



Report to Cabinet

Date: 10 October 2023

Title: **Streetworks & Statutory Undertakers - Select Committee Report**

Relevant councillor(s) Councillor Bill Chapple OBE, Chairman of the Review Group

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Ward(s) affected: *Not ward specific*

Recommendations:

Recommendations made by the Transport, Environment & Climate Select Committee to Cabinet are that:

- 1) The dedicated funds available within the Department be directed towards measures that increase service proactivity and efficiency, for instance by maximizing recruitment 'at ground level' and offering staff training opportunities and accreditation.
- 2) Plans for core testing reinstatements are piloted as soon as practicable.
- 3) Consideration be given to extending working hours to provide cover for sites to be inspected during evening and weekends.
- 4) The Cabinet Member for Transport seriously considers pursuing court action against Statutory Undertakers that breach road traffic conditions rather than issuing a fixed penalty notice due to it being more cost effective for companies to pay the fine rather than comply with conditions.
- 5) The use of smart temporary or intelligent traffic lights be incentivized across the network for traffic management where possible.
- 6) A target be set for all temporary traffic lights and other traffic management be removed within four hours following completion of works and explore penalization measures for non-compliance.

- 7) **The Council promotes itself as a neutral third party when requesting work programmes from the fibre companies.**
- 8) **The use and benefits of one.network be actively promoted to the public, Parishes and Councillors.**
- 9) **The Streetworks team work with the Statutory Undertakers to engage with local Community Boards regarding planned upcoming works, particularly those that may be disruptive.**
- 10) **The Cabinet Member for Transport urgently lobby the Department for Transport to:
 - a) **Significantly increase Fixed Term Penalty Notice fines for conditions being breached and/or operating without permit to ensure that fines are a true deterrent;**
 - b) **Increase Section 74 fines to Statutory Undertakers and for them to be applicable on non-working days.****

Reason for decision: For Cabinet to consider the recommendations of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee agreed to set up a rapid review into Streetworks & Statutory Undertakers at its meeting on 30 March 2023. The TECC Chairman advised he would chair the review group and five other councillors volunteered to participate.
- 1.2 It was agreed that the review would not commence until May 2023 to allow the service to settle following the change in Highways contract to Balfour Beatty.
- 1.3 In June and July 2023, the review group collected evidence through meetings both in person and on Teams. The review group then met to discuss and agree its key findings and recommendations which are presented in the report found at Appendix 1.
- 1.4 A series of questions on Streetworks and Statutory Undertakers were also included as part of a Town and Parish Council survey on Buckinghamshire Council services which ran from 22 May to 13 August 2023 – see Appendix 2.
- 1.5 The report was presented to the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee on 14 September 2023.

2. Other options considered

- 2.1 Appendix 1 provides further context to the Select Committee's recommendations. Cabinet is asked to consider these recommendations and provide a response.

3. Legal and financial implications

- 3.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

4. Corporate implications

- 5.1 These will be considered as part of the Cabinet's response.

5. Next steps and review

- 5.1 As noted above, Cabinet will provide a response to the Select Committee recommendations at its meeting on 10 October 2023. The Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee will then receive an update after 6 months and 12 months to monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

6. Background papers

- 6.1 Agenda and Minutes of the Transport, Environment & Climate Change Select Committee meeting 30 March 2023:
<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=343&MId=17617&Ver=4>