

Sturminster Marshall Infiltration Reduction Plan Summary

This provides an update on the last year's groundwater situation, what mitigation actions, if any, were taken and a summary of our action plan to prevent flooding due to groundwater infiltration of our sewer network.

April 2024 – March 2025

Regional Summary

2024 continued to be a very wet year in the Wessex Water region, with above average rainfall in the majority of months. In particular, groundwater levels rose dramatically in September 2024, where the region received over 250% of the monthly average rainfall. This resulted in many catchments experiencing inundation from groundwater much earlier than usual.

Whilst December was relatively dry, above-average rainfall for the remainder of the autumn and winter meant that groundwater levels remained elevated until March, at which point the drier weather enabled the majority of catchments to recover.

[Record-breaking rainfall for some this September - Met Office](#)

Local Summary

Groundwater reached critical levels in Sturminster Marshall and Shapwick resulting in two incidents attributed to inadequate hydraulic capacity (IHC). The Operational Mitigation Action Plan (OMAP) was instigated at Newton Road in Sturminster Marshall to alleviate the network.

Action Plan

Annual Activity

Review asset and operational data and update annual reports.

Continue monitoring system performance using telemetry, rainfall records and local groundwater levels to inform the operational response during high-groundwater periods, and to monitor changing infiltration levels in the catchment.

Use machine learning to predict flows in sewers and proactively identify blockages and other issues.

Undertake pro-active cleaning (jetting) of sewers to maximise capacity.

Proactive inspections and maintenance of sewerage assets.

Completed

Installed permanent flow meters at key pumping stations to continuously record pump performance.

Implemented a scheme to address capacity issues in the sewer network.

Updated the catchment hydraulic model.

Inspected public sewer network to identify points of infiltration.

Sealed sewers and manholes to prevent groundwater infiltration.

Completed (cont.)

Highway outfalls inspected and cleared of silt build-up

Inspected private gullies, drains or manholes to identify points of infiltration.

Undertaken pumping station or flow surveys to analyse flows in sewers.

Reviewed incidents of sewer flooding.

Short Term

Undertake pro-active inspection of public sewers and manholes using CCTV to identify points of infiltration.

Install in-sewer monitors at key locations to better understand flows in the network.

Infiltration sealing of sewers and manholes, where deemed cost-effective, targeting work according to study findings.

Long Term

Identify road gullies and other impermeable areas that are connected into the foul sewers.

Inspect private gullies, drains, and manholes where applicable.

Consider sustainable solutions to rainwater management, for example above-ground attenuation and property-level interventions.

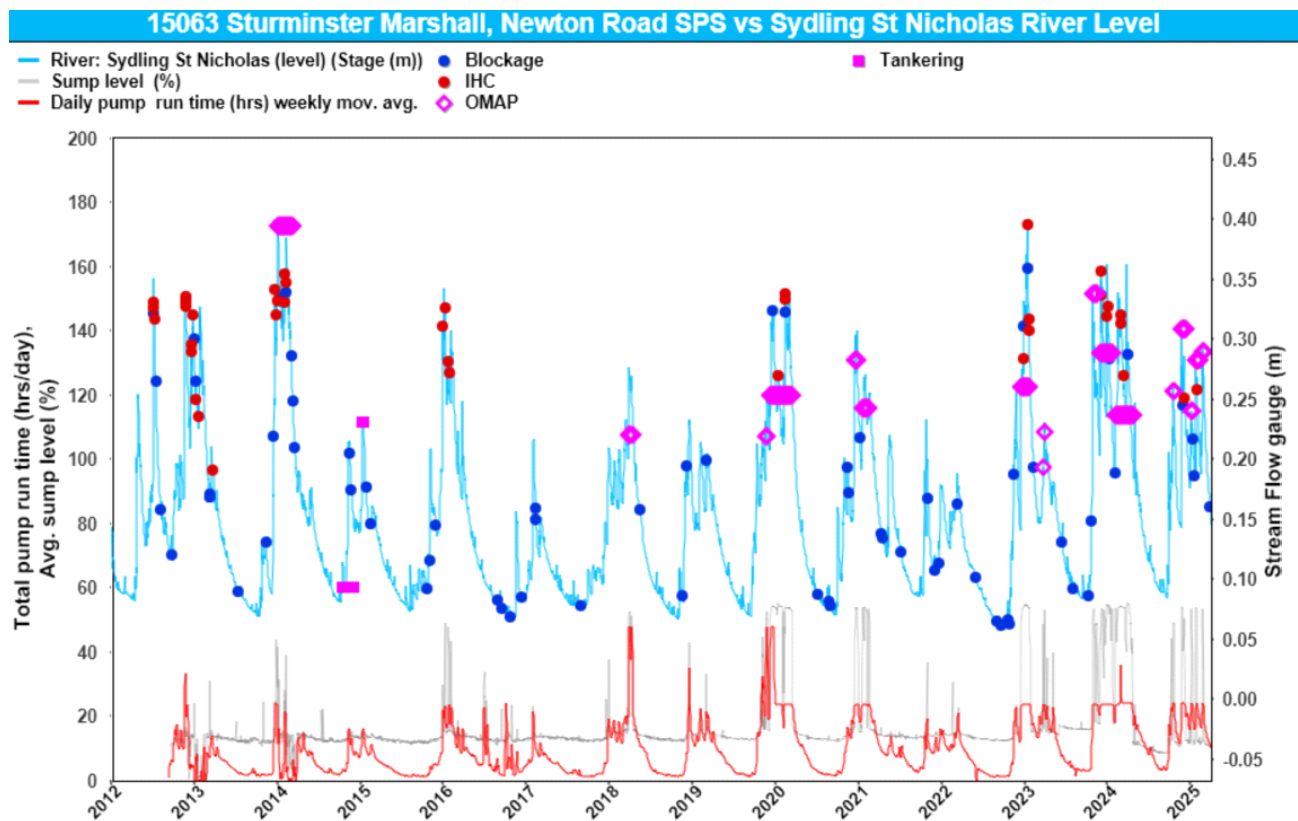
When Necessary

Implement emergency tankering procedure for preventing restricted toilet use and sewer flooding during high groundwater periods, in order to protect public health.

Implement Operational Mitigation Action Plan (OMAP) for discharging excess flows to the environment as a last resort, when tankering would not prevent restricted toilet use or sewer flooding, and public health is at risk.

Current Performance

The graph below show operational incidents against river level at Sydling St Nicholas and the flow at Newton Road sewage pumping station (SPS). There is a clear correlation between river levels (an indicator of local groundwater levels) and flooding incidents reported caused by inadequate hydraulic capacity (IHC). Following sealing and SPS improvements, the number of incidents reported have decreased, however infiltration continues to have a significant effect on the sewer network. The Operational Mitigation Action Plan (OMAP) is required during times of high groundwater to prevent flooding, loss of service and to protect public health.



Inspection and sealing since 2011

	2011-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
Length of sewer inspected (m)	5,136	-	-	4,292	-	-
Length of sewer sealed (m)	2,002	2	-	-	-	-