

BRIEFING NOTE

PLACE & RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Road/Streetworks, Traffic Management and Reinstatement

1. The streetworks industry is heavily legislated and regulated. Dorset Council manage streetworks under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991, our road network under the powers of Traffic Management Act 2004 and our Temporary Traffic Regulation Orders in line with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
2. Under the New Road and Streetworks Act 1991, a statutory undertaker has a right to place and access (for maintenance purposes) their apparatus within the highway and the highway authority has a right to carry out works to the highway for improvement/maintenance purposes.
3. In January 2020, Dorset Council implemented the Dorset Council permit scheme for road and streetworks. This scheme places an obligation on statutory works promoters (including our own highways operations) to apply for a permit to carry out activity on the highway network. The objective of Dorset Council's Permit Scheme is to improve the strategic and operational management of the highway network through better planning, scheduling, and management of activities to minimise disruption to any road or footway user. Our remit does not extend beyond disruption to the road network, and we cannot use loss of trade as a reason to instruct the timing of works.
4. The permit scheme allows for Dorset Council to execute our ability to coordinate and regulate activities. When permits are received, these are reviewed on a site-by-site basis. Conditions that a works promoter must follow can be applied to minimise disruption throughout the work period. We aim to avoid serious disruption, repeat disruption, and works taking place on a newly resurfaced street. We receive approximately 30,000 permits per annum.
5. Under the various Acts, we have limited control over emergency or urgent works. A statutory undertaker has the right to access the defective apparatus or make safe a situation without notice, ensuring that a permit is submitted no longer than two hours after the works have commenced. In some cases, a statutory undertaker may not have the necessary people, materials, or equipment available at the time of the fault, which can sometimes lead to traffic management being present without activity on site. Our expectation is that the statutory undertaker deploys the most appropriate traffic management and provides an update at their earliest opportunity.
6. Inspections of Road and Streetworks are defined within the New Road and Streetworks Act 1991. Dorset Council have four dedicated streetworks inspectors that enforce our requirements under the NRSWA 1991 and ensure that reinstatements completed by statutory undertakers are within specification. In April 2023, a new inspection regime was introduced by the Department for Transport which aligns the number of inspections to be carried out against the inspection compliance of a works promoter. This allows for a gradual increase in the number of inspections for poorly performing works promoters and a reduction for those that are performing well.

7. Further to the inspection regime, Dorset Council undertake a coring programme where we take core samples of reinstatements to ensure that the makeup of the reinstatement complies with specification.
8. Following the 02 May elections, a member webinar will be given that explains our responsibilities and the controls surrounding road and streetworks.

Marc Cutler
Traffic Team Leader