

CALDERDALE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION UNDER RULE 13 OF THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES

Council Meeting: **Wednesday, 24 September 2025**

Question from: **Councillor Webster**

Question to: **Councillor Courtney, Cabinet Member with
responsibility for Regeneration and Transport**

Frequency and duration of road closures and bus cancellations. People living in the Mill Bank and Cottonstones area have become disadvantaged by frequent road and bus cancellations caused by the repeated failure and repair of water and other utilities ageing infrastructure. People without private transport who are older, who have a disability or cannot afford taxis are left at risk or inconvenience when they can't get to work, miss health appointments or are unable to carry out other essential activities. The community can be cut off and without public transport for weeks at a time.

The Council's plan for Net Zero is to encourage more use of public transport to help fight the climate emergency. The utility companies carry the main responsibility but have been largely unresponsive to repeated requests for better management. Council Officers say they have little influence or responsibility in managing the consequences. However the Council's Streetworks service could act to give utility companies shorter permits or even fine the companies when they overrun. In our experience it is frequently the reinstatement of the road surface after repairs that can cause delays for up to five days.

Will the Council develop a policy to make sure utility works are planned and delivered in better ways to limit the harm to this and other communities? And bring together the Council and utility companies with the local community group (The Mill Bank Group), so that residents' needs are built into the process from the start.

RESPONSE

Hello Cllr Webster and thank you for the questions raised, all of which are noted.

Unfortunately, we are unable to develop a specific streetworks policy as set out in your question as Calderdale Council, along with all Local Authorities are governed by the Department for Transport and must follow their statutory guidance in relation to how permits are raised and co-ordinated.

It is important to note that a considerable proportion of the work on the road network causing major issues is categorised as emergency works whereby people are without critical supplies, and the utilities have statutory powers to undertake repairs without giving us prior notice.

Due to the access issues in the area, we challenge the duration of all works that prevent access, giving a maximum of three days for more complex repairs and on smaller jobs, ask that repairs are completed, reinstated and fully cleared within the same day but again, this is not always possible dependent on what is exposed in the ground and whether damage has been caused to the highway after a water burst for example.

Where works are planned, we also try to restrict working hours to weekends or overnight, dependent on the location and noise disturbance and impacts on local transport provision, which we appreciate is extremely important in small rural communities like Mill Bank and Cottonstones. We are aware of how many people rely on transport for appointments etc and this is relayed to the Utility companies on a frequent basis so that they can remind their work planners accordingly.

We appreciate it can be frustrating if workers are not visible and active on site and where there are perceived delays to reinstatements. This is something we monitor closely however there are also instances whereby the Utility Companies have to wait for system outages late at night to ensure that people don't lose critical services or in the case of water for example, to reduce pressure or shut off pipes completely in order to make them safe to work on.

We will continue to monitor all works in this area but as above, hope you can understand that much of the time, we are limited as to what we can do about the disruption due to not being able to foresee the frequency, location and timing of emergency/urgent works and third party restrictions on all involved.

NOTE: Questions under Rule 13 must be in writing and submitted to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services by noon the Friday before the Council Meeting.