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Dear Councillor Wheale

## **Coordination and Regulation of all Works on Hampshire County Council's Highways – Scrutiny Review**

Thank you for your recommendations regarding the Coordination and Regulation of all Works on Hampshire County Council's Highways – Scrutiny Review dated 17 May 2011.

I was pleased to read that your review concluded that the County Council's current method of coordination has produced examples of good working. It highlighted areas where improvements can be made, particularly in ensuring that communication takes place between relevant stakeholders, and that there is parity of coordination and regulation applied to all of those undertaking works on the road.

In respect of the 10 recommendations through the report my response and comments are set out below.

- A** That a study is undertaken on road closure orders, to ensure that a uniform approach is taken in delivering them across the County, and to assess the cost and effectiveness of bringing them in house.

### **Response**

A study will be undertaken to determine whether road closures handled by District Council agents and ourselves are done in a uniform and efficient manner to best facilitate minimal traffic disruption. Cost effectiveness in implementing road closures will be included in the review.

- B** That all District Councils are encouraged to liaise closely with the local County Council coordinator to provide details of all events that will affect the highway, and that such event information is added to the ELGIN website and Hampshire County Council email bulletin alongside the works details.

*Director of Economy, Transport and Environment  
Stuart Jarvis BSc DipTP FCIHT MRTPI*

**Response**

County Council officers attend 'Safety Advisory Groups' (SAGs) where a district council convenes such a group, in order to facilitate the coordination of events. Where a district council does not convene SAGs, gathering of event details is patchy. However, other methods of determining event information is being explored. Discussions are currently underway with the provider of the Elgin software to determine a suitable method of loading event details onto that website.

- C** That a Hampshire County 'Code of Conduct' for Works is drawn up, building on best practice, which includes the need for further traffic and communication strategies to be put in place by statutory undertakers for significant schemes, where appropriate.

**Response**

A Hampshire County Council Code of Conduct is being developed along the lines of the HAUC Code of Conduct recently produced by HAUC(UK). All works promoters, including the County Council, will be invited to sign up to the document. Initial discussions with utility companies suggest that such a document would be welcomed.

- D** That use of first time, permanent, like-for-like reinstatements by all statutory undertakers and those contractors undertaking internally ordered works is promoted through the Code of Conduct. Repairs undertaken on behalf of the County Council should comply with the same six month permanent, like-for-like timescale that is currently a legal requirement for statutory undertaker works.

**Response**

First time reinstatements (where appropriate, eg if planned works are due some months ahead a temporary may be appropriate) will form part of the Code of Conduct. The County Council will review its processes to determine optimal methods of avoiding the need to use a temporary surface and to ensure that temporary reinstatements are returned to a permanent surface within six months.

- E** That Hampshire County Council ensures that agreements with its works contractors are tightened up, ensuring parity with statutory undertakers.

**Response**

Hampshire County Council's Term Highway Contract and Street Lighting PFI currently includes penalties for non-compliances. Future contracts for individual schemes will look to introduce robust measures for improving the way coordination is improved with the contractor.

- F** That the application of non-compliances to all Hampshire County Council work contractors is enforced, and future contracts with those undertaking County works take into account the same performance measures and penalties that are imposed on utility companies.

**Response**

Hampshire County Council already imposes financial penalties for non-compliances under the Term Highway and Street Lighting PFI contracts. As above, specific contracts will be written to include non-compliance penalties. Parity in performance measures will be developed and performance of utility companies and County Council contractors will be reported alongside each other to the Traffic Manager. Individual contract managers will be responsible for enforcing non-compliance penalties. We will look to introduce undertaking random inspections on County Council sites to determine compliance with signing and guarding regulations.

- G** That the weekly road closure bulletin distributed by Hampshire County Council, and the monthly directory of works from the local highways office, is sent to a named contact(s) at each Borough and District Council in Hampshire. That the named contact(s) would then have the responsibility to disseminate this on to:
- (i) district and parish councillors;
  - (ii) waste and recycling companies;
  - (iii) private/taxi firms;
  - (iv) etc.

**Response**

The weekly works bulletins distributed by the NRSWA teams are of a technical nature and intended to assist officers in undertaking their tasks and reducing disruption. The distribution lists of these documents will be reviewed to ensure relevant contacts receive them. Appropriate contacts within the district councils will be determined and they will be encouraged to further distribute the information as they see fit.

The Elgin website will be promoted as the most accurate and up to date facility to obtain works information.

- H** That a communication channel to facilitate reinstatement defect reporting is put in place between District, Borough and Parish Councils and Hampshire County Council, in order to ensure that such instances are highlighted by those in the local community.

**Response**

The County Council has developed a website which can be used by district councils, parish councils and residents to report defects and other highway problems: <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/roads.htm>.

- I** That the Streetworks Manager publishes a yearly report of works undertaken on the Hampshire County Council website, which includes details such as:
- (i) the number of works completed annually;
  - (ii) the number of non-compliances recorded;
  - (iii) the number of days saved through coordination, etc.

**Response**

An annual report was produced for the 2009/2010 year and a further report for the 2010/2011 year is in production. Yearly reports will continue to be published and summary information will be loaded on the Hampshire County Council website.

- J** That a closer working relationship is forged with the corporate communications department, in order for successful coordination stories of road works to be communicated to the local media.

**Response**

This will be done. The working relationship is already good, and action will be taken to ensure that communications colleagues are alerted to potential newsworthy stories to increase public awareness of the County Council's work in this area. (We have recently issued press releases regarding Hampshire County Council/Southern Water Authority and South East Water working together to minimise disruption.)

Yours sincerely

Councillor Melville Kendal  
Executive Member for Environment and Transport