



Major Transport disruption to hit Strathaven for the rest of 2018!

There is no way to sugar-coat the message I'm about to deliver because this disruption has the potential to affect every single one of us living in Strathaven and not just for the summer but for the rest of 2018!

Please allow me to explain what is happening? For decades, the electricity supply to Strathaven has required an upgrade. Some would even say: 'It's had its' day,' but for so many of us living in the town, the poor electricity supply has caused problems for years and it needs a major overhaul, which Strathaven is about to get. This work is needed and not just because of the new housing developments but because the supply problems go way back, beyond even the houses built in the late 1990's.

So, a new sub-station is to be built this year in the Hamilton Road Industrial Estate. Our supply will then be re-directed away from Wishaw (where it comes from now) to the power distribution complex on Muttonhall Road (near Hamilton). This means laying a truly massive underground cable (made up of many cables) installed between the Muttonhall Road power distribution complex and the small sub-station currently located near the Strathaven (Avondale) Medical Practice.

So, here is the bad news:

- 14th May to 29th May 2018: Loudon Street will be closed from Commercial Road to the Ward and YES: during this time some residents will not have access to their driveways and access to the Medical Practice could be badly disrupted.
- 30th May to 9th July 2018: (suspended during both Strathaven and Glassford Gala weekends), Hamilton Road will have section closures between Commercial Road and Hamilton Road Industrial Estate. As above, residents and businesses alike may experience significant disruption accessing their premises.
- 9th July to 15th August: Commercial Road will have section closures from Loudon Street to Hamilton Road. As above, residents have got to expect real disruption: parking and accessing driveways as each section closes. The reason the job is being split this way is to ensure Commercial Road is not disrupted during the school term.
- Finally: from some point in August and for approximately 26 weeks), there will be at least two section contraflows (controlled by traffic lights) on Hamilton Road from Hamilton Road Industrial Estate to Muttonhall Road. Why two? Because one team will work towards Strathaven from Muttonhall Road and the other from Strathaven towards Muttonhall Road, meeting somewhere halfway.

Until recently, I'd no idea this upgrade meant road closures but I'm being told that due to the sheer size of the cable being installed, it requires a 1.9m track to be dug up the middle of each road in sections of 20 to 30 metres at a time. Why up the middle of each road, causing the closures? I've been told by SLC roads that too many existing utilities (especially gas) lie under the edges of the

roads in question so the 1.9m trench is required to be placed under the middle of Loudon Street, Commercial Road and Hamilton Road. The same problem doesn't carry on beyond the town boundary so a contraflow system can be used between Strathaven and Muttonhall Road.

As you can imagine, as one of the 3 Strathaven councillors, I'm horrified about the potential level of disruption and I have many questions, eg. Why can't the cable be redirected over fields? What are we doing to mitigate the risk to patients accessing the Medical Centre? How will the emergency services manage? How will Whitelaw's even manage to run a bus service from Strathaven to Hamilton during the Commercial Road closure.? What will residents do if they can't access their driveways?

The bottom line: as a locally elected member, my powers (along with the Councils) are limited. We have got to (by law) allow Scottish Power to carry out this work and at the end of the day: this upgrade is badly needed! All I'd ask is that residents bear with me as I try to answer my own questions, which I hope to do during a meeting with Isobel Dorman, Margaret Cooper, SLC Roads and Scottish Power on Friday 20th April. Sadly, this will be too late for the Strathaven Echoes but I promise to keep everyone updated via my Councillor Facebook Page.

I'm demanding that Scottish Power provide a 24x7 emergency telephone number as a minimum and they keep us (Councillors and Council) updated every week (during the work) as an update on progress and planned disruption for the week following. This work will also have to delay planned road improvement work around the new St. Pat's Primary School (and Community Wing) and will delay by a year: resurfacing work and improvements we had planned for the A723 Hamilton Road.

This is major and I can't under-estimate the level of disruption it will have on all our lives, our businesses in the town and the services we use. I'm not a lawyer so I have got to take the advice I receive from the Council Officers on this matter but please be assured, I am trying to work with everyone concerned to minimise what will be a massive challenge for everyone in Strathaven mainly during the summer but also to a lesser degree: for the rest of the year.

CLLR Graeme Campbell (Scottish Conservative & Unionist Party)
SLC Ward-5, Avondale & Stonehouse