



NJUG CASE STUDY

CASE STUDY 36: Performance Enhancement Group

The National Joint Utilities Group (NJUG) is the UK industry association representing utilities on street works issues. The 37 companies¹ we represent work to deliver gas, electricity, water and telecommunications to both individual consumers and UK plc.

NJUG members need to continue to drive forward further improvements. We have therefore developed the NJUG Vision for Street Works, which revolves around six main principles:

1. Safety is the number one priority
2. Damage to underground assets is avoided
3. Utilities work together and in partnership with local authorities to minimise disruption
4. Utilities deliver consistent high quality
5. Utilities maximize use of sustainable methods and materials
6. Street works in the UK are regarded as world class

This case study is an example of NJUG delivering on these principles and turning the vision into reality.

Overview:

The East Midlands Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee (EMHAUC) Performance Enhancement Group (PEG) works to strengthen relationships between Highway Authorities and Utilities in the region, seeking to promote initiatives that encourage good working practices and enhanced performance. Its membership consists of four representatives from the East Midlands Joint Authorities Group, and four representatives from the East Midlands Joint Utilities Group.

Case Study:

In 2008, the group focused mainly on addressing basic issues relating to the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA), aiming to provide accurate information and effective communication links in order to achieve the common goals of:

- Improving co-ordination; and
- Minimising disruption on the public highway.

PEG was influential in both harmonizing and improving relationships between Highway Authorities and Utilities, particularly through its advice notes. Below you will find a selection of tangible outputs that have resulted from PEG.

- **EM HAUC Website (www.emHAUC.org.uk)**

The site was overhauled and re-launched to provide a user-friendly format, intended to act as a central reference point for members of EMHAUC, as well as providing a source of interest to others concerned with related matters. Significant effort was made to keep the site simple, avoiding industry jargon, and

¹ NJUG's current members are Energy Networks Association (representing electricity and gas), Water UK (representing all water and wastewater companies), National Grid, Openreach, and Virgin Media. Our associate members are Clancy Docwra, Skanska McNicholas, Balfour Beatty, Morrison Utility Services, Morgan Est, NACAP, PJ Keary, First Intervention, Carillion, Enterprise, Laing O'Rourke and AMEC. Including members through trade associations, NJUG represents thirty-seven utility companies, and twelve utility contractors.

duplication of information that could be obtained from other sources. PEG maintains its own area of the website, where agreed advice notes are published.

- **Contact Details for Highway Authorities & Utilities**

Every Highway Authority & Utility operating in the East Midlands region is encouraged to provide salient information in an agreed format (for consistency) on a “word” document, that can be accessed via the website from the “contact details” tab. Selecting the appropriate organization immediately provides contact details for staff undertaking various roles within the sphere of NRSWA, which addresses one of the major principles of the TMA – better communication.

- **Utility Matrix**

Recognising that the utility industry has become significantly fragmented, particularly with an ever increasing number of cable companies and gas transporters competing for business, thought was given to other works promoters that are believed to be operating in the East Midlands area. In an effort to minimise the risk of damage to underground apparatus, a matrix was produced and is available on the website, identifying which utilities / works promoters are operating within each local area.

- **Defects Handling Advice Note**

Discussion amongst the members of PEG highlighted definite differences in the interpretation of the existing Inspections Code of Practice. PEG decided to re-write the specific part of the Code that was causing concern, with the intention of promoting clarity, and also offering practical advice. This advice note was accepted by EMHAUC members, pending the revision of the current Code, with the aim of encouraging a positive response to defect notices and to tackle resource implications, caused by constant chasing up of the required remedial work.

- **Standard Format for Reporting Section 81's – Defective Apparatus**

To enhance communication in this aspect of NRSWA, it was acknowledged that benefits would be gained by standardising the format by which Highway Authorities notified Utilities of defective apparatus in the public highway. This removed some of the ambiguity, and reporting in a consistent format helped to distinguish whether immediate action was required on site, reducing the risk of public liabilities.

- **Advice Notes on System Failures**

To maintain communication links between Highway Authorities and Utilities, in the event of unannounced system failures, two advice notes were produced. These laid down an agreed procedure for Highway Authorities and Utilities to notify each other formally in the event of system failures, so that the IT problems could be investigated and rectified as soon as practicable, but more importantly to negate the risk of poor co-ordination arising from system faults.

- **Supervisors/Operatives Guidelines on Planned/Unplanned Works**

These serve as aide memoirs to front line staff, both supervising and undertaking street works on the public highway. Many documents have been published previously in support of this, but the group felt it would be beneficial to tailor this to a user-friendly one-page document laminated in A5 size, in line with the Safety at Street Works Code of Practice.

Projects that PEG is currently working on include:

- A specific logo to further promote EMHAUC as a source of information to both the street works community and the general public;
- The complexities of working in modular surfaces, especially where specialist surfaces / reinstatement techniques have been used, in an effort to avoid bituminous reinstatement in paved areas (even on an interim basis);
- Devising a training package for both Utilities and Highway Authorities to use, focusing on the basic administration fundamentals of NRSWA / TMA legislation.

For full details and an update on the above and other activities, please visit www.emHAUC.org.uk.