Invercargill
CITY COUNCIL

Thursday, May 8, 2014

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ATTENTION: CHIEF REPORTERS
CIVIC REPORTERS

Smoke infiltration testing in Appleby

Stormwater to foulsewer infiltration smoke testing is being undertaken over the next week in Appleby suburb to diagnose sewer pipes that may be affected by stormwater.

The testing will continue during normal work hours until Friday May 16. There are concerns that pipes may have been broken or incorrectly connected in the past. During times of high rainfall, this may lead to stormwater entering the sewerage drains, increasing waste flow and placing stress on the sewer system. This also leads to large quantities of water being treated unnecessarily by the Clifton Wastewater Treatment Plant, costing ratepayers and the Invercargill City Council.

Appleby has been identified as an area of concern Council project technician Jessica Griffin said. “There was a high level of stormwater infiltration coming from that catchment. This could be for a number of reasons; direct infiltration is caused by connections, downpipes and road sumps connected to sewer mains or surface run-off entering property gulley traps. Indirect infiltration is caused by leaking drains and gaps in the pipes allowing ground water to enter the network. This occurs predominantly in the older areas of town.”

The smoke infiltration testing method employed involves the use of non-toxic smoke to identify problems in the network. The smoke is pumped into a section of sewer pipe with the resultant smoke arising from each property’s fresh air inlet. The smoke is a visual aid and will escape from broken sections of pipe or any direct connections, highlighting areas needing attention. The smoke is non-toxic and poses no harm to people, pets or property.

Contractors Veolia Water is operating on behalf of the Council and will be accessing the foulsewer systems though nearby manholes, requiring the workers to cordon off the main sewer pipes. The process of smoke infiltration is widely used in New Zealand said Ms Griffin. “It is a historical way of doing the testing. It has its limitations but is inexpensive compared with alternatives such as dye testing and CCTV.”

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If problems are located then the Council will look at fixing them as soon as its practical said Ms Griffin. “If the fault is found on the property, it is the responsibility of the house owner. They may need to fix the pipes within a given time. Nothing has been determined yet…it will be assessed on a case by case basis.”

ENDS.

Inquiries, please contact Jessica Griffin on 211 1724.

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