

Trees and Utilities

Understanding the legislative background and reducing conflicts

Introduction to project

- Seven-month project with Kent County Council (KCC) to collate current guidance on trees and utilities, understand the current conflicts and research how to overcome them using existing or emerging solutions
- Project part of the Trees Outside Woodland (TOW) programme
- Involved literature review, surveys and stakeholder engagement
- Full report to be published imminently by Defra

Current legislation

- Trees are not adequately protected from damage or removal by utility companies
- There are no statutory obligations governing the position or depth at which apparatus should be laid within the highway
- Relevant legislation:
 - Electricity Act 1989
 - Town and Country Planning Act 1990
 - New Roads and Street Works Act 1991
 - Communications Act 2003

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Current guidance – Placement of utilities

- Streetworks UK Volume 1: Street Works UK Guidelines on the Positioning and Colour Coding of Underground Utilities' Apparatus

Utility	Recommended Minimum depth	
	Footway/verge	Carriageway
Electricity HV (High Voltage)	450-1200mm	750-1200mm
Electricity LV (Low Voltage)	450mm	600mm
Gas	600mm footway, 750mm verge	750mm
Water (non-potable and grey water)	600-750mm	600-750mm
Water - firefighting	600-750mm	600-750mm
Oil/fuel pipelines	900mm	900mm
Sewerage	Variable	Variable
Telecoms	250-350mm	450-600mm
Water	750mm	750mm
Water pipes for special purposes	750mm	750mm

Current guidance – street works around trees

- Street Works UK Volume 4: Guidelines for the Planning, Installation and Maintenance of Utility Apparatus in Proximity to Trees
- BS 5837 (2012)
- TDAG guidance

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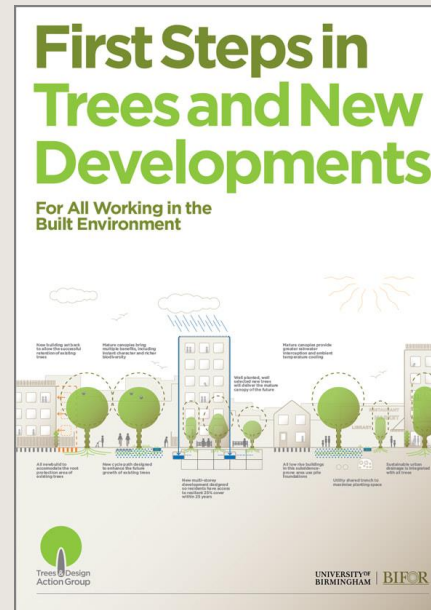
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Current guidance – Tree planting around utilities

- The United Kingdom Onshore Pipelines Operators' Association (UKPOA) have a good practice guide "Tree Planting Near High Pressure Pipelines" (UKOPA, 2022)
- The water industry's own standards (Sewers for Adoption, by WRc plc/Water UK) were revised in 2012 and any reference to 2-meter distance requirements for tree planting near sewers were removed

Project recommendations

- Streetworks UK guidance updated in-line with further research and evidence since publication in 2007, make mandatory
- More legal protections for trees - Put trees on par with other street infrastructure so that existing legislation will more effectively protect existing trees.

Any questions?