

The first enquiry was received on and completed on 18th July. The second was received (I believe) on the 20th July and was completed on the 24th July.

- Customer Enquiry

From customer: City Fibre are due to undertake works in Comet Way and Armstrong Way including the footway between Comet Way and Miles Way. Can you provide details of these works and where the council has allowed City Fibre to access and store their materials. Can you provide me with the permits issued to City Fibre by WBC for these works and confirm that City Fibre have not been permitted to access or block private land in the area by WBC?

WBC Response: CityFibre are a statutory undertaker and therefore have a right to be able to install their apparatus, including cabinets, on the public highway providing that they are granted a permit to do so from the Council. The works are being undertaken to install fibreoptic cable in line with central government's commitment to providing superfast broadband to 99% of homes by 2030.

A condition related to storage of materials has been placed on the permit and as such material will only be stored outside of 269 Headley Road East on the public highway. I can confirm that the Council is unable to grant permit applications for works on private land and it would be CityFibre's responsibility to contact the person responsible for that area. Whilst the Council cannot issue specific permission to block private accesses, it is unavoidable in work of this nature. We expect CityFibre to inform customers when this will happen and also remove barriers when the access needs to be used. If you do experience this, please do speak to the workforce on site so they can assist you.

- Customer Complaint

From Customer: The footpath between Miles Way and Comet Way has been closed by City Fibre. This is marked on the one network map (on which WBC roadworks are shown rather than on WBC's own website) as being green with limited impact. Also works are shown on Armstrong Way as medium impact with a footway closure and the provision of an alternative route. The works on both of these is marked as utilities maintenance and repair, this is false as the works are speculative installation.

Why have the council provided this false information, or allowed false information to be posted on a website linked to the council's own? Why have local residents not been informed of these closures and works? Why have City Fibre been allowed to operate/store materials on private land and block access to properties which is contrary to the Highway Code. Why does nobody from the council check on these works? Why do the council not provide up to date and accurate information on road works in the borough online?

Expected outcome or action

Provide accurate and open/honest information about roadworks on WBC website that is easy access and is inclusive. Show care and consideration for local residents and regulate/provide oversight for speculative private roadworks such as those conducted by City Fibre and their contractors. Consider residents' complaints and respond in a respectful manner that answers the complaint instead of just ignoring it and the resident. Consider the mental health and well-being of residents.

WBC Response: I write with regard to the complaint that you submitted in relation to CityFibre work in Armstrong Way. You have submitted a number of questions, so for clarity, I will answer each in turn:

- *The footpath between Miles Way and Comet Way has been closed by City Fibre. This is marked on the one network map (on which WBC roadworks are shown rather than on WBC's own website) as being green with limited impact. Also works are shown on Armstrong Way as medium impact with a footway closure and the provision of an alternative route. The works on both of these is marked as utilities maintenance and repair, this is false as the works are speculative installation.*

CityFibre are a statutory undertaker and therefore have a legal right to install their apparatus within the public highway – providing that they the appropriate permit from the Council. CityFibre are installing their apparatus as part of central Government's commitment to providing ultrafast broadband to 99% of properties by 2023. I am afraid that I do not know what you mean by speculative installation in this context.

- *Why have the council provided this false information, or allowed false information to be posted on a website linked to the councils own?*

The information you refer to is provided from the permit and is simply a classification. Wokingham Borough Council, and the majority of Councils across the Country, use the one.network service to be able to provide road and streetwork information to customers in line with the requirement of the New Roads and Streetworks and to assist customers in planning their journey and getting information of road and streetworks happening in their area. The information is taken directly from the national Streetworks Register and is therefore accurate.

- *Why have local residents not been informed of these closures and works?*

It is a condition of CityFibre's permit to work on the public highway and to provide evidence of this to the Council. Evidence of this has been provided and whilst it does not guarantee that every customer received the correspondence, it does provide surety that the appropriate effort has been made. The Council has made our dissatisfaction with CityFibre's approach to customer communications clear to them at our fortnightly progress meetings and are awaiting details of how this will be improved.

- *Why have City Fibre been allowed to operate/store materials on private land and block access to properties which is contrary to the Highway Code?*

CityFibre have been given no permission by Wokingham Borough Council to store materials on private land. If this is occurring, such complaints should be directed to them. Regarding the blocking of accesses, I am afraid that this inevitable during works of this nature. However, CityFibre and their contractors are expected to personally inform customers when their accesses will be blocked and

what to do when they require access. Further, private accesses are not to be blocked when the site is unattended for any period of time.

- *Why does nobody from the council check on these works?*

The Council has a robust regime for inspection third party works on the highway. This is performance based so at the present time, CityFibre receive one of the highest number of inspections. Indeed, the area Streetworks Inspector did attend Armstrong Way and issued a high risk live site defect on the 19th July, which was rectified to his satisfaction.

- *Why do the council not provide up to date and accurate information on road works in the borough online?*

This achieved by the one.network tool described above. It is also embedded on the Wokingham Borough Council website [here](#). Beyond that, information is published regularly on the Council's Traffic and Travel Twitter and Facebook pages and you can also subscribe to a weekly Traffic and Travel newsletter [here](#).

I hope that this provides answers to your queries but if I can help you further, please do not hesitate to contact me again.