HWM Global

Thames Water

case study

Tackling the Whitechapel Fatberg: Averting a Crisis

HWM Global's advanced SLM solutions provide the vital early warning needed to prevent a fatberg-related blockages, like the Whitechapel Fatberg, from escalating into flooding events.

Fatbergs are a growing threat, rapidly forming from fats, oils, grease (FOG), wipes and other unflushables. For Thames Water, these blockages have led to flooding, costly clean-ups, and severe strain on ageing infrastructure, making detection critical for operational resilience.

The Whitechapel Fatberg, one of the largest ever found, blocked 250 metres of Victorian sewer, weighing 130 tonnes and made up of fat, grease, wipes and other unflushables. Despite Thames Water's routine inspections, the fatberg grew quickly and posed a serious risk of raw sewage flooding the streets had it not been discovered in time. Fatbergs are becoming a widespread issue, costing water companies significant time, money, and resources to remove, with Thames Water alone spending £1m per month clearing blockages.

HWM Global's advanced SLM sensors provide a practical solution by delivering accurate, non-contact water level monitoring ideal for remote sewer environments. The device's low-power operation and compatibility with the Intelligens WW data logger make it perfectly suited for deep, hard-to-reach chambers. Multiple alarm thresholds enable real-time alerts when water levels rise, often an early indicator of a fatberg forming, allowing utilities to respond before flooding or sewer backups occur.

"With advanced sewer level monitoring technology in place, we are able to detect rising sewer levels early, act faster, and avoid the huge time and cost implications of fatberg blockages as seen with the Whitechapel fatberg."
Head of Operations, Thames Water

By deploying advanced SLM sensors, Thames Water consistently gained visibility of rising sewer levels, enabling faster intervention, reduced maintenance effort, and major savings in both operational time and cost. This solution helps teams detect blockages, prevent service disruption, and protect network assets while reducing the financial burden associated with fatberg removal.