



Project
Groundwater
Northumbria

NEWS LETTER

Welcome to the first PGN Newsletter of 2026. This is to keep you in the know!

PGN the Flow Path to Project Completion in March 2027!

January 2026 opened with real momentum for the PGN team. With two key work trips on the calendar, one to London for a workshop with ARUP on the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) pilot, and another to meet fellow Flood & Coast Innovation Programme (FCIP) projects, where we set out to strengthen partnerships and gather fresh insights. Read on to find out what we've been working on.

5 Key outcomes PGN are working towards:

PGN Continues to work towards six major goals:

1. Single Point of Contact (SPoC)
2. Handbook & Dashboard
3. STE(A)M Legacy
4. Community knowledge
5. Work Experience
6. Leaving a legacy for our region through process & policy change



March 30, 2026 / Issue 1

Inspiring STEM Sessions at Keser Primary and Brighton Primary

Project Groundwater Northumbria recently delivered STEM workshops for Keser Primary School & Brighton Primary School, where pupils showed wonderful warmth, curiosity and enthusiasm.

Both schools created welcoming environments, with many pupils saying they appreciated the kindness shown in asking for their ideas and valuing their answers.

At Keser Primary, pupils were eager to discuss how mining has shaped communities over time. At Brighton Primary, Year 6 explored mining in Gateshead, Europe and Brazil, and were fascinated by how former quarries become wildlife habitats.

Both schools demonstrated a strong passion for learning, making the sessions rewarding and memorable.

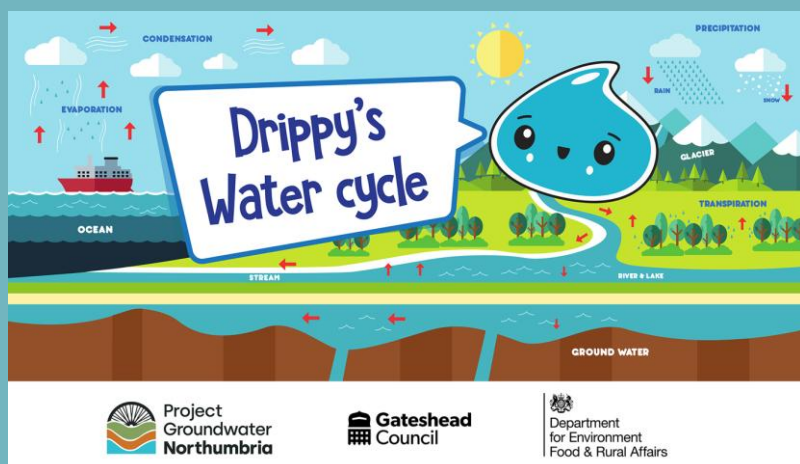


Image: teaching materials for STEM session

Laying the Foundations: Our Role in Shaping Future Planning Policy

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is consulting on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the national rulebook guiding planning decisions across England. The consultation explores how planning can better support sustainable development, climate resilience and modern infrastructure needs.

We've worked closely with our sister projects, Project Groundwater Buckinghamshire and the Lincolnshire Groundwater Project to review and contribute to the consultation. Our shared local North-East evidence base, from community engagement to on-the-ground data, has shaped our response.

A key message is that the NPPF should explicitly recognise groundwater variability across the UK and incorporate clear expectations for how planning authorities, developers and other NPPF stakeholders should assess, plan for and mitigate groundwater-related risks.

Around 70% of the North East's subsurface contains historic mining and buried infrastructure, which can influence housing development and planning decisions. In a climate emergency, rising groundwater will increasingly emerge in vulnerable areas.

National policy should seek to steer development away from high-risk locations and equip planners and communities to manage future impacts.

We've ensured the North East's unique groundwater challenges are clearly represented so our region's needs are not overlooked. **Next steps:** Government will review all feedback, and further refinements may follow before the final NPPF is published. We will keep you updated as this progresses.

A huge **thank you** to Fola Ogunyoye, Technical Lead (Buckinghamshire Project Groundwater), for coordinating this work and compiling the final submission.



'Making sure our mining legacy isn't hidden from future development'

Dive Beneath Gateshead: Explore Our New 3D World!

You may have missed this when we first shared it on social media in December, but it's a big step forward for Project Groundwater Northumbria and for our partners.

Together with the British Geological Survey (BGS), we've launched a new free interactive 3D geological model of Gateshead, designed to help us understand how groundwater moves beneath our towns and communities.

This is especially important in the North-East, where historic mining shapes how and where groundwater flooding can occur.

The model is an innovative step forward in how we can capture data. Traditional geological maps don't allow us to show the interaction of mine water and groundwater, but we can showcase them with this model.

It doesn't just visualise the subsurface, it's a tool that can improve how Gateshead Council prepares for and responds to flooding. By identifying where groundwater flooding is likely to occur. This means Councils and Risk management Authorities can better coordinate plans, deploy resources more effectively, and monitor how water moves in real time.

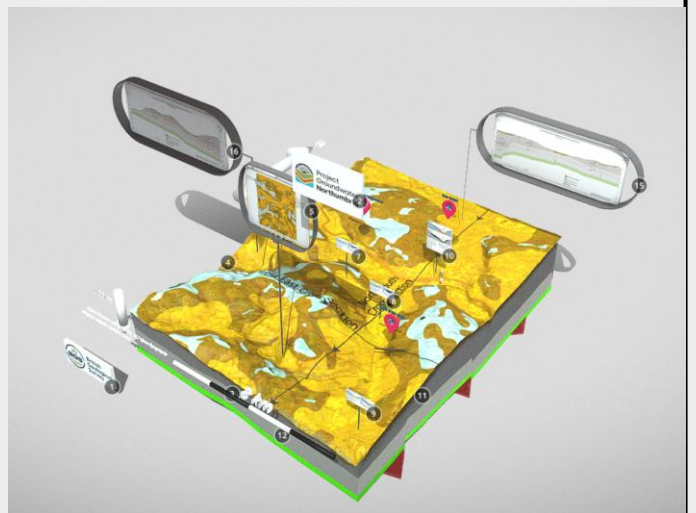
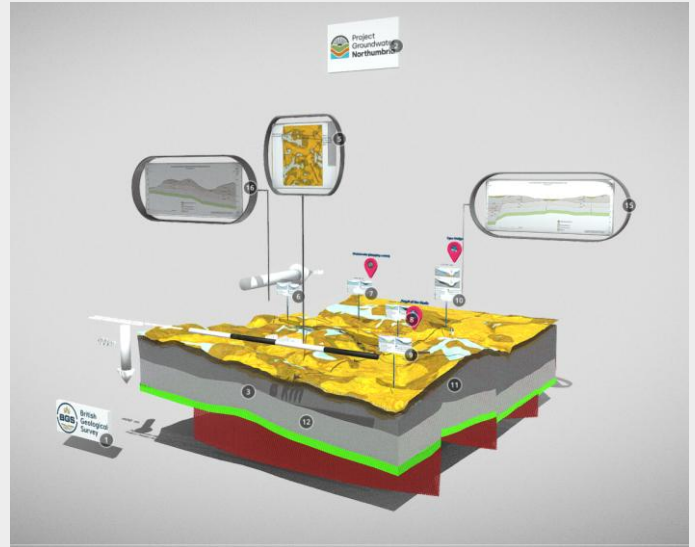
This model has taken its place alongside other 3D urban geology models as part of a Nationwide programme to understand and improve geology management.

You can explore the model here:

[3D urban geology - British Geological Survey](#)

and read the press release here: [New 3D model to help mitigate groundwater flooding - British Geological Survey](#)

Have a play and let us know what you think, your feedback helps shape what comes next.
pgn@gateshead.gov.uk



*'Now you can see what
lies beneath'*

Upcoming Events

March 28 – Saltwell Park

PGN will be pitching our tent at Saltwell Park. Come and meet the team. Will have Groundwater Guardians certificates to hand out.

April 4th – Henderson Park

During Easter Weekend PGN will be at Henderson Park Community Event. Bring your kids and colour in one of Drippy activity sheets.

April 11th – Barnhouse Hub

PGN are back out again at Barnhouse Hub Community Event. We are looking forward to meeting the community.

SPOC Technical Pilot

April, sees the launch of the SPoC technical pilot. This is an opportunity for LLFA's and RMA's, to test the pilot, to identify opportunities of growth and areas of amendment.

Summer Work Experience

We are exploring bringing students in for short technical and outreach work experience opportunities and working with our partners to ensure a great experience. Our aim is that placements begin over the summer period, more details to follow!

We appreciate your continued support and interest as we move toward creating a more resilient, better-informed future for communities across Gateshead.

If you'd like to get involved, learn more, or host a PGN visit, we'd love to hear from you – PGN@gateshead.gov.uk



*“Come see us at
a festival near
you.”*

C L O S I N G

A quick note from the PGN Lead

"As we step into a fresh new year for PGN in 2026, we're entering a pivotal phase of the programme.

Over the coming months, we'll be finalising our workstream outputs and making a concentrated push to bring everything together ahead of project closeout in March 2027.

I'd like to extend a huge **THANK YOU** to our team and all our stakeholders, partners & communities for the hard work, collaboration and perseverance that have brought us to this point.

In our next newsletter, we'll share more about how the Single Point of Contact (SPoC) system technical pilot went and the steps we'll be taking to ensure we leave a strong and legacy for the North- East."

Take Good Care *Helen*

FOLLOW US ON OUR SOCIAL CHANNELS!

We'd love your support in helping our stories, activity and project outputs travel far and wide across the North-East and beyond.

Give us a follow, share our updates, and help us spread the word!

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T H O U G H T S



**Project
Groundwater
Northumbria**

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