

## CITY OF PLYMOUTH

**Subject:** Highway Coordination  
**Committee:** Growth and Prosperity Overview Scrutiny Panel  
**Date:** 11 July 2011  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Wogens  
**CMT Member:** Director for Development and Regeneration  
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**Ref:** TW/06/11  
**Key Decision:** N  
**Part:** Part I

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### Executive Summary:

#### Introduction

Statutory Undertakers provide an essential service delivering and maintaining some of the most important infrastructure for the City, including electricity, gas, water and telecommunications. The majority of these make substantial use of the street for their distribution networks. The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA), as revised by the Traffic Management Act 2004, provides the regulatory framework for the council to coordinate, approve and direct works effectively with the aim of minimising disruption.

The Authority has a duty to plan and co-ordinate works and events on the highway network, however, Utility Companies have statutory powers to carry out emergency works on the network at any time.

#### Noticing of works

Under NRSWA, statutory undertakers must notify the council of their planned works on the public highway. The period of notice that must be given before such works can commence, depends on the magnitude, nature and location of individual schemes:

- Major works – 3 months
- Standard works – 10 days
- Minor works – 3 days
- Immediate works (Urgent) – within 2 hours of works starting
- Immediate works (Emergencies) - no later than 2 hours after work has begun.

Whilst the majority of street works are undertaken with little or no disturbance to the public, the council liaises with utility companies to discuss and agree the details of works with the potential to cause significant disruption. This will include agreeing working times and traffic management plans, e.g. a detailed understanding of the use of road/lane closures, and the use temporary traffic lights.

## **Street Works Register**

Under section 53 of NRSWA street authorities are required to maintain a register for every street for which they are responsible. The council operates an electronic street works register, Confirm Streetworks, which provides a single source of information relating to on-going and planned works on the public highway.

The Confirm Streetworks system also serves as the authority's Notice management system, allowing the electronic receipt of street works notices from Statutory Undertakers in accordance with the national protocol for the Electronic Transfer of Notices (EToN). Once works are notified, the Streetworks Register provides the facility for the council to report on, and to coordinate all future and planned works.

## **Coordination Meetings**

The council meets quarterly with Statutory Undertakers and neighbouring authorities in HAUC (Highway Authority and Utility Companies) meetings and JAGSW (Joint Authorities Group for the South West) to identify where programme clashes may occur, where works are scheduled within Traffic Sensitive Streets, and take appropriate action. This may mean imposing working hours restrictions or directing the utility companies to change their schedules. The meetings also enable the Council to discuss the duration of individual works, challenge these where appropriate, and also to discuss the Council's own works programmes.

In some cases it is necessary for the authority to coordinate with Statutory Undertakers on a one-to-one basis. This might occur where an Undertaker is planning large scale maintenance works affecting a wider area over a longer time period, e.g. water mains rehabilitation works. Such meetings give the authority a chance to discuss and agree with the works promoter the timing of the works and the traffic management arrangements.

## **Weekly Road Report**

The council issues a weekly 'Road Report' by email both internally and to other interested bodies including the media, police, public transport operators and adjacent authorities.

The report summarises works to be undertaken in the forthcoming week indicating the location, nature and duration of the works, the traffic management arrangements, and the possibility of delays. Updates are provided to stakeholders by email throughout the week as and when information changes.

## **Network Meetings**

Fortnightly network meetings are held with public transport operators. This provides the forum to discuss upcoming street works and how they might affect services. Operators are also able to feed back on proposals and live works.

## **Street Works Inspections**

Street works inspections play an important role in reducing the potential for works to cause disruption on the network: poorly implemented traffic management or unsafe working practices can lead to accidents and delays, whilst remedial works due to substandard workmanship and materials can lead to overruns or additional road space bookings. The council's Street Works Inspectors ensure that works are undertaken safely, to the correct specifications and within the limits agreed with the authority.

The Confirm Streetworks system produces a random sample of notified works for inspection on a daily basis and includes both ongoing and completed works. If, during an inspection, a defect is identified inspectors ensure that remedial actions are taken within 2hrs, 24hrs or 14 days depending on the traffic sensitivity of the street.

To ensure overruns are avoided Confirm Streetworks produces a regular list of works for which no End Notice has been received by the authority. Inspectors visit the site daily until the works have been removed and a fine is levied on the offending Statutory Undertaker in accordance with Section 74 of NRSWA. The level of fine is determined by the number of days overrun.

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**Corporate Plan 2011 – 2014**

Providing a safe and well-maintained road network contributes to the economic well being of the City in support of the Growth priority.

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**Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:  
Including finance, human, IT and land**

No implications.

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**Other Implications: e.g. Section 17 Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management, Equalities Impact Assessment, etc.**

No implications,

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**Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:**

N/A

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**Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:**

N/A

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**Background papers:**

None.

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