

SCOTTISH ROAD WORKS COMMISSIONER

Media Release

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SCOTTISH ROAD WORKS COMMISSIONER ISSUES PENALTIES

The Scottish Road Works Commissioner has today issued penalties totalling £57,500 to six utility companies for failing to comply with legal requirements when placing their cables and pipes in roads. These failings were identified by the latest biennial Scottish National Coring Programme in which road cores are taken to establish whether the correct materials, layer depths and compaction have been used to refill the bituminous layers of excavations. Openreach has been fined £30,000; SP Energy Networks £20,000; Vodafone £3,000; ES Pipelines £1,500; Energetics £1,500; and Fulcrum £1,500.

The latest results showed that only two companies, SSE (94%) and Scottish Water (92%), achieved in excess of the 90% target pass rate set by the Scottish utility companies themselves after poor results in the previous Coring Programme.

Elsbeth King, the Scottish Road Works Commissioner said:

“Although I am pleased to see that the overall pass rate has increased to 83% from 74% previously, this is just not good enough. There is a legal duty to meet the required standard for all materials and workmanship when carrying out excavations and I expect all utility companies to endeavour to achieve as close to 100% compliance as possible. This will entail a significant increase in levels of supervision and quality control.

I am disappointed that the results do not show the step change in performance which has been required. These failed reinstatements will have a detrimental effect on the serviceable life of the road, leading to further road works to replace the failed sections and the potential of disruption and inconvenience to road users.”

All of the companies involved have now assured the Commissioner that they have introduced procedures to improve future compliance rates.

NOTES FOR NEWS EDITORS

The post of Commissioner was established under the Transport (Scotland) Act 2005 to oversee improvements to the planning, co-ordination and quality of road works throughout Scotland. The Commissioner monitors performance and promotes good practice across both utility companies and roads authorities. She also has the power to impose financial penalties of up to £50,000 on organisations who have systemic failures in compliance with road works legislation.

Contact: Raymond Elliot (Policy Manager) on 0131 244 9938 or raymond.elliott@srwc.gsi.gov.uk.