

### The fatberg



- 1 Today Thames Water has declared victory in its nine-week battle against the monster Whitechapel fatberg. Teams have been working in cramped and extremely challenging conditions – as seen on BBC News – four metres below the east London street to remove the famous congealed mass of fat, oil, wet wipes and other sanitary products.
- 2 Work in Whitechapel Road took longer than first expected due to the damage the fatberg – weighing a whopping 130 tonnes – caused to the one-metre-high egg-shaped sewer, using brute force and shovels. Thames Water waste network manager, Alex Saunders, said: “Our work is finished, and the beast was finally defeated after a huge effort from the team. It was some of the most gut-wrenching work many would have seen on national television, and one of the reasons why the man-made Whitechapel fatberg captured the world’s imagination.
- 3 The good news is, it has helped Thames Water and other water companies around the world get the message across that cooking fat, oils and grease should never go down the plughole. As you have seen, when combined with wet wipes, sanitary products, underwear, nappies, and anything else that shouldn’t be flushed, we’re faced with having to clear out these giant, rock-hard fatbergs.” Thames Water’s ‘Bin it – don’t block it’ message is simple, with poo, pee and toilet paper the only things that should ever be flushed down the toilet.
- 4 Andy Brierley, director of Lanes Utilities, Thames Water’s wastewater network services maintenance partner, added: “Nailing this fatberg was like battling a giant Harry Potter movie creature beneath the streets of London. Around each sewer corner we discovered a new fatberg challenge.” Thames Water spends around £1m a month clearing blockages from its 68,000-mile sewer network. Eight times every hour a customer suffers a blockage caused by items being flushed away or put down the drain which shouldn’t be.

*Thames Water Utilities Limited, 2017*