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## **£25m to combat Counter's Creek sewer flooding**

Thames Water is spending up to £25million over the next five years on measures to stop basements flooding with sewage at properties in west London.

Work from 2010 to 2015 in the Counter's Creek area includes delivering a short-term solution - fitting more than 600 pumping systems to protect the worst-affected properties - while research and design continues on a long-term solution - a larger sewer network costing several hundred million pounds.

**Bob Collington, Director of Operational Management for Thames Water, said:**

"We're desperate to end the misery of sewer flooding, which is a truly horrible experience.

"We have yet to get the approval of our economic regulator Ofwat for building a larger Counter's Creek sewer system, but the £25million of funding we've been allowed by Ofwat for the next five years will enable us to provide a short-term fix for the worst-affected properties while we design the long-term solution."

Around 1,400 properties have suffered sewer flooding in the past six years and studies suggest up to 7,500 properties could be at risk in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Counter's Creek, one of London's historic 'Lost Rivers', is the main sewer for the area. It's a combined sewer, carrying both rainwater and sewage, and it simply can't cope with the demands of modern-day London. This is because of:

- Increasing development in the capital, leading to more waste to enter the Counter's Creek catchment from as far afield as Brent and Camden;
- Concreting-over of green spaces, preventing natural drainage. Since 1971, there has been a 17 per cent increase in impermeable areas in

- London due to things like paving over gardens;
- A trebling of London's population since its sewerage system, designed by Sir Joseph Bazalgette, was built in the 1850s;
  - Climate change bringing the potential for more intensive storms, like those in 2007.

In addition, properties in the Counter's Creek catchment are five times more likely to have a basement than the national average - which makes the area even more prone to sewer flooding.

Over the next five years, Thames Water will install more than 600 FLIPs (Flooding Local Improvement Projects), pumping systems which force sewage out into the sewer in the road when it would otherwise back up into customers' basements.

**Councillor Nicholas Paget-Brown, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Cabinet Member for Environment, said:**

"While it is clear that the best solution to the Counter's Creek flooding problems is a new large sewer, I am pleased that Thames Water has secured funds to enable it to begin to tackle the problems experienced by those worst affected by flooding from the sewer.

"Of course we must also pay close attention to the effect future development may have in the area and work with developers through the planning process, to minimise the impact on local drainage system. It will also be very important to work closely with other boroughs and the Greater London Authority to reduce this risk in the future."