

Full Council – 10 November 2025

Amendment submitted by the Labour Group to the Conservative Group Motion

Proposed amendment – To add the wording underlined and delete the wording indicated:

Holding Highways Contractors and Utility Companies Accountable for Unsafe and Substandard Reinstatement Works

This Council notes with concern the increasing number of highways works, and substandard reinstatement activities carried out by utility companies across Brent — particularly on Kingsbury Road, Westmoreland Road, and Dryburgh Gardens. These works have led to unsafe footways, prolonged disruption and unacceptable conditions for residents, businesses and road users.

This Council further notes:

- After decades of underinvestment through their model of privatisation, Thames Water are now finally undertaking major upgrade works across Brent – work that should have been delivered years ago. While these long-overdue improvements are essential, they are also causing significant congestion and disruption on local roads.
- That on Dryburgh Gardens, outside several properties, Thames Water subcontracted a company whose backfill works failed to meet required standards. The ground has since sunk, leaving footways hazardous for pedestrians.
- That on Kingsbury Road, the footway was excavated near a BT chamber and reinstated with concrete rather than the original paving slabs. When contacted, Brent's Highways team confirmed no permit had been issued for these works. This raises serious concerns about illegal excavation, and lack of oversight and whether Brent Council is maintaining a record of roads being dug up without authorisation and left in a dangerous state adherence to public realm safety management from utility companies operating in Brent.
- That outside Morrison Patrol Station, two clear breaches have been identified and reported:

- A footpath originally laid with paving slabs has been reinstated with low-grade asphalt;
 - A double yellow line across the carriageway has not been reinstated following trenching works.
- These reinstatement failures breach the “like-for-like” standard and pose trip hazards to pedestrians.

This Council further notes:

- That defects identified under the New Road and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) Section 81, where apparatus is unsafe or unrepaired, are subject to strict response timelines yet often remain unresolved due to disputed ownership.
- That defects identified and that come within Section 72 of the NRSWA — where reinstatement fails to meet prescribed standards—are enforceable and chargeable, yet enforcement remains underutilised difficult without transparent public ownership and accountability of these utility companies.

As a result, this Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Publish Explore new options within out Transformation programme to publish a public-facing defect tracker for Section 72 and Section 81 of the NRSWA, detailing timelines, responsible parties, and enforcement actions, as well as making reporting easier.
- (2) Escalate Maintain strict enforcement under Section 72 of the NRSWA for all confirmed defective reinstatements, including chargeable inspections and remedial permits.
- (3) Report ~~quarterly~~ annually to Full Council on progress, enforcement outcomes, and resident feedback.
- (4) Reaffirm its commitment to public safety, transparency, and holding highways contractors and utility companies accountable for the quality and timeliness of their works.
- (5) Invite Thames Water’s senior leadership to attend a Brent Council Scrutiny Committee to present their new investment plan, explain current disruption, and set out how they will deliver lasting local benefits.
- (6) Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, expressing Brent’s support for continued reform of Thames Water and other utility companies, and urging that any future restructuring of Thames Water prioritises a transparent pathway toward a publicly accountable, sustainable model of ownership.

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