



Scottish Water in your community

Planned upgrade to your waste water system in Ardersier

Overview

Scottish Water is planning improvements to our essential infrastructure in the Ardersier area. This includes an upgrade of the existing waste water treatment works, the construction of a new underground pipeline and the extension of an existing sea outfall pipe.

The purpose of these works is to protect and improve the environment of the Moray Firth (specifically for the benefit of bottlenose dolphins) and to meet the needs of the housing and economic growth which is expected in the area.

Current situation

For many years, Scottish Water has operated a waste water treatment works at our site outside Ardersier. This essential facility is used to treat waste water collected from the village, as well as from homes and the businesses in the wider area – including Inverness Airport and a number of small settlements such as Tornagrain and Fort George. Once the waste water has been treated at the works, it is safely returned to the environment via an outfall pipe to the Moray Firth.

Planned environmental improvements

While the Ardersier waste water treatment works has served the area well for many years, we are required by our environmental regulator, Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA), to improve the quality of the

treated water which is safely returned to the environment.

The main reason for doing this is to protect the bottlenose dolphins and help improve the quality of the water in the Moray Firth.

We are doing this in two ways:

- Installing ultra-violet treatment equipment next to the existing works control building, which will improve the disinfection of the waste water before it is returned to the environment.
- Extending the existing outfall pipe, near Fort George, by 300 metres – this will take the discharge of treated waste water further out to sea and into deeper water.

Housing and economic growth in the wider area

Several years ago, significant housing and economic growth was planned in the area which is served by Ardersier waste water treatment works. In 2009, pipework was laid to connect the Whiteness area to the facility. In order to cope with an increased volume of waste water from Whiteness, and the growth within the area, plans were put in place to upgrade the existing Ardersier waste water treatment works and other infrastructure.

There was local engagement at that time as part of our planning consent for work at Ardersier waste water treatment works which was approved in 2011.

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However, due to the economic downturn this work was not progressed at that time. The development in the area is now progressing, which is why we are now talking to the community about what work is required to meet this extra demand in future.

We are doing this in two ways:

- Increasing the capacity of the existing Ardersier waste water treatment works, all within the current site.
- Laying a new underground pipeline to take the increased waste water flows from Tornagrain and the A96 Corridor to the Ardersier existing waste water treatment works.

All work to upgrade and increase the capacity of the existing waste water treatment works will be carried out on land owned by Scottish Water.

Once installed the new pipeline will be located underground and will not be visible. Once work is carried out, the area where we have been working will be returned to its previous condition.

Why are these works necessary in Ardersier?

Because of anticipated growth in the area, we considered whether it would be possible to transfer the increased volume of waste water from these developments to other sites.

The Allanfearn site was fully considered as part of the optioneering phase when we were deciding the preferred solution and there were a number of reasons why this was discounted:

- The Allanfearn waste water treatment works is operating at or near capacity and the PFI company which owns and operates it has to occasionally dose additional chemicals to maintain compliance within agreed levels.
- There are areas within the existing Inverness drainage network that have planned growth which will take the plant to its limit (including the Gateway Development, Ness Castle, North Kessock and other infill sites in the Local Plan). We would, therefore, effectively have to build additional treatment capacity at two waste water treatment works – one at Ardersier to accept the Whiteness development (which is already connected to Ardersier) and additional capacity at Allanfearn to accommodate the other A96 development.

- It is further from the Tornagrain development to Allanfearn, which would result in additional pipeline laying and more energy being consumed through pumping longer distances.
- The Allanfearn site is very constrained for further expansion.

Transferring flows to Nairn waste water treatment works was investigated but expansion of the Nairn waste water treatment works was considered to be a non-viable option due to its distance from the committed development growth areas and also due to the proximity of its discharge outfall to Nairn Beach, a designated Bathing Water.

We also considered whether it would be possible to build a new waste water treatment works on a different site. We would still have had to build a pipeline to safely discharge the treated flows to the environment – probably at the existing Fort George location as this was the preferred location for discharge agreed with SEPA and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Ardersier, on the other hand, is the location of our existing waste water treatment works – not just for the village but also the wider area. The site has operated successfully for the environment and within the community for many years. All of the existing sewers and pipes lead to Ardersier waste water treatment works. We therefore decided to submit a planning application to upgrade this existing facility – completely within the area of land that we own at the current site. This was granted in 2011. The planning application included wide consultation and a full Environmental Impact Assessment.

Prevention of odour

The upgraded Ardersier waste water treatment works will have odour control technology installed and will be closely monitored by our waste water team and regulated by Highland Council. Any odour complaints are documented and fully investigated by Scottish Water operations staff and Environmental Health officers. The odour management plan will be available on our website: www.scottishwater.co.uk/ardersier.

Visual impact of work before and after

We will do everything we can to minimise the impact of the construction work on the village of Ardersier. We would like to discuss the plans with you at the information events and

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with Highland Council, the community council and local elected members.

While upgrading the existing Ardersier waste water treatment works, work will take place within the current site which we own and operate, which is located a short distance from the village. We expect this work to have very little impact on the village.

Pictures of the upgraded facility will be on display at our upcoming information events and we will have information about the outfall to the sea too. The design of the new equipment to be installed is almost complete and we will show more information about this, including the size and height of the equipment as soon as it is available.

While the new pipelines will be located underground, the construction of this will be noticeable. We will be endeavouring to minimise the impact of this. Once complete, the pipeline will be located entirely underground with no impact on the existing bund.

The pipeline has been designed to follow the same route as existing pipework through Ardersier where possible. The pipeline will travel through Stuart Street which will require a road closure for approximately 15 weeks. Although the road will be closed to through traffic, residents of Stuart Street will have access as the works will be carried out in sections along the street to minimise disruption. There will be emergency access at all times.

We will write to all residents in Stuart Street before we start the work and have a dedicated point of contact for anyone wanting to discuss access to their property and driveway. We will work with the residents to ensure this work is carried out with as little disruption as is possible.

The route of the pipeline carries on along the coastal path. This work will be carried out in sections with diversions in place to allow use of the path while the work is carried out. In some locations either the path becomes narrow or existing services are in place so it will be necessary to trim the landward side of the bund to allow for the pipe to be constructed. This work will not reduce the height or compromise the integrity of the village's coastal protection bund. Reinstatement will follow immediately after pipe laying has progressed to the next section.

We will discuss the landscaping of the upgraded waste water treatment works and the reinstatement of the pipeline with Highland Council and your community council and would like your views too.

When will this work be carried out?

Our plan is to carry out the work in phases. Work began on the new pipeline at Tornagrain in February 2016. This is progressing well and we expect to begin work close to Ardersier in August.

We expect to start work at the existing Ardersier waste water treatment works in September and on the outfall towards the end of 2016. We expect this work to be finished by the autumn of 2018.

We are still in the design and planning stage of much of the work so this timescale may change. We are also in discussion with The Highland Council as Planning Authority about various elements of the work.

We are committed to keeping all residents fully up-to-date on the start dates and the progress of each phase. There is information on how we will do this at the end of this fact sheet.

We would like your views on the timing of the work to ensure we do it at a time to minimise the impact on your village. We have already agreed with the community council that we will keep the road open during the Military Tattoo at Fort George.

Impact on traffic

We realise that there will be increased traffic while we are carrying out this work. We have already discussed plans to manage the construction traffic with Highland Council and would like to discuss this with you and your community council and local elected members.

During the upgrade of the waste water treatment works there will be some deliveries made by lorries, but we will plan our works as much as possible to minimise the number passing through the village.

Once the waste water treatment works has been upgraded we do not predict any significant change to the number of tankers visiting the site and our new processes may actually reduce the number of visits required until the works approaches its full operational capacity.

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What steps will be taken to protect the environment

The purpose of the outfall pipe extension and installation of ultra-violet treatment is to improve the quality of treated waste water effluent and protect the marine environment. SEPA has given their approval of the scheme proposed. We will also apply for a Marine Construction Licence to extend the outfall. A copy of the application will be available on our website.

As part of the original planning application at the Ardersier site, an Environmental Impact Assessment was carried out which includes assessment of how the work would be undertaken. A copy of this is available at www.scottishwater.co.uk/ardersier. The revised design remains within the footprint of the existing planning permission and will be reviewed in light of the Environmental Statement with regards to the changes proposed.

What happens next?

We are holding five informal information events and attending the community council meeting on Tuesday 28 June. We will then write to you to update you on the outcome of these events and send you a copy of the information displayed there.

As we progress the work we will write to you to keep you informed and will hold weekly drop in events. We will discuss the work regularly with your community council and elected members.

We will give you the name of a dedicated point of contact in the team and you can also call our Scottish Water Customer Helpline on 0800 0778778 any time.

For updates visit

www.scottishwater.co.uk/ardersier.



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