

Important Information – Please Read

Council's Plan to Stop Wastewater Overflows into Waiwhetu Stream

Issue 6 – December 2008

Background

During heavy rain, sewer drains in your area become overloaded causing sewage to overflow into Waiwhetu Stream. This dirty water and untreated effluent is a health and environmental hazard. Tests have shown that the overflows are mainly caused by groundwater entering cracks and breaks in private sewer drains, that is, pipes on private property that connect to Council sewers.

The Council has a resource consent from Greater Wellington Regional Council that requires us to substantially reduce overflows, from the current average of about four times a year, to about once every five years, by 2009.

This newsletter updates you on progress to date with our project to meet these consent conditions, and outlines next steps for the project throughout 2008/09. It is very important you read it as it may affect you.

We have split the project into three parts so that we can work through Areas 1, 2 and 3 in time to meet our resource consent obligations. The map at the back of this newsletter shows which area you are in.



Toby, Jessica and Reuben Gurnsey play diggers and pipe laying in their sandpit which was undisturbed by the upgrade work, while mum Rachael looks on.

Digger delights during drains upgrade

A digger in the backyard was an added bonus for Rachael Stocker of Waterloo when Perkinson Civil laid new pipes during the upgrade of private drains in Area 3 of the upgrade programme.

"I had to almost bribe the kids to go to kindergarten and school, they were so excited about having the digger in the back yard," says Rachael.

Despite initial concerns that the work would involve a lot of digging and disruption and take a long time Rachael was delighted at how quickly and easily things went.

She says that work went well right from the start, from the investigative work, the quote, through to the actual pipe replacement where Perkinson's were a real pleasure to have around. "They made sure that I had a clear understanding of the process and the actual work to be carried out."

"They were very polite and really good at explaining to the kids what they were doing." Rachael says initially she hadn't really understood the technology and had thought there'd be a lot more trenching – *"in reality all you could see was two holes"*.

Rachael was very impressed with the workmanship and the way the workmen left the site.

"They really tried to minimise the inconvenience and impact. For example they put wood under the digger when it was on the lawn to protect the grass. I was really impressed with their professionalism and the way they cleaned up everything when they left."

The work involved putting a replacement flexible plastic pipe through the old pipe under ground. Rachael says this work took place under the backyard including under the sandpit and, apart from the two holes, didn't disrupt the surface at all. Rachael says the work took only two days to complete.

"I was nicely surprised by how quick and easy the whole thing was even though the kids would have loved to have them and the digger here longer."

Project update

Area 1

Since our last newsletter we can advise that work on almost all of the properties requiring upgrades in Area 1 is complete. Monitoring and analysis of these upgrades, together with ongoing upgrades of the public system, confirms there has been a significant reduction in sewer flows during heavy rainfall. This has already prevented sewer overflows into Waiwhetu Stream.

We are on target for achieving the required level of reduction in groundwater infiltration into the sewer system. This will ensure that the frequency of the overflows from this area will be reduced to a level which will meet resource consent requirements.

Area 2

Most of the nearly 800 properties in Area 2 have had their sewer drains tested for watertightness and owners have been advised whether or not they have passed or failed. Upgrade work on the failed drains is steadily being undertaken by Council contractors.



Project update (continued)

Area 3

Most of the 1100 owners will now have received a letter outlining whether their private drains meet the watertightness requirements (no further remedial work required) or whether they fail the requirements and further work is required to upgrade the drains.

Thank you to all those residents who responded to the initial request to make contact with Mike Ryan at Cardno TCB to visit and explain and quote for the work required to be done. Mike is continuing to work through all the requests and will be in touch. If you have any queries please call Mike at Cardno TCB on 4780 342.

How to manage the upgrade work

Owners of properties whose drains require upgrading will receive a letter from the Council that sets out the two options available for upgrading private sewer drains.

Full details, including interest costs of the rates payment options, will be provided to you when you meet with Cardno TCB and in further information that the Council will send you.

Option 1 – Council to manage upgrade

If your drains need upgrading, you have the option of the Council managing the repairs for you. The Council's consultants, Cardno TCB, will provide you with a quote for the upgrade before any work takes place so you know in advance the maximum amount you'll need to pay. The Council contractors who will undertake the actual work are Perkinson Civil, Dews Construction and HEB Construction.

Option 2 – Managing the upgrade yourself

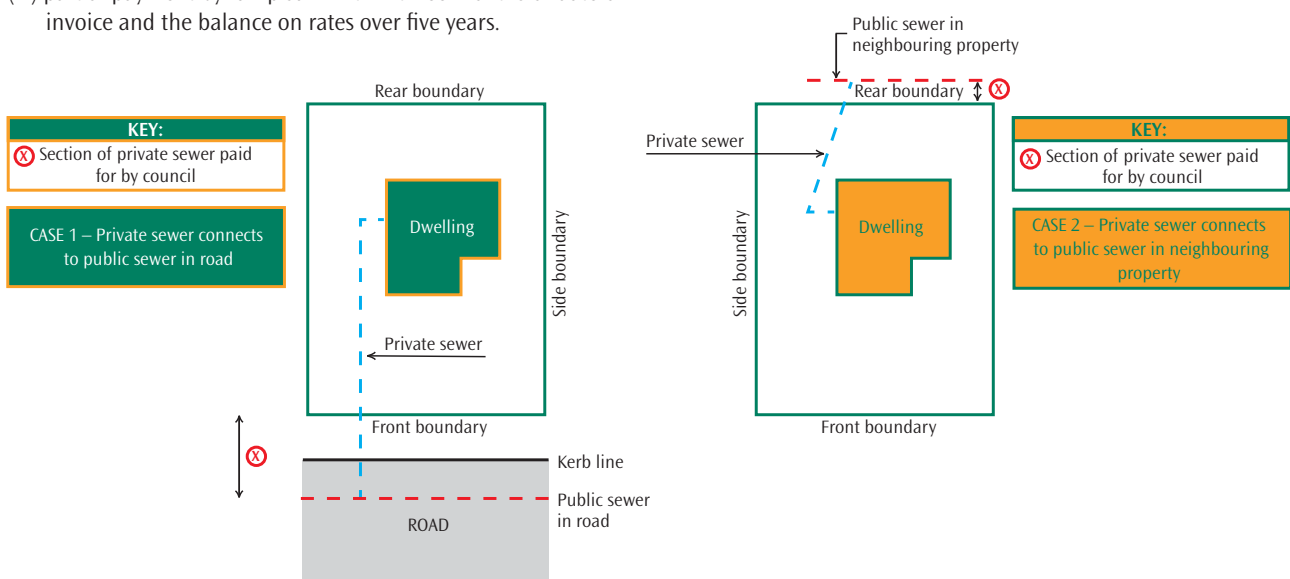
If you prefer to manage the repairs yourself, you'll need to employ the services of a registered drainlayer. The Council will keep in close contact with you to assist and ensure the work is completed to the required standards.

If you select the Council to manage the upgrade there are three payment options for the cost of upgrade work:

- (i) one lump sum payment within three months of date of invoice
- (ii) costs added to your two-monthly rates instalment with repayment spread over five years
- (iii) partial payment by lump sum within three months of date of invoice and the balance on rates over five years.

Council payment for part of private drain in road or neighbouring property

The Council will pay for part of the private drain upgrade in some situations. The diagrams below show the section of private drain that the Council will pay for. It is the length of private drain from the property boundary to the Council or public sewer drain, where the public drain is in the road or neighbouring property. It is shown as length X in the diagrams below.





Programme timeline

Area 1 2005–2007

Vast majority of repairs to Area 1 already completed

Area 2 2007–2009

Majority of testing and informing residents of results completed

	START	FINISH
Council and residents/owners agree on how the repairs will be carried out	Feb 07	Mar 09
Council undertakes Council-managed repairs to private drains	Feb 07	Mar 09
Council liaises with residents/owners who choose to carry out repairs themselves	Mar 07	Mar 09

Area 3 2007–2009

Testing completed and the majority of residents informed of results

Council and residents/owners agree on how the repairs will be carried out	Feb 08	Mar 09
Council undertakes Council-managed repairs to private drains	Mar 08	Mar 09
Council liaises with residents/owners who choose to carry out repairs themselves	Mar 08	Mar 09

Ever wondered...

During the course of the private drains upgrade project we have been asked a number of questions. A few of the more common ones are outlined below. Bruce Sherlock, the Council's General Manager City Infrastructure takes the time to answer these here.

1. The quote for the work seems expensive – how do we know it's competitive?

"All contractors employed by the Council are awarded the works via an advertised tender process. For the private drains work, the contracts were awarded to the most experienced, most resourced and best priced companies. And of course any resident can choose to obtain quotes from other registered drainlayers."

2. The testing done at the start of the process doesn't seem that accurate and our drawings had to be re-done. Is this a common problem and why?

"Council currently holds plans for around 60 per cent of properties in the Waiwhetu Area. If the property does not have a drainage plan, our contractors estimate on the results sheet where the drain is likely to go. This is not always accurate, and your advice of the location of your drain can sometimes affect the quotes provided. Additionally, we have found that some of the drainage plans we hold at the Council may not show recent

upgrades or realignments to drains if your drainlayer at the time did not require a drainage permit, or did not submit an amended as-built plan."

3. What is the benefit in the work as the stream still looks the same?

"The benefits to the Waiwhetu Stream are observable during wet weather. Previous to works being undertaken on the private drains, there were significant volumes of wastewater overflowing from the public sewer mains into the stormwater drains and then into the Waiwhetu Stream during heavy rainfall. The frequency of these overflows has significantly reduced as a result of the Council public main upgrades, and the upgrades of the private drains."

4. Why do current owners have to pay to fix problems from the last couple of generations?

"The reason why the private drains are being targeted now is two-fold. The first reason is due to our resource consent requirements, and our commitment to reducing the frequency of the overflows as much as practicable. The second reason is that many of the private drains in the area are now past their design life of 50 years. In terms of both serviceability, (in being able to sufficiently convey sewage to the public mains), and structural integrity (pipes not having cracks, holes, displacement), many drains in the area fail and require replacement."



Project team

If you would like to get in touch with our project team call Mike Ryan of Cardno TCB on 478 0342, or email michael.ryan@cardno.co.nz. If you want to speak to the Council direct, call 570 6666 or email contact@huttcity.govt.nz.

For more information

All information relating to this project, including copies of newsletters are available on our website www.huttcity.govt.nz. You will also receive further newsletters to keep you up to date with progress on the project.

Area map

Map of areas where private drain upgrade work is required to help stop wastewater overflows into Waiwhetu Stream.

