

Committee: Full Council

Date: 25 January 2022

Title: Wessex Water Underground Sewerage Tank

Purpose of Report

To inform Members of an upcoming project proposal from Wessex Water to install an underground sewerage tank

Recommendation:

For members to note an upcoming project that will be proposed by Wessex Water and delegate authority to officers to manage with Wessex Water any proposals that are put forward.

Report:

1. On 30 November 2021, Wessex Water sent an invitation to the Town Clerk and a South Somerset District Council (SSDC) representative to meet at the car park on Wharf Lane on 12 January 2022 to discuss which of three potential sites to install an underground sewerage storage tank Appendix 13a.
2. Wessex Water's options were numbered in order of their preference: 1. Under the car park. 2. Located near the public toilet block on the recreation ground. 3. Under the recreation ground close to the corner of The Mead and Orchard Vale. Please see Appendix 13a and Appendix 13c for the location.
3. The Deputy Town Clerk attended the meeting on 12 January 2022 and Wessex Water gave an explanation of their proposal. The Environment Agency has requested Wessex Water reduce the number of sewerage overflows from around 50 per annum to around 20 per annum. These overflows affect the local waterways around Ilminster.
4. The proposal to install the underground sewerage tank would assist by holding some of these overflows and reduce the pollution in the local waterways.
5. The project to install the tank would take approximately six months and will need to take place at some point from May 2023 but must be completed by April 2025.
6. The three options were discussed and concerns raised for each option as follows:
 - (1) The car park – this is Wessex Water's preferred option due to the location of the existing pipework underground. However, SSDC raised their concerns relating to losing the use of the car park and subsequent income for six months, the effect of losing car parking for local residents, and the possible disruption to the parents and children who attend Greenfylde School.

- (2) The area sited on the recreation ground close to the toilet block would require Wessex Water to apply to have a layby installed on Canal Way to allow them access to the site for future maintenance. The pipework would need to run underground to the existing pipework under Orchard Vale. This would mean the removal and reinstallation of both sets of swings and the new path into the recreation ground. I raised concerns about this particular site, stating that the local residents would likely object to the park being closed for six months and the bad publicity it may cause if the play equipment and path were removed as the £300k playpark refurbishment had only been completed a short time ago. I also told them about not having vehicles on the recreation ground during the winter months as they would get stuck due to the water levels.
- (3) The third option (Appendix 13c) was discussed, and I informed Wessex Water about the underground drainage that runs along the recreation ground in parallel to The Mead, and that the fair come twice a year, highlighting that they have a right to do so.

Wessex Water suggested that they could install a dropped kerb on Orchard Vale to allow access to the site and put down a road for vehicles. I told them that a road probably would not be accepted by the Town Council, however, the Councillors may consider a hard surface that allows grass to grow through. This would help the area to remain looking green and also help with the fair vehicles using that area of the recreation ground.

7. Having discussed all three options, it became clear that option 2, the site near the public toilet block was not feasible and myself, SSDC and Wessex Water all agreed.

8. This leaves two options for Wessex Water. They said they will send us further details of the two possible sites by the end of January 2022 ready for discussion at Town Council on 15 February 2022.

9. In the meantime, Wessex Water will send a letter to the residents in the vicinity of the proposed sites (Appendix 13b).

10. Once we have received the information, the SSDC representative asked me to contact Claire Oaten, Head of Greenfylde School, to arrange a meeting to discuss the car park option. He would also like to attend the Town Council meeting on 15 February.

11. For members to note an upcoming project that will be proposed by Wessex Water and delegate authority to officers to manage with Wessex Water any proposals that are put forward. Members will be notified at Full Council meeting on 15th February 2022 the proposals that Wessex Water have sent through.

Julie Earp
Deputy Town Clerk