NJUG

NJUG Statement: 2010 ALARM Survey

Quotes attributable to Les Guest, CEO, National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG)

NJUG recognises the release of the 2010 Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance (ALARM) survey. In particular, NJUG supports the report's call for Government action to address the increased number of potholes that have occurred as a result of severe weather conditions in the UK. However, NJUG would contest that a 'pothole tax' should be levied upon utilities.

Following street works, utilities reinstate the road network in line with the national Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways (SROH), a statutory code of practice under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991. The Government recently consulted (November 2009) on a revised edition of the Code, which included reviewing the subject of long term damage. The updated Code, which looks to strengthen the requirements for the quality of reinstatements, is expected to be launched in April 2010 and has been agreed by the Department of Transport and the UK Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee – HAUC(UK). Utilities also fund highway authorities to inspect their works up to two years after they have been completed and if any are found to be defective, they will repair at their own cost.

Given that utilities comply with these legal requirements, NJUG does not believe that a further charge on industry can be justified since the increase in potholes is mainly due to changes in weather conditions and lack of highway maintenance. However, utilities recognise their responsibility to carry out high quality works and NJUG has therefore commissioned a workshop in April 2010 to review and understand best practices across the UK and share these practices with all utilities and their contractors.

NJUG believes that national and local governments should work with the utility industry on researching new technologies and materials that may prevent potholes from occurring in the first places.

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Notes to Editors

For further information about the National Joint Utilities Group please go to www.njug.org.uk. To arrange an interview please contact the NJUG press office at pressoffice@njug.org.uk or telephone 020 7340 8737.

About The National Joint Utility Group (NJUG)

NJUG is the only UK industry association representing utilities and their contractors on street works issues.

Our full members include the Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas companies), Water UK (representing water and waste water companies), National Grid, Openreach, and Virgin Media. Our Associate Members are Clancy Docwra, Skanska Utilities, Balfour Beatty, Morrison Utility Services, Morgan Est, NACAP, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise, Laing O'Rourke, AMEC and SQS. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents thirty-nine utility companies and thirteen utility contractors.

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.

Utilities undertake street works for four primary reasons – safety, security of supply, to connect or upgrade customers' supplies, or to divert apparatus to facilitate major transport or urban regeneration projects. Examples include Crossrail, the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, tram projects, or new urban and housing developments.