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21st September 2009

Adrian Tatum
Editor
Hemming Group Ltd
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Dear Adrian

RE: "Guaranteed to last?" article by Mo Abrahams, Surveyor, 11 September 2009

I was disappointed to read the article by Mo Abrahams published in the last edition of your magazine, which fails to present any new evidence for increasing the guarantee period to five years.

I understand Mr Abraham's position to not be that of all local authorities by any means, and at odds with the position taken by their representative body on road and street works, the UK Joint Authorities Group. It is this organisation that contributes local authority representatives to the *Specification for Reinstatement of Openings in Highways* (SROH) Working Party.

I can assure your readership that the issue of the guarantee period has been debated by the Working Party for some years now. Indeed Mr Abrahams presented his arguments earlier this year to the group, and they were discussed over many hours. However, the conclusion reached by the majority of the Government, utility and local authority experts was that the evidence presented was not robust enough to substantiate an increase to the guarantee period and the associated commercial costs.

As you will be aware the Government consultation on the updated SROH Code of Practice (CoP) is currently underway and NJUG's members look forward to working through HAUC(UK)[1] with the Department for Transport and local authority colleagues to improve the guidance in line with the responses received.

Should any authorities have specific concerns or issues of contention with utilities or contractors, the recently launched HAUC(UK) Strategy has a recognised dispute resolution procedure available to be used, if the regional HAUC wishes to escalate any disputes for consideration and adjudication. All parties involved agree that the new strategy is now starting to gel very well and ensuring robust guidance and codes of practice are implemented, based on evidence and stakeholder consultation, is something HAUC(UK) is committed to driving forward.

Yours sincerely,

Les Guest
CEO
National Joint Utilities Group Ltd

Cc Jerry McConkey and Mark Ostheimer, Joint Chairs of HAUC(UK)
Cc Roger Culpin, Chair of JAG(UK)
Cc Ellen Duffy, Head of Street Works Branch, Traffic Management Division, Department for Transport
Cc Alan Rainford and Kevin Fuller, Joint Chairs of SROH Working Party

[1] Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee UK, http://www.hauc-uk.org.uk/