

Carron Valley A RSZ Discolouration October 2020

DWQR Inspector:
Colette Robertson-Kellie

Event No. 11292

Event Category: Serious

Routine servicing of a pressure reducing valve (PRV) alongside an 18" trunk main was planned at Kemper Road in Falkirk. The work was planned in accordance with Scottish Water's Network Control procedures, and the work was approved on 6 October 2020. When work on site commenced with the isolation of the PRV, it was evident that the system was still live. When another valve was closed, pressure dropped in the neighbouring DMA and "no water" calls began to be received. Another valve was opened to restore flows, but additional "no water" calls were received from further downstream. The 18" trunk main continued to depressurise, so the decision was taken to open an 18" contingency valve to restore flows. Although valves were operated following Scottish Water's CALM network policy, the change in flows disturbed deposits and caused discoloured supplies, leading to 184 consumer contacts over the following three days.

There were several root causes of this incident – a valve was missed in the initial assessment of the work that meant that the planned valve operations did not successfully isolate the PRV. Instead of stopping the job to re-assess it with Network Control, as per Scottish Water procedure, the experienced team decided to implement their own solution to enable the work to proceed. This may have been successful, had there not been an incorrectly labelled valve on GIS that meant that pressure was not sustained in the main as had been predicted. The resulting de-pressurisation and recharge of the 18" main meant that debris were disturbed, causing discoloured water. Finally, the Network Control process failed to pick up the inadequate completion of the Impact Assessment Form, prior to it being approved.

The event has been categorised as Serious. Scottish Water has identified four actions which DWQR accepts are appropriate and will monitor to ensure they are completed prior to signing off the incident. DWQR made one additional recommendation.

