



NADC Road Map Discussion Document

Introduction

The purpose of this document (NADC Road Map) is to outline the key facts (problems) of the Private Sewers Transfer which is scheduled to take effect on the 1st October 2011 and to offer alternative solutions to the three main 'parties' concerned – Home Owners (consumers) WaSCs (Water Companies) and Drainage Contractors.

The Drains & Sewers Transfer October 2011

The impending drains and sewers transfer will, without doubt have a profound effect on the way drainage contractors operate presently on a day to day basis.

It is envisaged, and expected, that unprecedented changes will occur across the entire spectrum of the drainage industry.

Home owners, drainage contractors and WaSCs will undoubtedly be directly affected and will immediately feel the full force of the implications of such change. Change of which cannot be back tracked upon once enforced by legislation.

It is our considered opinion, at the same time being absolutely imperative to all concerned that a fair and proper solution be found and one which will ensure that fair trade and freedom of choice in the market place continues to exist after transfer.

The Problems

The problem for the Home Owner:

It is a fair assumption that most home owners have very limited knowledge, if indeed any, as to just how their drainage systems actually work.

In most cases, home owners are also unaware as to the routing or direction of under ground pipe work systems which may or may not serve their property alone, nor of the way in which it would ultimately connect to the existing public sewage system.

In most cases they will not be aware of any existing connections with neighbouring properties / drainage, nor would they be aware of ultimately whose responsibility the drains actually are.

Most home owners at present realistically seek only an immediate solution to their problem and therefore would wrongly or rightly assume responsibility when a blockage occurs.

From the point of view of a consumer they presently have at their disposal drainage contracting companies who are available usually 24 hours a day to deal with such

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emergencies. Most have very short response times to emergency call outs, normally within 2 hours

The problem for the WaSCs:

Although at present, we understand that in the majority of cases many of the WaSCs operate a questionnaire type procedure when receiving a call from a distressed client who has such an emergency situation. We consider the staff who would man the telephones at these control centres, would certainly not be in a position, let alone qualified, even if further training was provided (as suggested by the WaSCs) to accurately gauge or assess whose responsibility it would be to address the reported drainage problem.

It is understood that a vast majority of the drainage network, due to be transferred, is un-mapped and therefore call centre operatives would have absolutely no information as to knowledge of the systems to hand.

They certainly would not be in a position to identify with any accuracy in which part of the system the offending blockage was via a telephone phone call which is to be answered by “a non drainage professional” as indeed we believe the present and future case to be.

We are of the opinion that even trained drainage operatives whilst on site often have difficulty determining exactly where the offending blockage is and in most cases this vital information cannot be established until after the problem has been resolved and a clear view of the drainage can be seen.

The problem for the Drainage Contractor:

In our opinion, we believe that unless this impending transfer is not handled with absolute diligent due care and attention, to include for the **full** consideration to be given to the drainage contracting industry, then we foresee many drainage contractors and suppliers throughout the UK simply ceasing to trade.

The results of such actions would no doubt lead directly to:

- The closure of many small to medium sized drainage companies & suppliers
- **A mass and forced un-employment situation estimated to be in the region of 10,000 people**
- The permanent loss of a skilled national workforce
- **The inability for contractors to recoup their investments – capital, training and so on**
- An important –Vital & Crucial part of our country’s infrastructure left un-protected possibly for a considerable amount of time
- **A potential risk to public health through drainage being left blocked and overflowing for a greater time frame period than it is at present**

The Solution

Home Owners

1. When a home owner places an emergency call to the relevant WaSC and it transpires that a “ trained operative “ within the call centre is unable to determine with complete accuracy where the reported problem is, the said WaSC should then implement the following protocols.

Through public awareness using a combination of Literature & Campaigns (*and possibly directly via WaSCs water bills / call centres*) the home owner, when faced with an emergency drainage problem should be made aware of the NADC's existence and subsequently be provided with the direct means to contact an approved & certificated local NADC drainage contractor. This can be achieved via the NADC web site, where a detailed list of certified contractors will be provided.

A certified NADC drainage contractor (**of the home owner's choosing**) could then be called to site by the house owner directly thus ensuring both a speedy response as well as continuing to provide the freedom of choice by the consumer.

Once the nominated drainage contractor has arrived on site, usually within a two hour time frame, a fair and accurate assessment could be made as to the nature of the problem and more importantly, of its exact location, whereupon the engineer would either:

- **Deal with the problem directly on behalf of the consumer if found to be their responsibility, therefore chargeable to the client in the usual manner.**
- Make direct contact with the water company if it transpires the problem is in fact within the then Public part of the drainage system.
- **Seek instruction from the WaSC as to how they would wish for the works to continue. All NADC contractors will be on the approved contractor list.**
- Carry out the works under the instruction of the WaSC (at an agreed rate)
- **Leave site to enable the WaSC to take control of the identified works and levy a call out charge for attendance only.**

By adopting such a protocol it would, without doubt, eliminate the thousands of potential - false and un-chargeable call-outs WaSC's are likely to incur / receive which obviously would be at great expense to the WaSCs, who in turn must (in time) pass on these costs to the home owner / consumer.

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The WaSCs

This course of reactive & positive action would relieve the WaSCs of the responsibility of attending what could be potentially thousands of call outs /blockages every year which may ultimately transpire not to be their responsibility in the first instance.

This approach would ultimately save the WaSC's tens of thousands of pounds per annum in administration and logistical costs alone which will not have to be passed on to the consumer when calculating future annual water tariffs.

We attended the No-Dig Live breakfast briefing on 6th October 2010 and were astounded by the sheer scale of the potential problems. Steve Arthur of Wessex Water stated these facts:-

Wessex Water currently handle approx. 25,000 calls per year on sewer related issues. When the private sewers transfer (approx. 17,000km) to Wessex they expect the calls to triple or quadruple.

So every working day that results in 341 – 454 calls

Or per calendar day that results in 205 – 274 calls

It is worth noting that Wessex is one of the smallest companies!

An added advantage from the WaSCs perspective, would be they now have the benefit and professional information to hand knowing that the consumers blockage is in fact their responsibility, as well as at the same time being provided with two immediate options for the solution. This course of action will greatly relieve the burden placed upon the WaSC.

As a basic requirement and as part of the ultimate procurement of NADC members, it is to be confirmed that all NADC certified contractors will have met fully with the WaSCs own procurement requirements prior to transfer taking place. The NADC have submitted its request to DEFRA to have the transfer date changed to the 1st April 2012 to allow time for transition.

NADC Certified Drainage Contractors:

Each and every operative member of the NADC is to be fully trained in all aspects of the core modules as detailed below:-

- Basic awareness for Health & Safety (S.H.E.A.)
- High Pressure Water Jetting
- Electro-Mechanical Machine
- CCTV Drain Surveying & Reporting
- Confined Spaces
- Drain Lining

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They are all to be issued and accredited with full and approved certification provided by qualified and endorsed trainers / facilities which will then clearly define those core modules the individual operative is able to offer.

In adopting this protocol the standards across the entire industry will be significantly raised.

The benefits in summary:

The NADC Road Map provides the following solutions:

- **The home owner retains choice of certified contractor and saves on increased water tariffs.**
- Saves the Water Companies thousands in over heads and ensures that water tariffs remain low which will be welcomed by the consumer while certified contractors provide them with professional advice from site at no cost.
- **Ensures and protects the NADC certified drainage contractors, who, are better equipped and placed to offer professional services to both the public and the WaSC's directly.**
- Provides the consumer with added security in knowing that each operative will carry their NADC Identification card. This card will confirm their identity the level of certification they have achieved.
- **A much faster response time to effluent/sewage related emergencies therefore reducing risk to public health**

Other Notes

The NADC is committed to the professionalisation of the drainage industry across the UK and Ireland and will continue to provide its members with the highest level of services possible.

To date, the NADC is in fact the only professional body whose sole aim, and ultimate responsibility, is to represent drainage contractors and suppliers throughout the UK while at the same time providing services to both consumers and WaSC's.

The NADC is actively working on behalf of all of its members to ensure that fair trade opportunities still exist after transfer. It is imperative that contractors remain on a level playing field after transfer has been completed.

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The most important part of the future of drainage contractors and suppliers is to be able to continue to trade within the field of expertise in the environment to which they have achieved a high level of professionalism.

The NADC Road Map, upon full endorsement by its present members, will in our opinion, lead to more drainage companies demonstrating a desire to become part of the NADC Certified Contractors Scheme who can provide a valuable service to both consumers and WaSCs.

This 'model' is by no means unique we have based our findings on similar schemes as operated and managed by the "Gas Safe & Corgi Registration Schemes"

It is our intention and ultimate aim to bring the NADC Certified Contractor Scheme to the forefront of national awareness so we can demonstrate to all potential clients that drainage contractors operating in the field can easily be recognised as being professional in all aspects of the services they provide, at the same time provide all contractors with the legitimacy within their industry, one which they deserve and is long overdue.

National Drains & Sewers Survey

In addition to the above, NADC's certified members (if requested to do so) could also, (during the Amp 6 period) provide the WaSCs with copies of all CCTV drain surveys carried out within a particular site. This information could be sent directly to the WaSC via the Internet, PDF or DVD using industry recognised reporting software.

This invaluable information would enable the WaSCs to develop a national database of the conditions and possible mapping of the drain / sewer system and could be kept for historical record.

If such a scheme were implemented it would effectively become the first ever detailed drain and sewer study to be carried out on a national level.

The WaSCs could collate and utilise this information which would otherwise cost millions at a greatly reduced cost.

The NADC has engaged in dialogue with the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors with a view to recommending that in the future CCTV Drain surveys should automatically be carried out on all properties which enter the property re-sale market.

This recommendation is to apply to any domestic, commercial or industrial property.

Once again, invaluable data could then be collected and provided to the WaSCs at a fraction of the normal cost.

The NADC would urge all concerned parties to give this Road Map very serious consideration. The benefits of which have been made very clear and ensure professional co-operation between the WaSC's and the drainage contractors who have met the required standards.

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Readers of this document should visit the NADC's web site and read the testimonials page to find out more about the professional service being offered by NADC member companies.

We are willing to attend any meeting requested by DEFRA, OFWAT, CC WATER or any of the WaSCs to discuss this Road Map in greater detail.

Peter Stacey

Peter Stacey
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NADC