

A5 Towcester High Street

We will be carrying out essential maintenance work on the A5 from the road bridge over the River Tove southwards towards the junction of the A5 with Marlow Road, Towcester.

These works are required to address surface water ponding issues that cause splash damage to properties on the A5. Particular issues are noted outside the Monk and Tipster public house, Totts Nursery and a residential property at No.63 Watling Street.

Towcester High Street has been subject to many maintenance projects, designed to help improve the facilities, transport links and utilities available to residents and business owners. One of these projects involved major gas works back in 2009, which delivered the removal of the previous iron gas mains and installation of a replacement plastic pipe, designed to last up to 80-years. These works were intended to significantly reduce the need for deep trench works along Watling Street.

Following on from these works, in 2013 the carriageway through Watling Street was resurfaced. However, by 2015 there were signs of cracking and rutting. At this point emergency patching works were undertaken on Richmond Road, around the manholes, outside the NatWest bank and on Church Road. Further investigatory and surveying works were planned to establish the cause of this rapid deterioration of the road surface.

A Virtual Management report was issued in September 2016. This allowed visual conditional surveys to commence. These were conducted in February last year. The Virtual Conditional Surveys (VCS) were then compared to the VCS conducted in 2011, prior to the 2013 resurfacing works, to determine if the issues found were the same as previously reported in 2011. Based on these VCS comparisons, which showed cracking, depression and potholing reoccurring in the same parts of the carriageway, further investigations were conducted by means of trial holes.

All findings from the VCS and the outcome of the trial holes identified that the pavement defects are due to the gas main trench reinstatement. The trench over the gas pipe itself is sound; the problems are on the edges of the trench. This was likely caused by the trench having being mechanically broken out without saw cutting first and then backfilled without preparing the concrete edges and leaving loose

materials onsite. It has been determined that this stretches the full length of the 430m gas main trench.

Further to the deterioration of the pavement surface, on the northbound and southbound carriageways, ponding of surface water and subsequent "splashing of properties" has been reported by business owners and residents.

It has been identified that during rainfall events some gullies become surcharged and consequently ponding occurs around the kerb line and across the carriageway. Traffic flows across this ponded water, causing splash damage to properties and posing a significant risk to pedestrians.

The fact that this relatively new surface is now failing badly is indicative of the existing poor construction quality of the gas trench. In order to avoid repetition of such premature deterioration of the new surface, it is important that a quality repair, in accordance with highways standards, is undertaken.

The town of Towcester represents a very different environment, compared to a typical stretch of trunk road. Towcester is lined with several shop frontages, many busy pubs and restaurants, a church, a car park, hundreds of residential properties within very close proximity to the edge of the carriageway, two schools, nurseries and five pedestrian crossings along the stretch of road where the works are to be carried out.

As mentioned above, the essential maintenance work on the A5 will stretch from the road bridge over the River Tove southwards towards the junction of the A5 with Marlow Road. During this comprehensive scheme of work, we will repair damaged drains and kerbs, resurface some footways, resurface the carriageway, refresh road markings and install road studs and traffic loops.

The work will also include the reinstatement of the trench over the gas main mentioned above that runs between the south side of the junction at Brackley and Northampton Roads and The Lindens.

Following discussion with Towcester Town Council, we have agreed to keep our programme for these works as short as possible. Work is due to start late in July 2018 and is scheduled for completion by the end of November 2018. We will work two shifts per day (between 7am and midnight) Monday to Friday, one shift

(between 7am and 5pm) on Saturday and one shift (between 8am and 4pm) on Sunday.

Please note that all our planned roadworks may be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances.

An environmental assessment has been carried out for the works. We have consulted with the District Council Environmental officer and a restriction of 'noisier activities' has been agreed between 7am and midnight. Acoustic barriers and appropriate management and supervision will be ensured.

We have also taken into consideration the amount of traffic that will be present during large events in the area. Two stand down periods have been scheduled, one during the Palomo Faith Concert on the 28th July at The Racecourse and the other during the Grand Prix MotoGP between the 24th and 26th August at Silverstone Circuit.

Given the width of the carriageway and close proximity of properties along the A5 route through Towcester, full carriageway closures will be required to allow enough space to safely carry out the drainage, pavement and gas main trench repair works. To lessen disruption to the businesses and residents of Towcester, we plan to carry out these works in phases.

The first phase extends from the bridge over the River Tove down to and including the junction of the A5 with Brackley and Northampton Roads. Subsequent phases run from the south side of the junction with Brackley and Northampton Roads to approximately 60 metres south of the junction of the A5 with Marlow Road.

Please refer to the attached drawing for more detailed information about each phase.

During these closures we will:

- temporarily close the gaps in the central reservation on the A43, between the junction with Tiffield Road and the junction with Towcester Road, for the safety of our customers
- put in place fully signed diversion routes, which have been agreed with the Local Authority

- temporarily lift one-way restrictions to enable access and egress for businesses and residents in Park Street and Browns Yard; and businesses, residents and visitors to Chantry Lane and Moat Lane

We will maintain vehicle access to businesses and properties wherever possible. And, we are currently working with local businesses to arrange alternative delivery vehicles and drop off / pick up points. Pedestrian access will be maintained at all times.

We have put in place a comprehensive communications strategy which is helping us involve key stakeholders (including local authorities and transport providers), local businesses and residents in decisions about the delivery of this scheme. We have appointed two full-time Public Liaison Officers (PLOs) to this scheme who will help us deliver all activity.

The main contractor (Forkers) PLO will be available during the mobilisation and construction phases of the scheme. He will work with the site team to foster a culture in which the customer impact is considered before and during the undertaking of any work. Both PLOs will be on hand to respond to any queries which are raised via the Highways England Customer Contact Centre or dedicated site specific email address / mobile telephone number.

If you have any questions about this work, you can contact our PLO via email at infoA5towcesterhighstreet@forkers.com or by calling 07964 114 623.