

Meeting between Ben Howard & Amy Ward (Bromley Council Environmental Services) & Zoe Knight & Steve Barnes (Downe)

26 November 2019

The meeting was called to discuss recent road disruptions caused by utility company (SGN, UKPN and Thames Water) repairs and where we might be able to improve the process or information flow. Steve outlined that many complaints had been handled from residents, he had asked a question at a full Bromley Council meeting, and had tried to engage Cllr Colin Smith (Leader) on the subject. The following was covered:

Emergency repairs

- The utility alone decides if the repair is an emergency
- The utility is responsible for informing local businesses (a surprise to us as we thought the Council did this)
- The Council must be notified by the utility within two hours of an intended repair. Unless this is out-of-hours or at the weekend. If at the weekend, the Council must be notified by 10am on the Monday morning.
- The utility raise a permit number (the Council do not) and can start work before Council agreement
- The utility must inform TFL (for bus route issues)
- The utility must arrange with contractors for barriers to be put up. The utility must arrange for barriers to be taken down afterwards
- The utility to inform TfL that the road can be reinstated for buses

Non-emergency repairs

- The utility must apply for a permit. These can be Minimum (for 3 days), Standard (for 10 days), Major (up to 3 months). The Council have different charges for different permits
- The Council need to agree traffic management issues. If the road is to be closed, the process can take up to 8 weeks, or a matter of days if not
- The utility is responsible for informing local businesses
- The utility to inform TfL that the road can be reinstated for buses

Transport for London

- There is concern that TFL is unaware of some road works (or not in sufficient time)
- The TFL website is often not up to date. Passengers are often completely “in the dark” about the bus services

Conclusions

- It was impressed upon the Council that whilst repairs cannot be prevented, communication was the key. The sooner and better that Downe residents could be informed by Bromley Council (via Downe Mailing/S Barnes) the better for everyone

- We concluded that of the utility companies, Thames Water were consistently worse than the others
- Amy offered to supply contact details for each utility
- Amy will supply details of Alice Keeping (Thames Water) who would be willing to come and talk to residents
- Cllr Richard Scoates has offered to raise the subject with the full Bromley Council