

# SEWERAGE CODE PANEL MEETING

25<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 | 12.00 -1.00 | VIRTUAL MEETING

## DECISION PAPER

1. On 13<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the Panel received a change request form from the British Plastics Federation (BPF), which requested the following changes be made to the Code documentation:

*The maximum permitted depth of inspection chambers of 3 metres in SFA7 (2012) was retained in the draft Design and Construction Guidance throughout the consultation process (see 14/2/19 DCG consultation draft), until the final consultation draft (25/3/19) where it was changed to 2 metres. Errors were also introduced at this stage into the selection process in Figure 1 affecting the use of shallow concrete manholes.*

Change:

- *The maximum depth for (Type D) inspection chambers to 3 metres.*
  - *Figures B.18 – B.21 back to 14/2/19 consultation draft*
  - *Clause B5.2 to back to 3 metres*
  - *Figure 1 back to 14/2/19 consultation draft*
2. The Panel considered the request at its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2020. In considering the change proposal, the Panel:
    - should only recommend the change to Ofwat if there are compelling reasons for it to do so;
    - should ensure that it has sufficient information to make a recommendation to Ofwat.
  3. At the meeting, the Panel considered the anecdotal feedback about inspection chambers with a depth of 3m, which had resulted in difficulties of access for maintenance and CCTV. In addition, company Health & Safety advisers had raised concerns regarding the risks to customer and public safety, particularly for chambers that were situated on private property. The Panel also noted that the issue of inspection chamber depth had been considered in the consultation process and was documented in the responses previously submitted to Water UK as part of that process.
  4. At the meeting, the Panel concluded that it did not yet have sufficient information in order to make a recommendation to Ofwat on the request. It required further

technical advice from the Water Research Centre Ltd (WRc) on the change proposal and also needed to review the previous advice that had been given to the Technical Review Group, particularly regarding health and safety concerns. In light of this, the Panel arranged a further meeting for 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to consider the additional information and confirm its decision on the request.

5. Following the meeting, WRc were instructed to prepare a paper on the request, a copy of which is attached.
6. In accordance with its Terms of Reference, the Panel must assess the request in terms of:
  - (a) the need for the change, for example, is it a service improvement or is it needed to address a particular issue;
  - (b) consistency with the principles and objectives of the Code, and any relevant statutory or regulatory requirements; and
  - (c) the impact of the change (be it positive and/or negative) on Customers and on Sewerage Companies.
7. At the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020, the Panel is required to:
  - a. **Consider the paper from WRc** and any further information or issues that it considers are relevant; and
  - b. **Confirm its final recommendation to Ofwat** on the change request from BPF.