

Sediment in sewers

Attention is drawn to the International Conference on Sewer Operation & Maintenance to be held at Bradford 26th-28th November 2001. Further information from John Blanksby (j.r.blanksby@bradford.ac.uk)

Richard Ashley introduced the workshop. He highlighted some of the problems caused by sewer sediments, such as increased flood risk and premature CSO spill. While many other countries (including France, Germany and the USA) are developing strategies for sewer sediment management, in the UK we suffer from limits on operational expenditure and a lack of knowledge of the extent of the problem.

He also pointed out that there are significant gaps in our knowledge of the processes at work.

Richard posed four questions ;

- Can we get some real cost data?
- Can we trial some of the new ideas developing around the world?
- How good is the modelling?
- Do we need new approaches like LCA and WLC?

Richard Long outlined a way in which modelling might be used in the future as part of a 'just in time' maintenance planning system. This would be aimed at meeting the regulator's continuing drive to reduce costs without compromise to levels of service. Some of the key attributes a modelling system would need to have were outlined.

David Blackwood from the University of Abertay outlined the application of risk assessment and cost-benefit methodologies to sewer sediment management, concluding that a cost-effective analysis plus identification of other benefits was the best at the present time. Management strategies will be very site-specific.

Both Dhi and Wallingford Software had been invited to discuss the sediment modelling features of their software. Dhi were unable to respond in the short notice period given to them. Mike Reeves did the job for WS.

Some of the contributions were;

- Water distribution models are already used as an 'almost on-line' management tool, so why not sewer models?
- Fats and grease are a major contributor to blockage and loss of capacity, so we musn't focus exclusively on bed-load and suspended particulates?
- Since pollution is the current issue in AMP3 should we focus on this aspect of sediment impact for the present?
- Current industry regulation pushes companies towards capital 'solutions' in favour of better operational practices.
- The Water Framework Directive is likely to act as a driver to develop better understanding and management strategies in the future.

In summary, the Workshop concluded that this is an area which will become increasingly important and we should be laying the groundwork now.

