

Engineering challenges: Road closure extended due to complications

Unexpected difficulties prolong essential work in Northampton

10 Feb 2017

- Closure in part of Northampton's Gold Street will take longer than initially anticipated due to major engineering challenges
- Engineers are having to cut through reinforced concrete and negotiate a multitude of other utilities and underground services
- The project will help keep safe and reliable gas supplies flowing for cooking and heating

Engineers are using both force and finesse to carry out essential gas mains replacement work involving big engineering challenges in Northampton.

The closure of a 20m stretch of a bus, taxi, delivery and cycle route in Gold Street running from the junction with Horseshoe Street towards the city which was originally due to be lifted on Sunday 19 February but has now been extended until at least Sunday 26 February.

To carry out their work engineers are working to remove street surfaces made up of reinforced concrete slabs which sit above another layer of reinforced concrete. Beneath this tough exterior lie a labyrinth of cables and pipes belonging to other utilities.

National Grid Authorising Engineer Mark Allsop said: "With any project our pre-work surveys and the maps we are provided with from other utilities will only tell us so much - the complete picture only comes when we start work."

"Our engineers have found some major challenges with this work including having to break through tough reinforced concrete and then carefully configure a route for the new gas pipes amid a complex network of other cables and pipes."

He added: "We're sorry for any inconvenience this may cause people and we are doing all we can to complete the works as soon as possible. The end result will be positive and help ensure local residents and businesses keep on enjoying safe and reliable gas supplies in the future."

The project also involves phased lane closures in Horseshoe Street, - access to homes and businesses continues to be maintained at all times. All businesses will be open as usual. Access for motorists will be maintained via a signed diversion route. There will also be access to all main car parks.

Gas engineers may need access to businesses on Horseshoe Street to replace service pipes (the pipes that take gas from the main in the road to individual properties). This work will involve temporarily switching off the gas supply to the properties involved. Those affected will be notified beforehand.

All National Grid engineers carry official identity cards, which people should ask to see before allowing them on their property. Work started at the beginning of January 2017 and is currently expected to be completed sometime in April 2017.

To verify an engineer's identity or for any enquiries about this work people should contact National Grid's customer services team on 0800 096 5678.

To find out more about National Grid's gas mains replacement work go to www.bettergaspipes.co.uk

Contact for media information only

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Notes for editors

Notes to Editors:

National Grid is pivotal to the energy systems in the UK and the north eastern United States. We aim to serve customers well and efficiently, supporting the communities in which we operate and making possible the energy systems of the future.

National Grid in the UK:

- We own and operate the electricity transmission network in England and Wales, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. We also operate, but do not own, the Scottish networks. Our networks comprise approximately 7,200 kilometres (4,474 miles) of overhead line, 1,500 kilometres (932 miles) of underground cable and 342 substations.
- We own and operate the gas National Transmission System in Great Britain, with day-to-day responsibility for balancing supply and demand. Our network comprises approximately 7,660 kilometres (4,760 miles) of high-pressure pipe and 618 above-ground installations.
- As Great Britain's System Operator (SO) we make sure gas and electricity is transported safely and efficiently from where it is produced to where it is consumed. From April 2019, Electricity System Operator (ESO) is a new standalone business within National Grid, legally separate from all other parts of the National Grid Group. This will provide the right environment to deliver a balanced and impartial ESO that can realise real benefits for consumers as we transition to a more decentralised, decarbonised electricity system.

- Other UK activities mainly relate to businesses operating in competitive markets outside of our core regulated businesses; including interconnectors, gas metering activities and a liquefied natural gas (LNG) importation terminal – all of which are now part of National Grid Ventures. National Grid Property is responsible for the management, clean-up and disposal of surplus sites in the UK. Most of these are former gas works.

Find out more about the energy challenge and how National Grid is helping find solutions to some of the challenges we face at <https://www.nationalgrid.com/group/news>

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