

Summary of the common principles of good collaboration

This summary of the common principles of good collaboration has been produced drawing primarily on the previous winners of the NJUG Minimise Disruption Award (previously the NJUG Partnership Award) citing examples of best practice. It is commended to all utilities, highway and road authorities and their respective road and street works contractors by Joint Chairs of HAUC(UK) Bob Gallienne and Jerry McConkey.



Bob Gallienne and Jerry McConkey, Joint Chairs of HAUC(UK)

Common principles of good collaboration:

Identifying the opportunity for partnership

Where major works are planned to take place over a long period of time, it is imperative to recognise the value of and opportunity for collaboration from the outset.

In 2011, faced with their own major town centre refurbishment, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council recognised the potential for a large joint working scheme after various utilities shared their plans to undertake major investment work within the town centre during a quarterly NRSWA co-ordination meeting. The Council arranged a number of meetings with utility representatives to discuss the prospect of a joint working initiative. (See Case Study 62: [Dudley Town Centre Joint Working Scheme](#) - Winner of the NJUG 2012 Partnership Award), which resulted in all street works being completed within the advertised timeframes.

Sharing information

Sharing major works plans well in advance so that local authorities can co-ordinate street works at the same time as their own highway works is key. Giving advanced warning to members of the public and businesses about potential works in their area or on their route to and from work allows everyone to plan ahead and if possible reduce congested areas by finding alternative routes.

This was a key part of the development of the Bristol Code of Conduct where Bristol City Council worked closely with Bristol Water, Wessex Water, Wales and West Utilities and Western Power Distribution. (See Case Study 76: [Bristol Code of Conduct](#) – Winner of the NJUG 2014 Minimise Disruption Award), which in its first year has saved over 150 days road occupation.

As part of the Dudley Town Centre Joint Working Scheme, each utility company provided information on their individual works programmes. In turn Dudley Council compiled a list of the streets requiring resurfacing / maintenance; all the major re-developments due over the next 18-24 months and all known events due to take place. (See Case Study 62: [Dudley Town Centre Joint Working Scheme](#) - Winner of the NJUG 2012 Partnership Award)

Joint Occupation or Sequential Working

Excavating once and then various works promoters working in the same excavation either at the same time or sequentially, with the road then only reinstated once, has been proven to save a significant number of days of road occupation. Conducting works in the same or similar locations as much as possible to avoid lengthy disruption should always be a major consideration.

In 2009, Transport for London, Thames Water, Southern Gas Networks, UK Power Networks, Network Rail and Morrison Utility Services worked together to manage extensive road resurfacing and utility replacements in Borough High Street, saving 384 days of road occupation.

Thinking outside of the box

Striving for solutions which are not always most commonly used and are proven to have lower administrative burdens and costs to both highway authorities and utilities. When considering a scheme, the cost of disruption and inconvenience to the public should be also taken into account. This will ensure that benefits of the scheme are maximised.

For example, building on the HAUC(UK) Code of Conduct, the Bristol Code of Conduct was developed as an alternative to the use of permit schemes which Bristol City Council deemed to be too burdensome. (See Case Study 76: [Bristol Code of Conduct](#) – Winner of the NJUG 2014 Minimise Disruption Award).

As part of its communal entry chambers early installation initiative, the City of London Corporation used existing planning powers, to place a planning condition in developers to require them to fund the building of communal entry chambers under the public highway to supply new developments. (See Case Study 71: [Communal Entry Chambers & Early Installation Initiative](#) – Winner of the NJUG 2013 Partnership Award). This negated the need for each utility providing a service to a new office building having to excavate the road.

In 2008, Staffordshire County Council incentivised their Traffic Manager to save 365 days of disruption in that year. Each subsequent year, the council has set disruption targets. This gives the Traffic Manager a personal incentive to co-ordinate works, and in the village of Kinver where works took place predominantly on Dunsley Road (a C class road) but also on the High Street, it resulted in a job of 22 weeks taking only 7 weeks. (See Case Study 8: [Working in Partnership – The Kinver Project](#), Winner of the NJUG 2008 Partnership Award)

Communication: Engaging with the people and companies most likely to be affected

Ensuring that those primarily affected by street works, especially the road users, pedestrians local businesses and residents, are adequately alerted to planned street works prior to their commencement. All forms of communication should be utilised when considering notification of works. This should include timely information on websites, appropriate social media along with traditional methods of letter drops, local newspapers and advance warning signage.

As part of its communal entry chambers early installation initiative, the City of London Corporation gained agreement from telecoms providers in the Square Mile for them to install their services into new developments via communal entry chambers. The City of London Corporation held a number of roundtable meetings with telecoms providers and developers to get their buy-in into the initiative. (See Case Study 71: [Communal Entry Chambers & Early Installation Initiative](#) – Winner of the NJUG 2013 Partnership Award).

In November 2009, Severn Trent Water, National Grid, Enterprise and Worcestershire County Council undertake the resurfacing of Load Street as well as essential gas and water mains works in Bewdley town centre – projects that had been previously postponed due to public concern. The project undertook many activities to allay the concerns of customers – a public meeting was convened to discuss the proposals and this was followed by a customer service survey and thereafter visits were made to sensitive customers from the Customer Liaison. (See Case Study 50: [Bewdley Town Centre Mains Replacement](#) – Winner of the 2010 NJUG Award for Communication)

Communication: Communicating throughout all levels of the supply chain

Not only authorities and utilities but contractors and sub-contractors should be communicating regularly with one another and the community.

In 2013, NJUG held a [workshop on Temporary Traffic Management](#) and key themes identified were:

- Early engagement with the Local Authorities Traffic or Street Works Manager is vital.
- There is a need to manage effectively the various hand-offs between the utility (or highway authority); their Tier 1 (main) contractor; and any specialist contractors (e.g. traffic management or reinstatement contractors), so as to minimise times when no-one is working.
- Ensuring that all levels of the supply chain and all personnel from senior directors to operatives are informed; committed to making co-ordination a reality; and focused on minimising the impact of works.

Ensuring accountability

Holding regular meetings and conference calls to assess progress and areas where greater co-ordination is required. Providing training and re-training where necessary.

The East Sussex and UK Power Networks Partnership held a number of workshops to develop a balanced scorecard to measure the partnership's performance. The scorecard brought a better understanding of the needs of each party's objectives and ultimately improved service delivery for all parties to the benefit of customers. To support the balanced scorecard and promote high performance, further initiatives, including a joint coaching and briefing day and a focus group, were carried out. (See Case Study 34: [East Sussex Partnership](#), winner of the 2008 NJUG Award for Partnership)

The East Sussex / Southern Water Partnership held a number of joint training workshops including a 'Red book' workshop on signing, lighting and guarding and a Notice Quality workshop on noticing errors. (See Case Study 34: [East Sussex / Southern Water Partnership](#) – Winner of the 2009 NJUG Partnership Award)

Leadership

Demonstrating leadership by striving always to go beyond the minimum requirements of a project to minimise disruption as much as possible is essential. Demonstrating leadership by bringing together the various stakeholders and ensuring that they communicate effectively with one another and also demonstrate leadership themselves will derive great benefits to the process.

The Bristol Code of Conduct goes above and beyond the HAUC(UK) Code of Conduct and demonstrates leadership by demonstrating that there are alternatives to the use of statutory powers such as permit schemes. (See Case Study 76: [Bristol Code of Conduct](#) – Winner of the NJUG 2014 Minimise Disruption Award).

In 2008, Staffordshire County Council and a number of utility companies and contractors demonstrated leadership by openly expressing a desire to work in partnership and ensure forward planning. (See Case Study 8: [Working in Partnership – The Kinver Project](#), Winner of the NJUG 2008 Partnership Award)

The Key Principles of Good Collaboration

1. Coordination

A desire, and a proactive approach, to co-ordinating road and street works by local authorities, and a positive approach to co-operation by all works promoters (utilities and highway authorities' own teams / contractors).

2. Sharing

Both highway authorities and utilities (works promoters) sharing their major works plans a minimum of a year in advance, and where possible even earlier, allows the local authority the chance to co-ordinate major works more effectively and all works promoters to plan effectively.

3. Joint Occupation

Joint occupation or sequential working with several utilities working in the same excavation at the same time, or immediately after one another, followed by highway authority resurfacing or a single reinstatement, saves a number of days road occupation.

4. Innovation

Identify new ways of working or new incentives to better co-ordinate works to minimise road occupation.

5. Involving the Community

Early communication with the surrounding community, and working with them to minimise the impact on individuals or local businesses with specific needs, will reduce the impact of works.

6. Management

Effective management of the road and street works supply chain to ensure each stage of works is managed effectively and times when no work is taking place are minimised.

7. Communication

Effective communication at all levels within each organisation to ensure commitment to co-ordination and a focus on reducing the impact of works throughout the works duration, not just prior to commencement.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

Ensuring clarity and understanding by all of the respective roles and responsibilities of local authorities (to co-ordinate) and utilities as well as ensuring early and regular dialogue on major road and street works.

9. Leadership

Demonstrating leadership by striving to go beyond the minimum required of a project and bringing together various stakeholders and ensuring that those stakeholders also demonstrate leadership too.

10. Think Customer! (Public Perception)

Not just the person who is directly involved in the scheme but the hundreds of people who pass the site each day, and their perceptions, particularly as to the reasons when no work appears to be taking place.