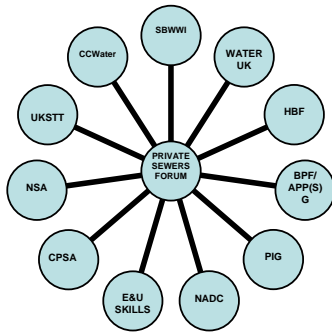




PRESS RELEASE PRIVATE SEWERS FORUM

7 June 2011



Members of the Private Sewers Forum established by the SBWWI in 2009, heard an update on the communications strategies being adopted by the WaSCs in advance of transfer. Accepting this is a major task for the companies to develop the right, customer-friendly text, get the millions of legal Notices and letters or leaflets printed and then sent out to customers before the 1st August, there still seems a lack of joined-up thinking on what to tell customers to do after

transfer – when they have a drainage problem. A protocol has been mentioned between WaSCs, insurers and possibly the private drainage industry, but so far there seems little sight of it, let alone agreement.

The recent SBWWI Private Sewers and Drains Seminar was a resounding success with a capacity audience of 120. Delegates commented “The event was extremely useful and provided us with key insights into the needs and issues of potential clients. The networking opportunities provided by ‘Meet the Buyer’ and through informal conversations with key stakeholders was invaluable”, “An important opportunity for businesses to obtain valuable information on these major changes within the water industry”, “An excellent day. The variety of content of the presentations was very informative and the chance to meet the key buyers in the afternoon proved to be extremely useful. The smaller drainage contractors found the ‘meet the buyer/contractor’ sessions especially helpful.

Although all parties are assuming transfer will take place as planned, and resources are being lined up, there seems little attention so far to competency requirements and training issues. Existing drainage contractors have a variety of potential qualifications but little has so far been specified by the WaSCs. Members heard that EUS will shortly be launching the Drainage Registration Scheme, which should go some way towards standardisation and hopefully acceptance by the WaSC clients.

There also seems a further potential ‘trip hazard’ Drainage contractors are unlikely to know until July or August if they have been successful winning work with Tier 1 contractors. That leaves limited time for mobilisation before the October transfer date. To compound this, many drainage contractors are currently having problems with supplies of equipment and essential components from Japan. Is this another ‘Perfect Storm’?



Members also voiced concerns over the implications for new sewers on development sites. When would Defra be publishing the Minister's Mandatory Build Standards for consultation, what would be included, and what really was the point of the recently issued but voluntary Interim Technical Guidance issued by the WaSCs?

The **Private Sewers Forum** will meet again in July

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

- 1 *The SBWWI is a not for profit trade association representing contractors, manufacturers, consultants, distributors and training providers, supplying the UK water and wastewater industries and has become recognised as the foremost trade association for the supply chain.*
- 2 *The Private Sewers Forum comprises representatives from SBWWI, BPF/APP(S)G, CPDA, CPSA, CCWater, EUSkills, HBF, NADC, NSA, PIG, Water UK, UKSTT.*