manages 200 SUDS throughout the UK and has developed expertise in maintaining and operating these features effectively.

Our main aim is to ensure the efficient operation of the SUDS and this objective must have priority over the aesthetic considerations from a horticultural point of view. This means that there are limits as to how often, and to what extent, the vegetation within and surrounding a SUDS is cut back as it is important that the vegetation does the job it is designed to do.

We also have to ensure that silt does not build up either in the ponds themselves or in any pipes that feed surface water into the ponds. This work is carried out either by hand or by specialist machinery.

We recognise that SUDS are an increasingly common feature of new housing developments and so we are working closely with Abertay University’s renowned Urban Water Technology Centre to ensure the maintenance, monitoring and management of SUDS is as effective, efficient and cost effective as possible.