



The SPEN Affect!

Right now, I'm fully aware of the affect SEPN are having on Strathaven; with the Hamilton Road closed this month and it only due to get worse in July and August with Commercial Road due to close in two phases.

There is no doubt that businesses in Strathaven are suffering! I've received many calls over the last four weeks from small business owners in Strathaven who are seeing their sales numbers and customer traffic falling far short of the same period in 2017. As a result of these concerns: last week I sat down with the SLC Executive Director of Community & Enterprise, plus the council's head of roads to discuss this very problem.

They prepared the following statement for me, which underlines the challenge faced by the council in this situation and the need of SPEN to carry out this urgently needed upgrade to our electricity supply in Strathaven:

"While roads are frequently seen as primarily serving vehicular traffic, they are also important conduits for critical public utility infrastructure. Consequently, public utilities such as Scottish Power, Scottish Water and telecom providers have a statutory right to place their apparatus in roads and maintain it as necessary. The role of the council is to plan and co-ordinate roadworks so as to minimise inconvenience to the travelling public. However, we cannot unreasonably withhold permission for public utilities to use the roads to maintain or improve their services.

When we receive proposals from public utilities to undertake works which are likely to involve significant disruption we will explore with them the available options to undertake the works. This may involve the specific routes chosen through the road network or where the apparatus is placed within the road; for example, by working on the edge of the road it may be possible to maintain traffic flow via signal control. We may also discuss undertaking works at a time of year (or time of week) which avoids peak traffic flows or working extending hours to minimise the duration of disruptive works. Ultimately, however, having exhausted such discussions, it may still be necessary to undertake works in a manner which causes significant disruption.

It should of course be borne in mind that works such as those in Strathaven, while significantly disruptive in the short term, will provide critical public service infrastructure from which communities will benefit for decades to come."

Before I finish, I do want to update everyone as I've done on my CLLR Facebook page over recent weeks: The SPEN Strathaven public transport sub-group, which has been supported by my ward colleagues, SLC, SPEN, CSPRATT, SPT and Whitelaw's Bus's: came up with a temporary solution that will maintain a bus service between Strathaven, Glassford and Hamilton during the entire two phases of the Commercial Road closure in July and August. I completely accept that our temporary solution will add to the disruption for some people but I'd also ask for patience as we try to maintain a badly needed bus service, that supports the elderly in our outlying villages shop in Strathaven and those without cars: get to and from their work.

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