

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date: 19 March 2026

By: Chair of the Review Board

Title: Scrutiny Review of Street Works

Purpose: To present the outcomes of the Scrutiny Review and make recommendations

RECOMMENDATION:

The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the report of the Review Board.

1. Background

1.1 The former Economy, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Committee conducted a scrutiny review of street works in 2013, resulting in 13 recommendations which were adopted by the Council in July 2013. The Place Scrutiny Committee review of Pothole Management, conducted in 2023, found that utility company excavations and street works have a significant impact on the overall condition of the public road network. The management and condition of the road network continues to be one of the most important issues for residents and so in September 2025 the committee agreed to establish a scoping board to explore the issue of street works.

1.2 The Scoping Board met on 20 October 2025 and heard that since the 2013 review there have been no substantial changes to the legislative and regulatory frameworks for street works. However, the overall volume of street works that take place on East Sussex roads has increased significantly in that time, and practices in the management of street works have since evolved, including with the commencement of the new highways maintenance contract in May 2023, and most recently with the adoption of the East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme on 1 April 2025. The committee agreed therefore to establish a Review Board to undertake a Scrutiny Review of Street Works at its meeting held on 27 November 2025.

1.3 The scope of the review was agreed to include:

- The planning and coordination of street works, with and between the Council and utility companies, and the use of the permit scheme.
- Minimising disruption of works, through the planning of diversion routes, avoiding disruptions for pedestrians (especially wheelchair users and those with visual impairments), cyclists, and public transport users.
- Utility company reinstatements.
- Incentives for improved management and collaboration by utility companies.
- Learning from other areas and national best practice.

1.4 The East Sussex Lane Rental Scheme was not within the scope of the review. Due to only having started in April 2025, the Board considered that it needed more time to bed in before its impacts and effectiveness could be well understood and subject to scrutiny.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The Scrutiny Review Board was comprised of Councillors Hilton, Hollidge, Lunn, Murphy (Chair) and Redstone.

2.2 The attached report (Appendix 1) contains the findings and recommendations of the Review Board. Copies of evidence papers listed in the report and other support documentation are available on request from the contact officer.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Committee is recommended to consider and comment on the Review Board's report. In light of the timing of the election, the incoming committee will have the opportunity to consider the report and recommendations ahead of reporting to Cabinet and Council.

COUNCILLOR STEVE MURPHY

Chair of the Review Board

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