

All systems go for EToN 6 Street Works Operations



The DfT recently announced the go-ahead of EToN 6, with a formal introduction date of October 2013. The Local Transport Minister - Norman Baker stated **“It is estimated that about two thousand hours could be saved by councils and utility companies every week by using the new system, saving industry alone £600,000 a year. In total, the street works sector is expected to net savings of £14.3 million over the next 10 years, driving efficiencies and saving taxpayers’ money.”**

Unlike previous versions, EToN 6 has not been necessitated by legislative requirements, instead it is a collection of enhancements for high priority requests made by Street Works practitioners, providing solutions and efficiencies to “real-life” problem areas.

The following is a summary of the key changes being introduced with EToN 6, touching on some of the projected benefits and efficiencies along the way.

Inspections



There are no major changes in the way that Street Works Inspections will operate, however Inspections will now be sent/received via XML web services rather than the previous FTP method. This will enable all Street Works organisations around the country to remove and stop paying for FTP facilities.

The new EToN 6 Inspection transactions will also allow external digital media such as photographs of defects to be referenced. This should significantly reduce the time spent on site reviews and disputes of inspection failures.

There has been some rationalisation of existing inspections formats, and there are new inspections for Section 74/74A (Occupancy Monitoring) and additional inspections for permit conditions compliance.

Defective Apparatus



A new standardised method for Authorities to report and Utilities to accept defective apparatus reports, such as a missing stop-tap cover, has been introduced. Previously there was no definitive standard for dealing with defective apparatus and as such these had to be dealt with by using e-mails and spreadsheets.

Under the new regime, all transactions can be sent and received using EToN systems, meaning the data only needs to be entered once - typically by field workers using mobile software. A new "Completion of Non-notifiable Phase" transaction is also introduced for recording the resolution of defects that do not require a full life-cycle of notices.

Temporary Traffic Signals



New EToN transactions have been introduced to enable Works Promoters to apply for Temporary Traffic Signals associated with proposed works and for Authorities to respond.

This should enable more consistent working practices to be introduced nationally – benefiting Works Promoters who operate across multiple authority areas. It will also mean that works and traffic signals information will be cross-referenced automatically – reducing the time and effort looking up data stored in separate systems.

Permit Modification Requests



A new Permit Authority response notice called "Permit Application Modification Request" is introduced to make it easier to deal with the re-submission of permit applications including minor modifications.

This will save Works Promoters from having to gain an early start agreement when submitting a modified application - saving both parties time on "early start" consultations by telephone/e-mail. It also reduces the risk and costs of Works Promoters having to re-schedule works and re-deploy work gangs.

Diversionsary Works



A new EToN transaction is introduced for Highway, Bridge or Transport Authorities to notify Section 85 Diversionsary Works conditions. If such works are notified it will enable Authorities to avoid paying the costs of moving Utility apparatus when new works, such as junction re-alignments, are needed.

This change will also reduce the risk of Utilities installing new equipment, which will cost further money to move at a later date.

Statutory Undertakers, who are new to working in a particular area, will also be able to obtain all of the current S85 notices in a Street Authority area from a single request – thus making it much easier and efficient to gather the relevant information.

Other Miscellaneous Changes



Other miscellaneous enhancements that form part of EToN 6 include:

- Forward Planning Information notices can now be sent for all Works Categories – improving the potential for the Traffic Manager to coordinate works.
- The ability to add Conditions into the Works Data Variation transactions - enabling conditions to be amended for works at the “In Progress” stage.
- Post-registration of Pole Testing and Coring is introduced and will work in a similar manner to how Bar Holes are currently dealt with.
- Rationalisation of the Charge Category code
- A change to Carriageway Restriction code to provide clarity in relation to works that have no incursion on the carriageway.
- Clarification of the precise rules for calculating inspection samples, to avoid differences in interpretation between different systems and reduce the time spent on authority/utility negotiations.

Attachments



EToN 6 massively opens up the ability to include attachments (most commonly photographs, but can be other digital media files) across all relevant notification types - including Street/ Permit Authority transactions.

It is important to note that attachments are only referenced by means of a URL within the EToN 6 transactions. The attachments themselves are not transferred from an Authority system to a Works Promoter system or vice-versa. This effectively means that each Street Works organisation will need to have web space that the attached files can be automatically mirrored to, so that the receiving organisation can click on the URL within the EToN notification to view the file.

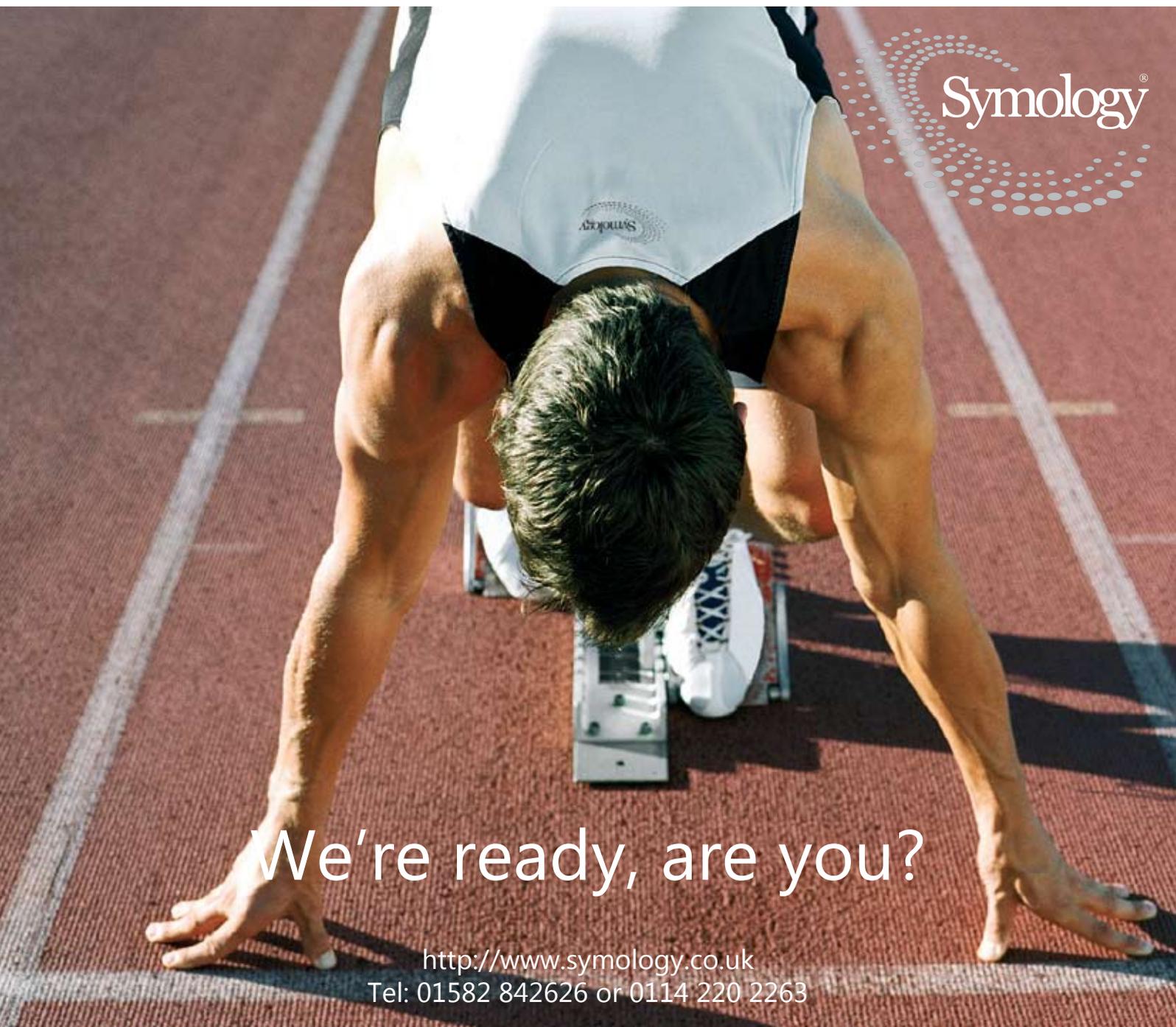
Whilst there will be costs in establishing and maintaining a publicly available data store for the attachments, the ability to share these files will bring about a number of benefits. These include:

- removing the requirement to send attachments separately from the notice
- the ability for photographs to be taken on-site using mobile software and sent automatically with the notice
- reduced time reviewing attachments by removing the requirement to cross-reference separate systems (the new EToN 6 attachment description field will also make it easier to locate the relevant file)
- reducing the number of discussions/arguments over FPNs/Overstay Charges, Inspections, Condition of Highway etc. as the proof will be in the photographs.

The Transition to EToN 6

The Department for Transport consultation reflected the enthusiasm in the community for EToN6, with 116 responses and 100% confirmation in favour. The DfT have also confirmed that any users wishing to gain the benefits at an earlier stage, i.e. before October, may do so by mutual agreement between authorities and undertakers.

The specification prepared by the EToN Developers Group allows for progressive switchover; EToN 6 systems will recognise when other organisations are also ready for EToN 6, and automatically switch at the right time. So, transition should be smooth and simple for users, enabling all the benefits to be gained without any transitional pain.



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