



Department  
for Transport

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From the Minister of State  
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Dear Cllr Webster and BID Chair Hancock

Thank you for your letter of 19 October 2018 about utility works on the A590.

I am sorry for the disruption caused in your area by these works. Highways England work closely with utility companies and their contractors when they need to carry out any required works. The utility companies are allowed by law to have access to their equipment, but they are required to apply to Highways England for permission and to work at set times.

These particular works were undertaken to provide utilities to four new houses on Canal Street. The utility company applied for permission for water supply works on 27 September. Highways England advised that this could not go ahead due to a clash with other works in the area, but the contractor commenced work on 2 October in any case. Highways England took steps to manage the remainder of the planned gas and electricity works to minimise disruption and are taking the matter up with the utility company to understand better why this miscommunication happened.

Highways England monitors and ensures that any work that is carried out by utility companies is safe and undertaken in a timely fashion under The New Roads and Street Works Act. This allows for a stronger management of utility companies' works than a permit system. Highways England does not have any plans to change to a permit scheme at this time, but I am sorry that the system did not work as it should have in this case.

**JESSE NORMAN**