



EMBARGOED UNTIL 09:30, WEDNESDAY 25TH FEBRUARY

Public Prioritise Utility Supplies Over Congestion

Survey finds utility companies must communicate more with the public about street works

XX February 2009 – Eighty-five per cent of the public agree that making sure that electricity and water supplies are maintained is more important than reducing congestion on the roads, according to a ComRes survey conducted on behalf of the National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG).

Furthermore, 94 per cent of people say that they are willing to accept the inconvenience of those works undertaken in order to maintain utility supplies.

The survey canvassed 1000 UK adults in January to gather the public's opinion on utilities and street works. While the results show that on average people have been disrupted 32 times in the past 12 months, those polled still agree that ensuring the security of electricity and water supplies is a higher priority than attempting to reduce congestion.

Forty-five per cent of those interviewed rate utility companies as 'poor' in explaining the steps they are taking to maintain their networks. Les Guest, CEO elect of the National Joint Utilities Group, said: "Utilities companies have a challenge to take up when it comes to improving their communication with the public about street works".

He added, "This is something NJUG has already recognised and started reviewing, the need for which is reinforced by the survey's findings that 89 per cent of people support warning motorists about upcoming works, rather than trying to prevent them from taking place."

Speaking at the Utility Street Works Seminar on the 24th February about the survey, Mr Guest said, "The results show that people do recognise the need for street works and are prepared to accept the disruption as long as they are told about it in advance. The findings indicate real public recognition of the essential service street works provide and their necessity for the smooth running of modern life."

The full results of the survey can be found on both the ComRes and NJUG websites.

For more information about the survey or NJUG contact info@njug.org.uk.

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Notes To Editors

For further information or to arrange an interview please contact the NJUG press office at pressoffice@njug.org.uk or telephone 020 7340 1423.

About the survey

ComRes interviewed 1000 GB adults by telephone between 16th and 18th January 2009. Data was weighted to be representative demographically of all GB adults. ComRes is a member of the British Polling Council and abides by its rules. Full tables available at www.comres.co.uk and www.njug.org.uk.

About The National Joint Utility Group (NJUG)

NJUG is the only UK industry association representing utilities on street works issues. Our full members include the Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas companies), Water UK (representing water companies), National Grid, BT, Virgin Media and Thus, a Cable and Wireless Business. Our Associate Members are Clancy Docwra, Skanska McNicholas, Balfour Beatty, Morrison, Morgan Est, NACAP, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise and Laing O'Rourke. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents thirty-eight utility companies.

NJUG is the utility arm of the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee representing street works in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales known as HAUC (UK). Please see <http://www.hauc-uk.org.uk/> for further information.

NJUG's focus is on promoting best practice, safety, quality and co-ordination of works as well as representing utilities in discussions with Government and other stakeholders on street work issues.

Street works are essential activities carried out by electricity, water, gas and communications utilities to maintain, enhance, extend, renew and repair their networks.

URL: www.njug.org.uk

About ComRes

ComRes is one of the leading polling and research consultancies serving clients in the UK, Europe and Asia. The company brings its knowledge and expertise in polling and research methods together with first-hand experience in communication.

Using the most extensive range of political research tools ever created, as well as the full breadth of quantitative and qualitative research facilities, ComRes works with many leading blue-chip corporations, campaign groups, political parties, public sector bodies and trade bodies.

ComRes is a CarbonZero company and a member of the British Polling Council and Association for Qualitative Research.

For more information, please visit: www.comres.co.uk