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Press Release

Issued on behalf of Roads Authorities and Utilities Committee Scotland (RAUC(S))

National Coring Programme of Road Reinstatements 2015/2016

NATIONAL CORING PROGRAMME'S DISAPPOINTING RESULTS

The Roads Authorities across mainland Scotland have carried out a programme of coring reinstatements done by the Utilities following their works on the road network. This was to determine if the reinstatement of the bituminous layers had been done to the required specification. This was the ninth National Coring Programme and the cores were taken on reinstatements carried out in 2015. The report is published today on the website of the Scottish Road Works Commissioner:

http://www.roadworks.scot/CommunityRAUCS/Coring/RAUCS_Coring.aspx

Following years of improving the quality of reinstatements, this last coring programme has noted a slight drop in standards. A total of 1535 cores were taken and 276 failed to comply with the specification. This equates to a pass rate of 82%, which is a fall of 1% since the previous 2012/2103 programme.

Scottish Water, SGN, SSE and Scottish Power performed well, improving on the previous programme, but the results from the telecommunications undertakers are disappointing. This sector only achieved a pass rate of 68%. Representatives of this sector have fully accepted that this standard of reinstatement is not acceptable and have already engaged with the Scottish Road Works Commissioner to develop plans and procedures to improve their performance.

end

Notes to editors:

Utility companies have statutory powers to place and maintain their apparatus in the public road but must comply with legislation and codes of practice and co-operate with roads authorities to minimise the disruption and damage caused by their road works.

The Roads Authorities and Utilities Committee Scotland (RAUC(S)) is a body set up to co-ordinate issues arising from this throughout Scotland. It has joint chairs representing the roads authorities and utility companies as follows:

Roads Authorities co-chair – Jim Clegg (Glasgow City Council)

jim.clegg@glasgow.gov.uk

Utility companies co-chair – Alex Rae (SGN)

alex.rae@sgn.co.uk

When roads are dug up by utility companies, they must be reinstated in accordance with a national specification issued by the Scottish Government. This can be viewed at <http://www.roadworks.scot/LegislationGuidance/CodesofPractice.aspx>

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The coring programme involves taking cores from a representative sample of recent reinstatements and checking whether or not they comply with this specification. At the time of testing, the reinstatements are not showing any outward signs of failure, but those that do not meet the specification are considered to be more likely to give rise to problems in the future.

Road works in Scotland are monitored by the Scottish Road Works Commissioner who has a duty to promote good practice and the power to impose penalties on organisations who are not complying with their duties.

The Commissioner made the following statement in relation to the coring programme in his last Annual Report for 2016:

“In September 2011, RAUC(S) agreed that, after a decade of coring, a minimum acceptable pass rate of 90% should be introduced for all future National Coring Programmes.

A Commissioner Direction was issued to all organisations on 23 January 2012 requiring that all utility companies shall, so far as reasonably practical, achieve a pass rate of 90% during all future National Coring Programmes.

During 2012, Scottish Water undertook 35% of all reinstatements across Scotland. It is likely that Scottish Water’s in-house monitoring of contractors is a major factor in their improved performance. Where a large organisation the size of Scottish Water can achieve a pass rate of 92%, all other organisations should be able to achieve a similar level of performance.

Other major utility companies such as Openreach who achieved a pass rate of 72% and SP Energy Networks with a pass rate of 77% need to be more proactive in their engagement with contractors. Contractors failing to achieve the required performance should consider introducing quality assurance schemes, increased monitoring, reviewing supervision arrangements and introducing utility company coring.

In June 2014, following careful consideration of the results of the 2012/13 National Coring Programme, the Commissioner imposed penalties against companies who failed to achieve a pass rate of 80%. Amongst other factors, the level of penalty considered individual pass rates, number of works undertaken and any known mitigation measures which were evidencing improvement.

The penalties imposed in this reporting period are detailed in Table 7.

Organisation Penalty Imposed

Openreach £30,000

SP Energy Networks £20,000

Vodafone £3,000

Energetics £1,500

ES Pipelines £1,500

Fulcrum £1,500

Table 7 – Penalties Imposed.”

The full Annual Report can be viewed on the Commissioner’s web site at:

<http://www.roadworksscotland.gov.uk/Publications/AnnualReports.aspx>

We have also attached background reports to the email bearing this release for your information and use.

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