

Water Service – Investing in Belfast’s Future

A 21ST CENTURY CITY

21st century Belfast – a vibrant city, a growing city, a modern city. Belfast has really come alive in recent years. A focus on urban regeneration and recent major investment has meant that all around us new buildings and developments are springing up.

There’s the state-of-the art Waterfront Hall, the action packed Odyssey Complex and the exciting Cathedral Quarter - these are only some of the investments which show how Belfast is changing, and changing for the better.

New roads are also being built and existing roads improved to cope with the increasing numbers of people choosing to work, live and visit here.

Look around you – Belfast is being transformed, adapting to the needs of today. Under your feet however, it’s a different story – a story firmly rooted in the past.



Katharine Bryan, Chief Executive of Water Service officially launches the Belfast Sewers Project.

A VICTORIAN UNDERGROUND

In sharp contrast to the progressive city emerging above the ground, Belfast’s current sewerage system is over 100 years old and unable to cope with the volume of waste generated by today’s society. Water Service has worked hard over the years to protect and maintain these sewers. However despite this work, some of the older sewers are crumbling and that is causing problems for the city. Problems like flooding of roads and property and river pollution. Problems which affect us all and problems which need to be remedied.

CREATING A CHALLENGING SOLUTION

That’s why Water Service supported by the Reform and Reinvestment Initiative

has created an ambitious multi-million pound Belfast Sewers Project to tackle and dramatically improve the situation for the benefit of everyone now and for generations to come. This is one of the biggest infrastructure investments not only in the city but in the UK as a whole. Over £100 million has been earmarked by Water Service to improve the current sewerage system and deliver one that is fit for the 21st Century.

This landmark Project will take in a huge catchment area of 42 square kms populated by a quarter of a million people served by nearly 1800 kms of sewers. That’s equivalent to an area the size of nearly 8,400 football pitches with enough sewers to stretch from Belfast to Dublin ten times over!

Investment in Action

The Belfast Sewers Project will include the construction of a new 10.5 km long stormwater tunnel up to four metres in diameter together with the laying of 19 kms of new sewers. In addition, 26 new stormwater tanks will be built to cope with peak storm flows.



'No Dig Technology' minimising disruption to our roads.

During the Project some 500 sewers which are in a poor structural condition, will be repaired.

The Project will require the use of the latest technology and highly experienced engineers to deliver this ambitious programme. A strong team made up of Senior Water Service personnel together with Atkins, one of the UK's leading engineering consultancies will direct this complex Project. Together they have an impressive track record in this specialist field.

The Project will take almost seven years to complete with repair work beginning in late autumn 2004 and tunnelling work starting towards the end of 2005. With a major project like this, some disruption is inevitable – but great care has and will be taken to keep this to a minimum. Modern construction



techniques such as 'no dig technology' will be used where possible. This removes the need for open trenches - minimising disruption to our roads. Water Service will maximise the use of such techniques. A community communications programme will flag up to the people of Belfast well in advance when work is taking place in their area and advise customers how they may be affected.

Reaping the Benefits for Belfast

The Belfast Sewers Project will bring with it significant benefits and provide a better quality of life for everyone – not only will flooding be reduced but environmentally the benefits are substantial.

Cleaner, healthier rivers - the water quality of the River Lagan will be greatly enhanced.

The local economy will benefit too with new infrastructure that will accommodate the developing city and provide an enhanced environment for the ever increasing number of visitors coming to Belfast. The Belfast Sewers Project is good news for everyone - it will make a difference to all our lives now and for generations to come.

