



# **Wessex Water Private Sewers Transfer Forum**

**19<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2011**

# Agenda



- **Overview (Steve Arthur)**
  - **Background & Wessex Water strategy**
  - **Key Issues**
  - **Scenarios**
- **Operational Approach (Paul Oaten)**
- **Discussion / Q&A**

# Scope & Scale



## Current situation

- 2.7 million waste customers
- ~18,000km of public sewer
- 1,400 public sewage pumping stations



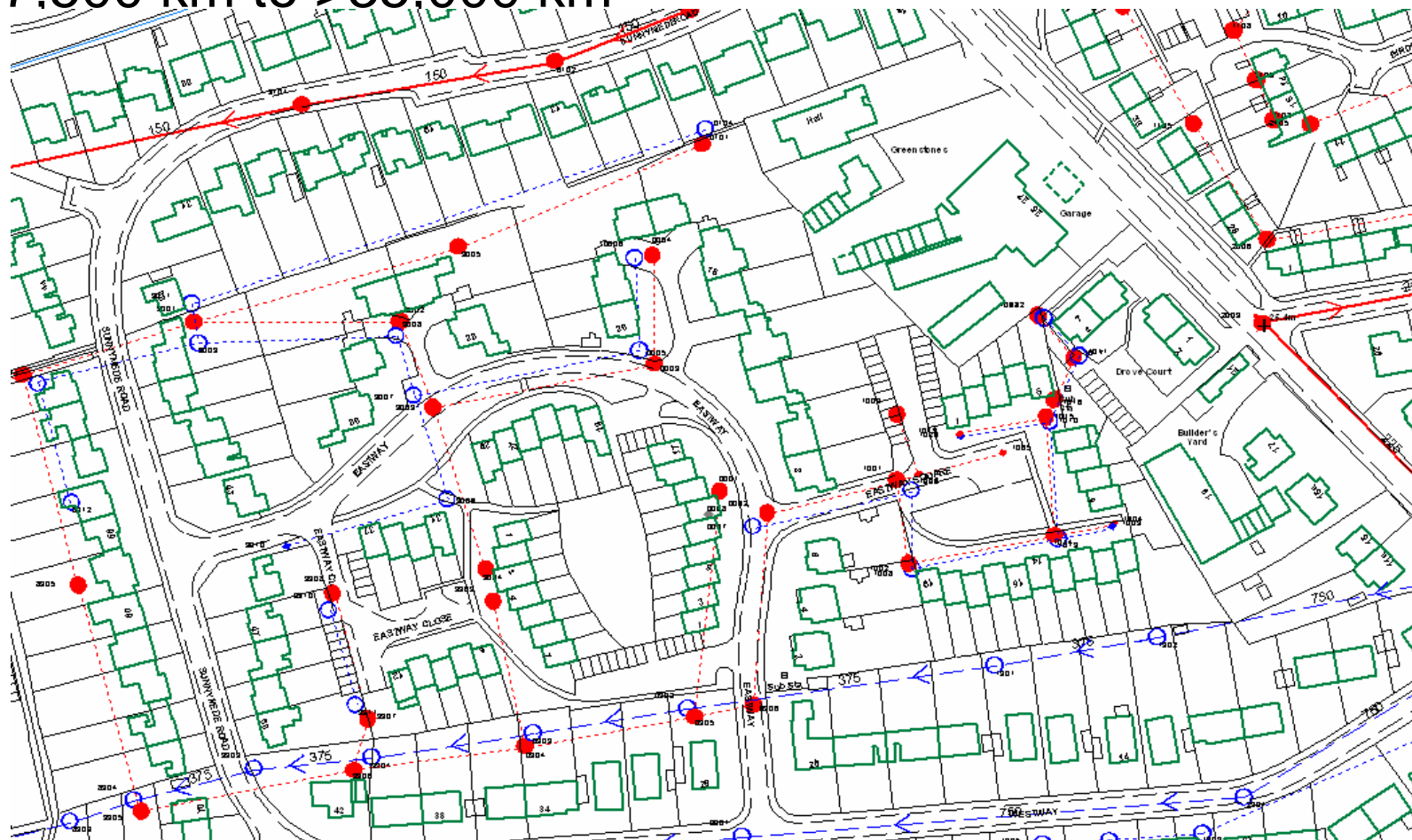
## Background

- Neighbour disputes –MP inboxes
- Integration of drainage & clarity of ownership !
- Who is best placed to carry out work?

# Impact on Wessex Water



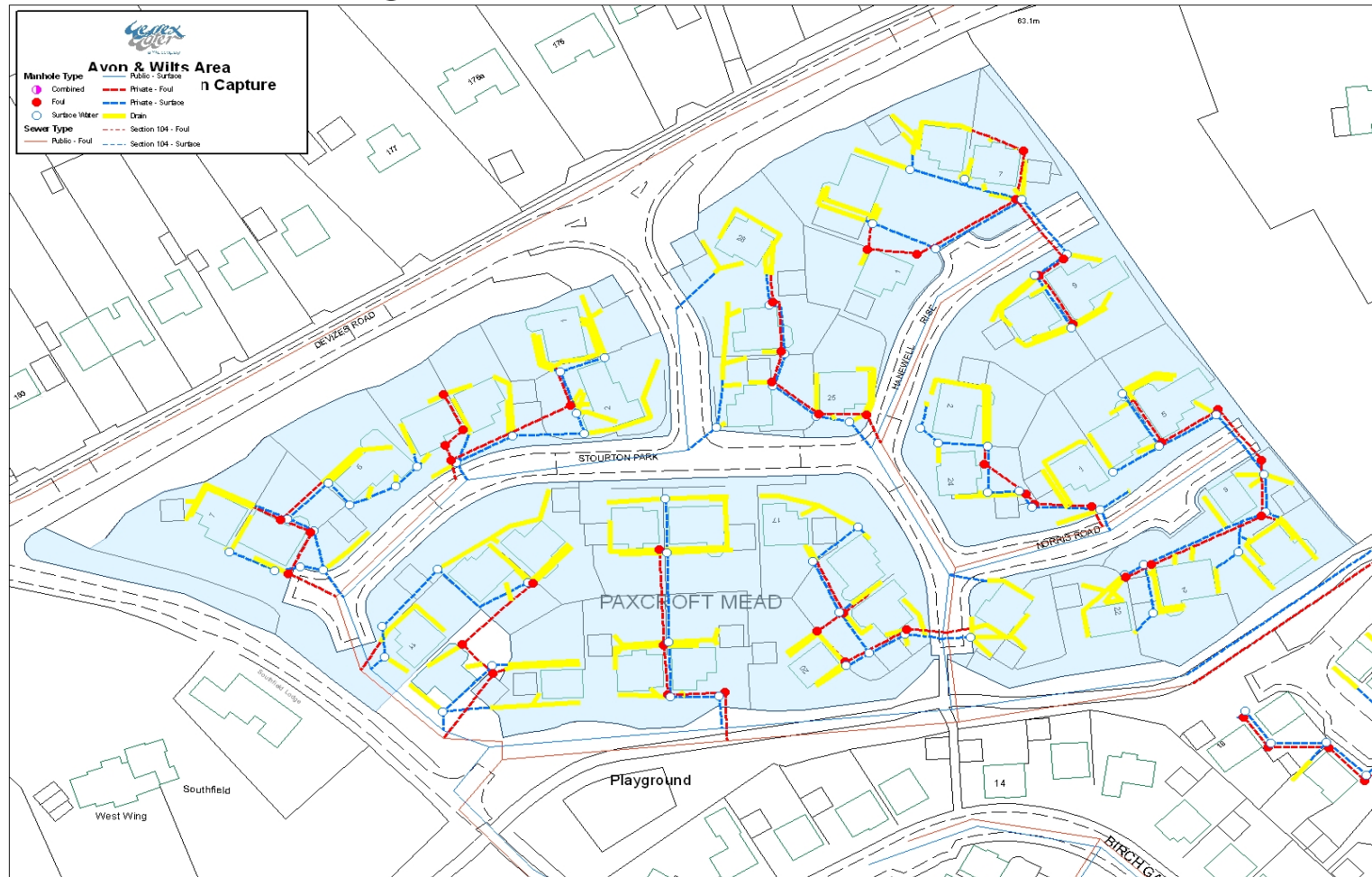
- Sewerage network will double in length overnight from 17,500 km to >35,000 km



# Impact on Wessex Water

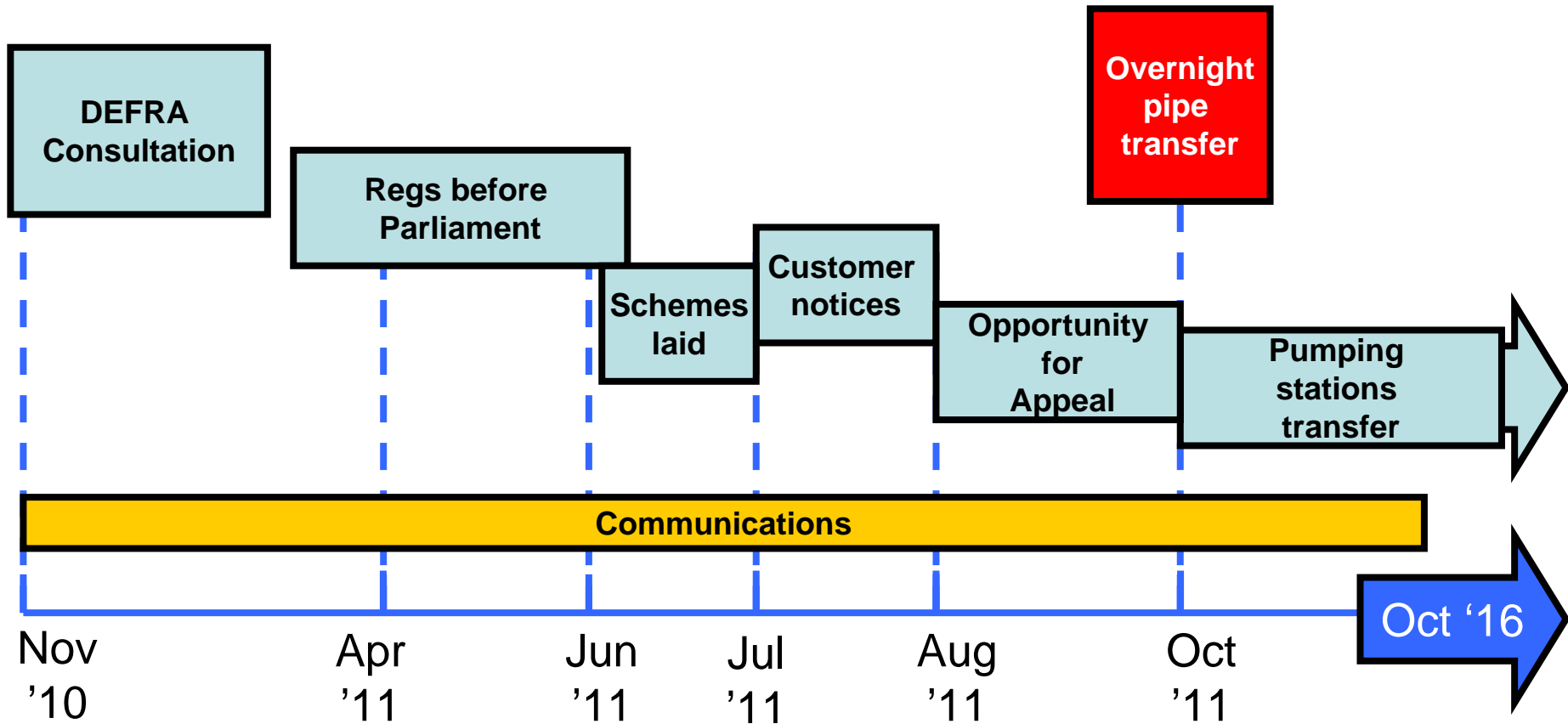


- But 30-40% of lengths of wastewater pipes will remain private



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# When?



# Comms, letter and notice



- 1.2 million letters sent to sewerage customers during July 2011
- Notices in London Gazette plus local press
- Letters sent to Local Authorities
- Letters sent to Housing Associations
- Letters sent to Developers
- Press releases & customer magazine





# FAQ leaflet – your guide to changes in sewer ownership



- Automated leaflet-line 0845 600 5 489

## What will happen for new properties after 1 October 2011?

A new national building standard is being agreed for all new sewers to ensure they meet satisfactory standards when constructed.

## Will you fix the current problems I have with pipes which will transfer to you?

Yes, but we will initially gather information about where the problem areas are so that investment can be prioritised to where it is most needed.

## Are private pumping stations affected by this change in legislation?

It is proposed that private sewage pumping stations that serve more than one property and pump to the public sewerage system, will transfer ownership to Wessex Water between October 2011 and October 2016.

Please let us know if you are jointly responsible for one of these by calling 0845 600 4 600 or emailing details to [private.sps@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:private.sps@wessexwater.co.uk)

Please include a grid reference or address and description as well as any other additional information about who currently maintains it and how old it is.

Private sewers and lateral drains upstream of these private pumping stations will transfer ownership on 1 October 2011.

## What happens if I don't want the responsibility for these assets to transfer to Wessex Water?

If you are able to demonstrate that the transfer of these pipes or pumping stations would be seriously detrimental to your interests you may make an appeal by contacting the Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) at Centre City Tower, 7 Hill Street, Birmingham B5 4UA or email [appeal.patroner@ofwat.gov.uk](mailto:appeal.patroner@ofwat.gov.uk)

Appeals will only be considered by Ofwat if made within two months from the date you received the notice from us. Appeal forms will be available on Ofwat's website [www.ofwat.gov.uk](http://www.ofwat.gov.uk)

## Further information

For more information about this change visit [www.wessexwater.co.uk/privatesewers](http://www.wessexwater.co.uk/privatesewers) where you can view a video. Alternatively call us on 0845 600 4 600 (Monday to Friday, 8am to 4pm).

## Avoiding drain pain

You can help prevent drains and sewers from being blocked by not pouring fat, oil or grease down the sink. Instead let it cool and pour it in to a container before putting it in the bin.

Hundreds of people cause blockages in sewers or damage to the environment by putting rubbish down the toilet.

To avoid blocked pipes, plumbing bills and damage to the environment, put the following in your bin:

- contraceptives
- disposable nappies
- wet wipes
- planners
- incontinence pads
- female hygiene products
- colic carry bags and bandages
- cotton buds

Wrap razor blades carefully in paper and put them in the bin and return medicines to your local pharmacy. Syringes and needles should be returned to a healthcare provider.



Wessex Water, Queens Drive, Exeter, EX2 7WV

## Your guide to changes in sewer ownership



[www.wessexwater.co.uk](http://www.wessexwater.co.uk)

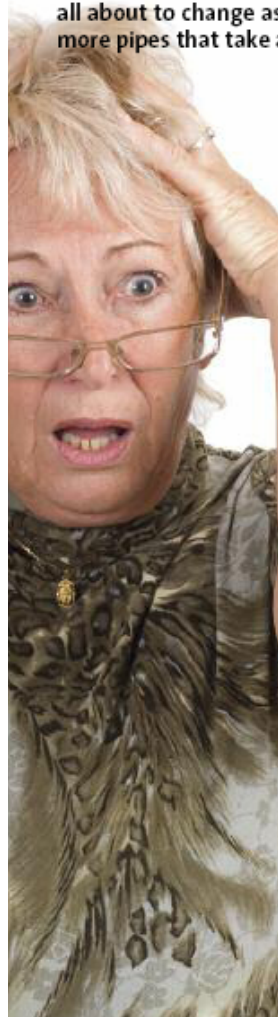
Website



- includes a 5 minute video explaining the transfer
- [www.wessexwater.co.uk/privatesewers](http://www.wessexwater.co.uk/privatesewers)

# Sewers no longer a drain on you

For most people drains and sewers are out of sight out of mind – that is until you experience a problem and realise it may be your responsibility to put right. But that's all about to change as from 1 October 2011 Wessex Water will be looking after many more pipes that take away waste water.



**Y**ou've just settled down to eat your Sunday lunch and you get a knock on your door.

One of your neighbours tells you that there is something very unpleasant coming out of the manhole in their garden and they think it's a problem in the sewer which you and your neighbours share.

You all get together and look at the awful mess spreading across the garden.

It is apparent that there is a blockage somewhere along the pipework that the houses share, which runs through the back gardens.

There is then a lengthy discussion about whose responsibility it is to call an engineer and who will pay for any work to put it right. To make matters worse, it's a Sunday and working rates are bound to be higher.

Paul Oaten, head of sewerage services, said this was a typical scenario faced by householders around the country.

He said: "A blocked private sewer can result in neighbourhood disputes and people being out of pocket."

"Residents who are not directly affected by the blockage may be reluctant to contribute towards the necessary work to get things flowing again."

But from 1 October 2011 this will be something of the past after the government decided to change the ownership of a large proportion of privately owned drainage pipework.

It means that Wessex Water will be responsible for thousands of miles of sewers and drains which are currently the responsibility of householders.

## So, how will the changes affect you?

If you are connected to a public sewer, the only wastewater pipework you will remain responsible for will be that within your property boundary serving only you. All other drains and sewers will become our responsibility, so from 1 October 2011 we will deal with any problems with these pipes. This is a big change and greatly reduces the length of pipework you will be responsible for.

## Why is this happening?

The government believes that transferring responsibility is the fairest, simplest and most efficient way to tackle private sewer problems faced by householders. The overall drainage system will be better integrated, managed and maintained and investment can be targeted where it is most needed.

## What do I do if I have a blockage or drainage problem?

If you have a blockage or drainage problem call us on 0845 600 4 600.

If the problem appears to be in the pipework which has transferred to us (see diagram on page 13), we will investigate and carry out necessary work without charge to you. If the problem is with internal plumbing and private drainage or is a kitchen gully blockage, you should contact a plumber, private drainage contractor or your landlord if you are a tenant.

## Will I see a change in my sewerage bill?

Managing the extra 17,000km (10,500 miles) of sewers and 2,000 extra pumping stations will involve additional cost. We are working hard to meet these costs through making efficiency savings elsewhere within the business, although it is possible that it could result in a small impact on bills in the future.



## Free to flow

While responsibility for sewer ownership is changing, doing your bit to prevent blockages is as important as ever. Remarkably Wessex Water regularly discovers all sorts of items in sewers that shouldn't be there including nappies and wet wipes.

A blocked sewer can lead to properties being flooded and watercourses being polluted.

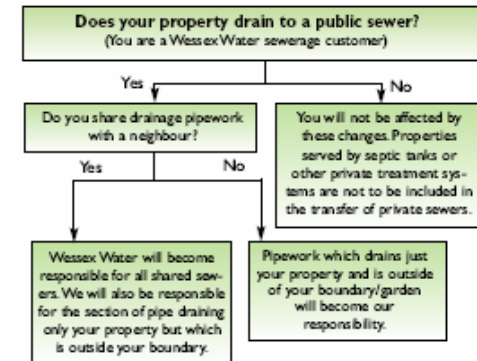
Make sure you only flush human waste and toilet paper down the loo. To help prevent blockages please follow these top tips.

**In the bathroom** – wrap up any sanitary products, nappies, wet wipes and condoms and put them in the bin.

**In the kitchen** – don't pour fat, oil or grease down the sink! Instead leave to cool and dispose with your household rubbish.

**Around the home** – all chemicals, solvents, engine oils and paints should be taken to your local refuse site for disposal.

**Medical** – medicines, syringes and needles should be taken to your pharmacist or local hospital for safe disposal. For more information on the safe disposal of sharp items and medical supplies please contact your GP or local council.



## To find out more

Request a leaflet

0845 6005489 (an automated and unmanned service available 24 hours a day).

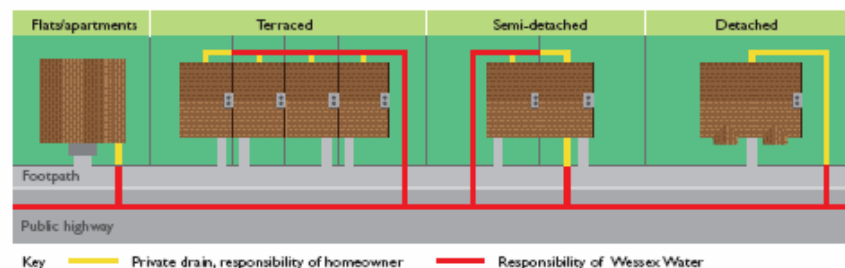


Watch the video

[www.wessexwater.co.uk/privatesewers](http://www.wessexwater.co.uk/privatesewers)



## Typical responsibilities for wastewater pipes after 1 October 2011



# Regulators & Stakeholders



- **OFWAT**
  - Appeals
  - Bill impact (change in 5 year business plan)
- **EA**
  - Temporary enforcement position ?
  - Limited history of prosecutions
- **CCWater**
  - Customer comms & levels of service
  - Bill increase

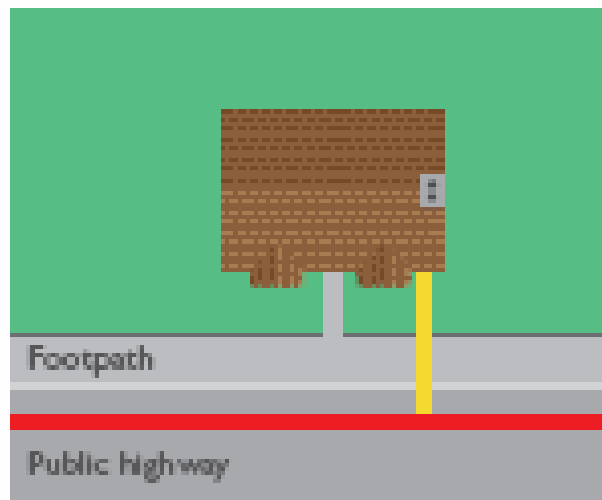
- **Customer awareness, service & expectation**
- **Data**
- **Definitions & exclusions**
- **Sewage pumping stations**
- **Bill impact & funding**

- 1. Sewers & lateral drains on Crown land**
- 2. Surface water pipework draining to watercourse**
- 3. SUDS features (retention ponds, swales...)**
- 4. Council/housing association estates**
- 5. Singly owned & managed sites**
- 6. Rising mains/laterals**

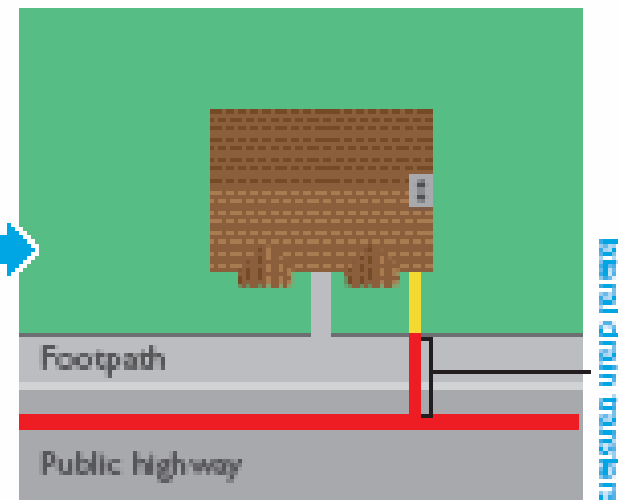
# 1. Detached property A

Ownership before transfer

Example one: Public sewer in highway.



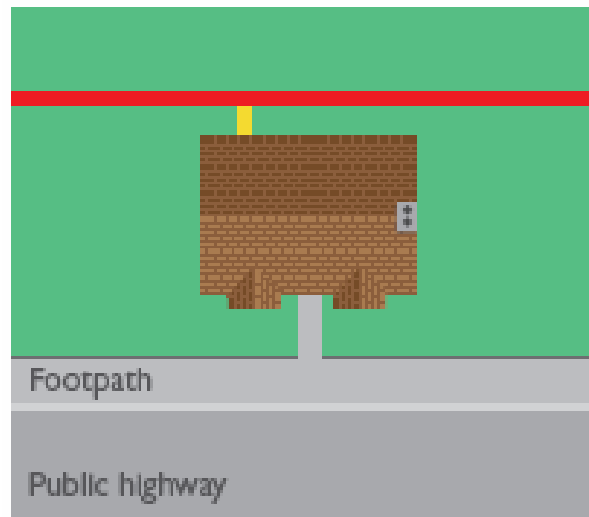
Ownership after transfer



## 2. Detached Property B



Example two: Public sewer in gardens.

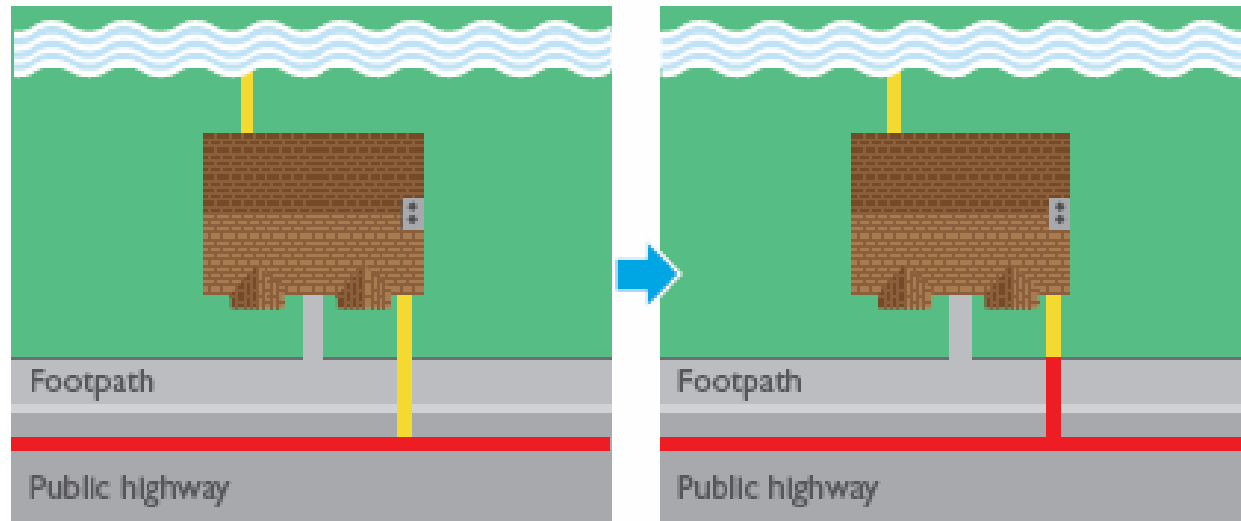


**Ownership  
not affected by  
transfer**



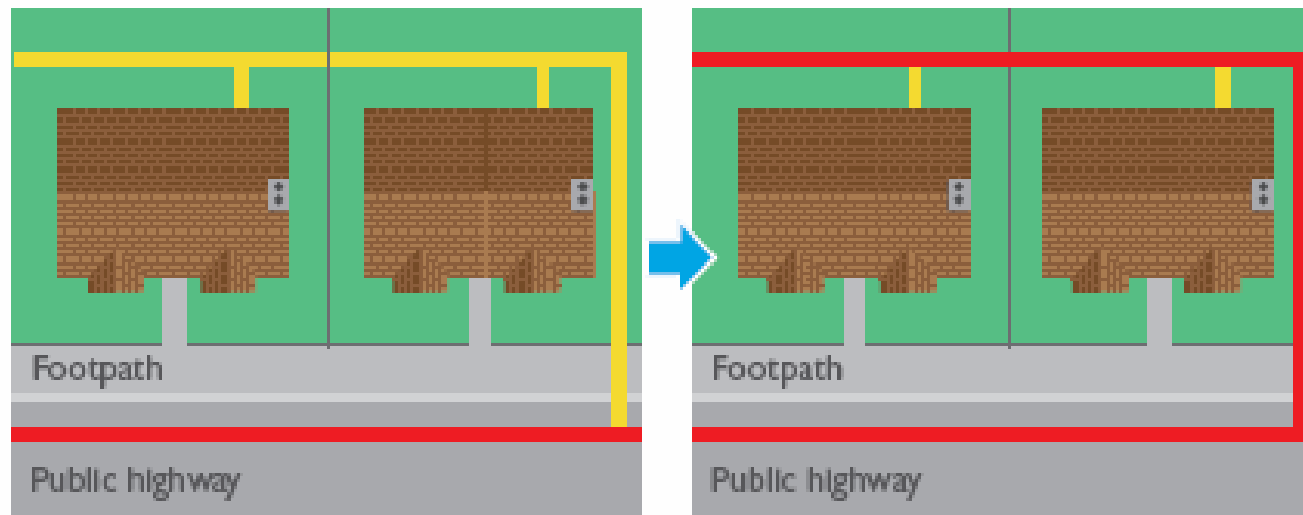
### 3. Detached Property C

**Example three:** Public sewer in highway.  
Private surface water sewer draining to  
watercourse.



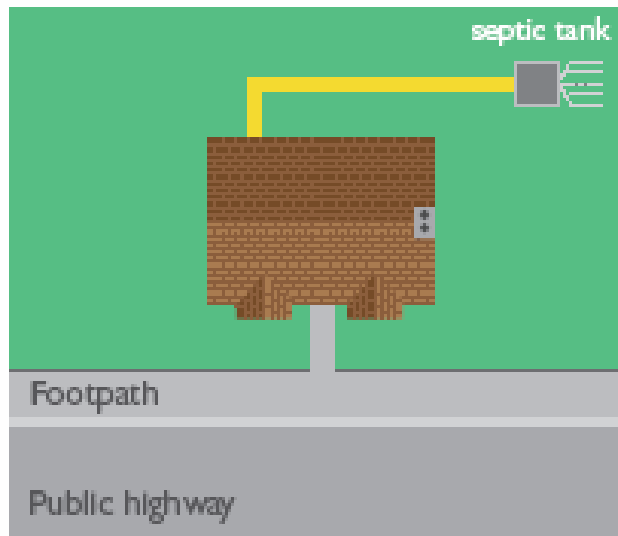
## 4. Detached Property D

Example four: Private sewer in garden draining to public sewer in highway.



## 5. Detached Property E

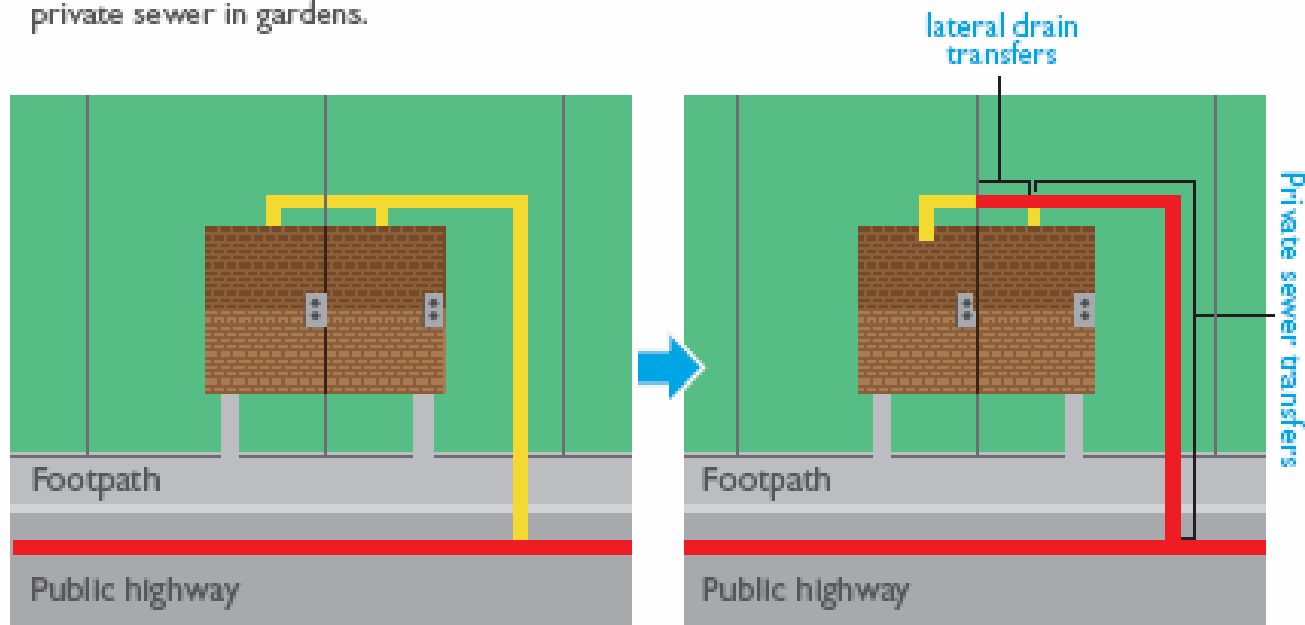
Example five: Property draining to private septic tank and soakaway.



**Ownership  
not affected by  
transfer**

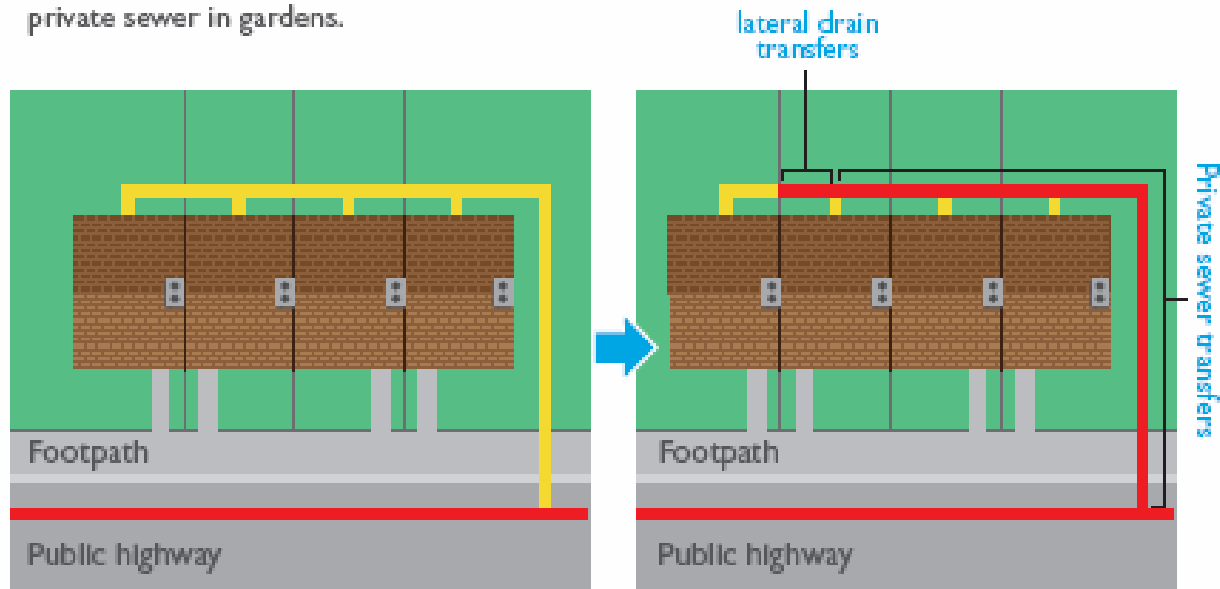
## 6. Semi-detached Property A

**Example one:** Public sewer in highway,  
private sewer in gardens.



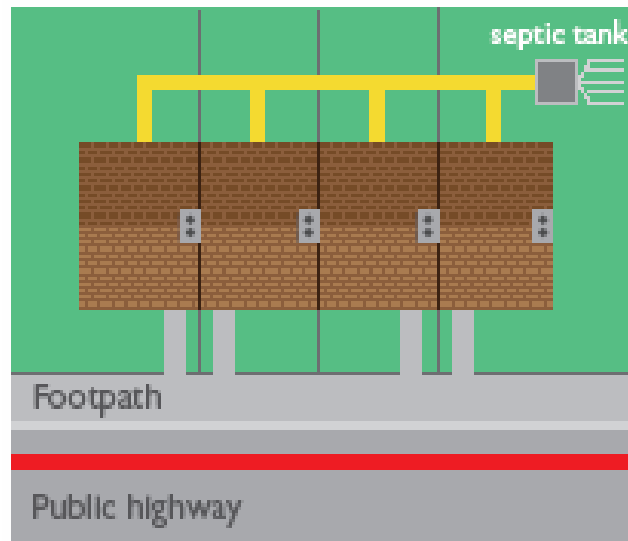
# 8. Terraced Property A

Example one: Public sewer in highway, private sewer in gardens.



## 9. Terraced Property B

Example four: Private sewer draining to private septic tank and soakaway.

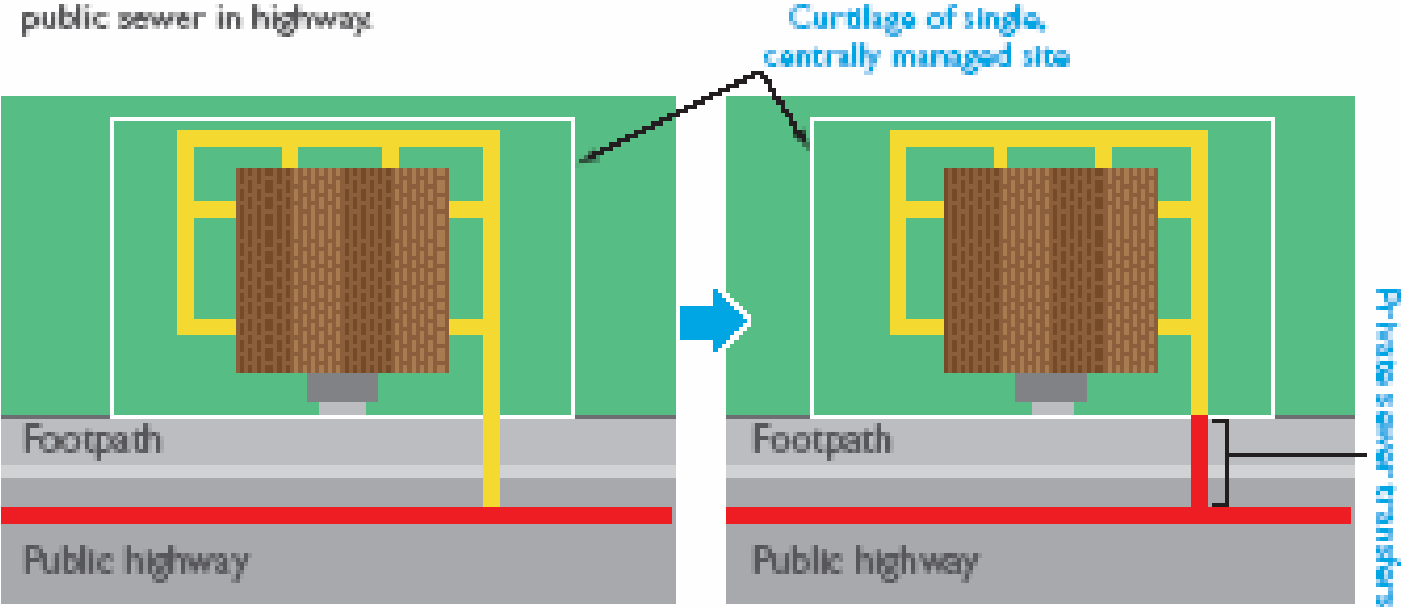


**Ownership  
not affected by  
transfer**

# 10. Single centrally managed site A



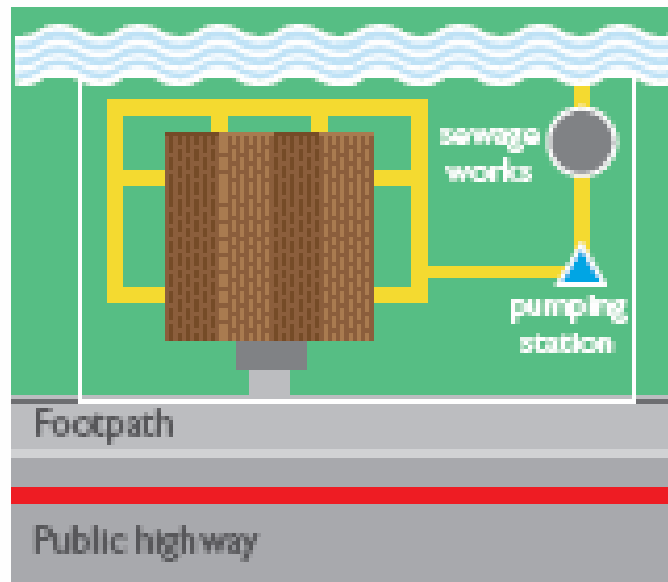
Example one: Private sewer connected to public sewer in highway



# 11. Single centrally managed site B



Example two: Private sewer connected to private pumping station and sewage works.

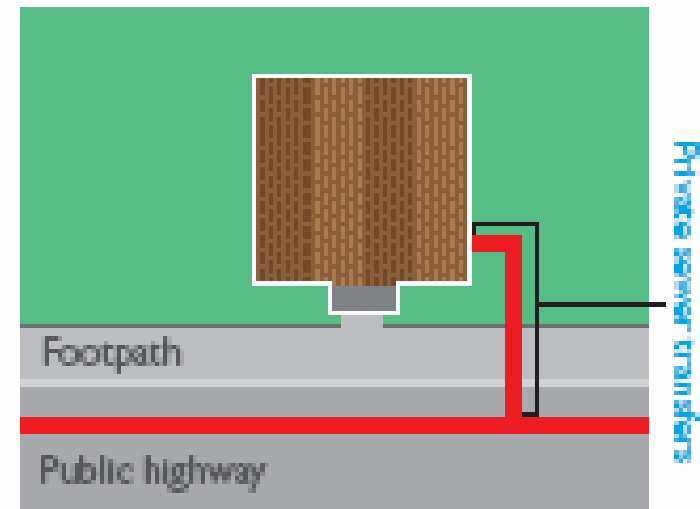
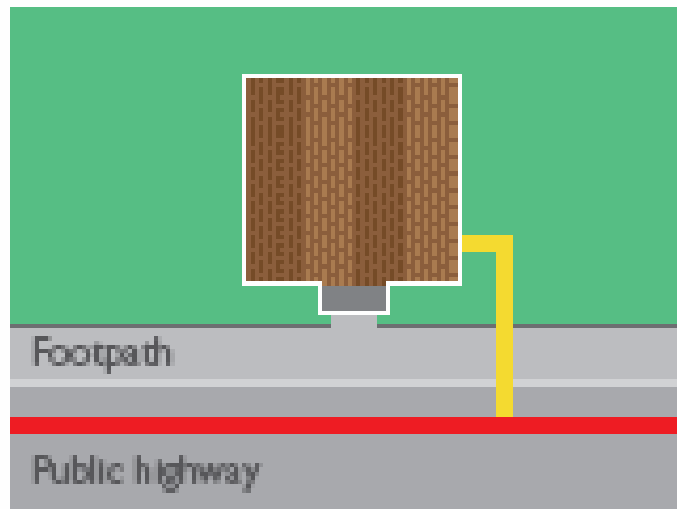


Ownership not affected by transfer



## 12. Single centrally managed site C

Example three: Private sewer connected to public sewer in highway. Curtilage of managed site does not extend beyond the building.

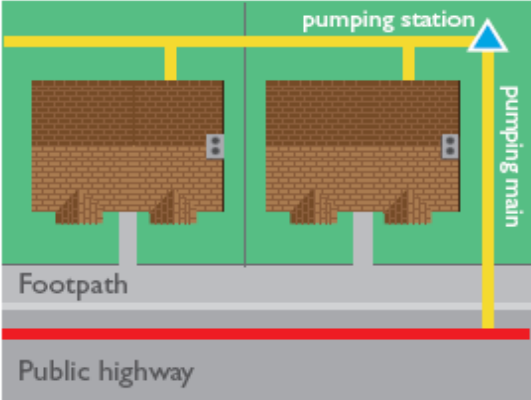


# 14. Private pumping station

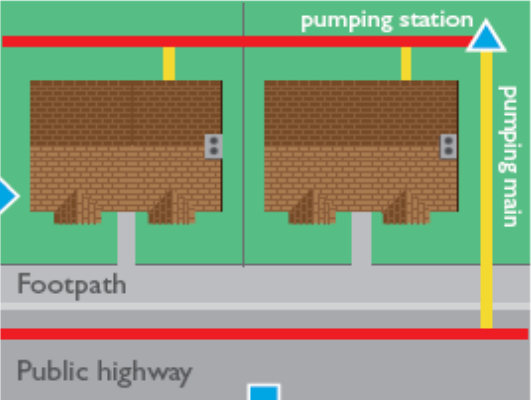


Ownership **before** transfer

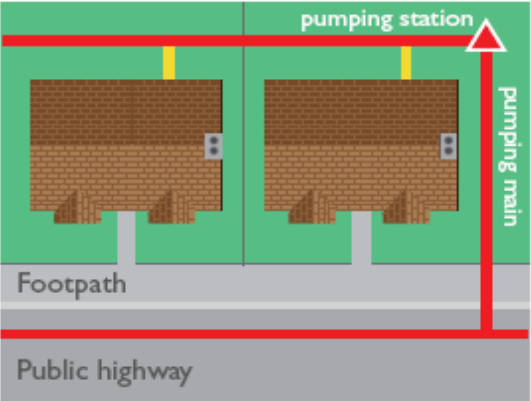
**Example one:** Private sewer in garden draining to public sewer in highway



Ownership **after** 1 October 2011 but before pumping station transfer



Ownership **after** pumping station transfer





**Paul Oaten**  
**Head of Sewerage Services**

# Operational Strategy – Current Situation



## **Currently:**

- **7000 blockages p.a plus 1000 private blockages on a re-chargeable bases.**
- **Maintain sewerage ancillaries ( pumping stations, attenuation tanks and storm overflows.)**

# Impact on Wessex Water



- **Advertised in the European Journal in May 2010**
- **Received 64 replies from a range of contractor**
- **Shortlisted to 17 contractors**
- **Awarded to 7 contractors – (large and medium sized companies)..**



# Future ways of working



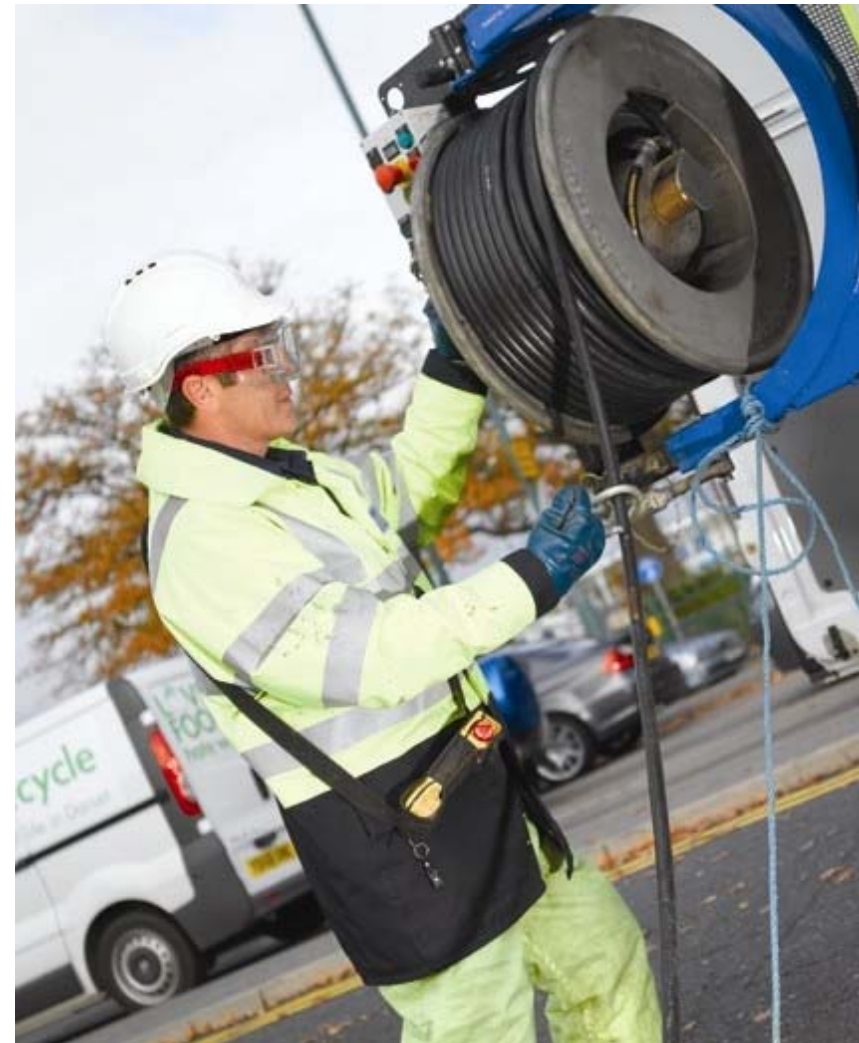
- **Calls taken & scheduled from WW**
- **Contractors working on behalf of WW**
- **Retain high levels of service**
- **Same WW systems**
- **Performance managed**
- **Emphasis on customer service & data collection**



# Impact on Wessex Water



- On many occasions we won't be able to determine responsibility of a problem over the phone
- If in doubt we will have to attend site
- Sewerage crews are best placed to identify nature of problem & sort it
- Private blockages



# Impact on Wessex Water



- Additional frontline operational staff
- Additional customer services staff to take phone calls
- Additional schedulers
- Additional asset data technicians





## Customer Service



- **Contact Wessex for operational incidents**  
**–0845 600 4 600**
- **Ideally customer direct contact**
- **We will take calls from 3<sup>rd</sup> parties**
- **Call agents will try to ascertain “private or public”**
- **Sharing of hotspot info..**

# Data



- **Any records you have:**
  - **GIS**
  - **Paper records**
  - **Drawings**
  - **Maintenance reports**
  - **Refurb project data**

# Q&A

## Wessex Water – Contact Details



**Paul Oaten,  
Head of Sewerage Services  
Wessex Water  
Claverton Down  
Bath  
BA2 7WW  
Direct dial: 01225 515328  
Email: [paul.oaten@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:paul.oaten@wessexwater.co.uk)**

## Wessex Water – Contact Details



**Steve Arthur**

**Asset Programme Manager**

**Wessex Water**

**Claverton Down**

**Bath**

**BA2 7WW**

**Direct dial: 01225 526231**

**Email: [steve.arthur@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:steve.arthur@wessexwater.co.uk)**

## Wessex Water – Contact Details



**Chien Tan**

**Asset Programme Manager**

**Wessex Water**

**Claverton Down**

**Bath**

**BA2 7WW**

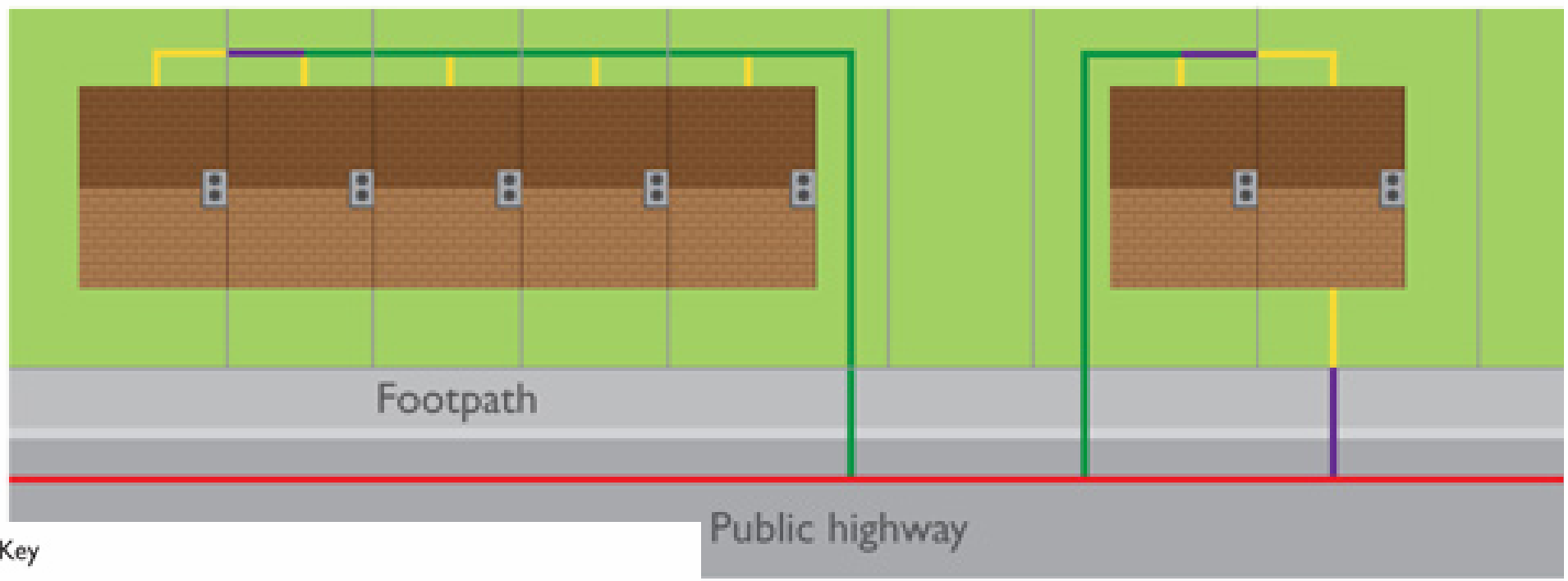
**Direct dial: 01225 526451**

**Email: [chien.tan@wessexwater.co.uk](mailto:chien.tan@wessexwater.co.uk)**

# Before



## Example of existing arrangements



- Key
- Private sewer, responsibility of home owner(s)
  - Private drain, responsibility of home owner
  - Lateral drain, responsibility of home owner
  - Responsibility of Wessex Water

After...

### Example of future arrangements



Key

- Private sewer, responsibility of home owner(s)
- Private drain, responsibility of home owner
- Lateral drain, responsibility of home owner
- Responsibility of Wessex Water