



# **Sunderland City Council**

## **Street Works Permit Scheme**

**For Road Works and Street Works**

**YEAR 1 REVIEW**

## **1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Sunderland Permit Scheme Commenced on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020.

This is the first annual evaluation of the Sunderland Scheme covering the period from the commencement of the Scheme, 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 until the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

The report evaluates the progress of the permit scheme in meeting both the stated objectives and parity of treatment of all works for highway purposes and utility street works. In both respects the Scheme is already demonstrating successful outcomes.

The first year has been challenging, both in terms of the changes in processes required for the Authority, and the challenges presented by COVID-19 to both utility and Authority alike. There have however been some immediate benefits:

- improved engagement with all Promoters
- increased registration of the Highway Authorities' own works.
- increased registration of Transport Authority works
- reduced days of occupancy
- average durations have shown a trend downwards in some promoters

All of these have led to us developing a foundation from which the Permit Scheme can help Sunderland fulfil its Network Management Duty, support economic development and improve residents' use of the highways of Sunderland in the coming years.

## **2 INTRODUCTION**

The Permit Scheme was introduced to give greater control over activities taking place on the Sunderland Highway Network which in the past have been seen to cause unnecessary disruption. These were previously coordinated via a notice system operated under the New Roads and Street Works Act (NRSWA).

Permit Schemes enable the Authority to.

- manage and coordinate street works more effectively
- minimise disruption to users
- recharge the allowable coordination costs to the Utility Companies.

Powers now granted to Sunderland have allowed us to agree conditions with Promoters, carrying out works to ensure that works are carried out in a safe, efficient, cost-effective and expedient manner.

The over-arching objectives of the scheme were to:

- Reduce occupation of the highway
- Enhance co-ordination of all activities on the highway
- Obtain greater control of all activities on the public highway
- Minimise/avoid/manage delays to all road users
- Encourage collaborative activities between all activity promoters

- Promoting best practice across Sunderland and the wider Tyne and Wear region
- Enhanced cross-boundary co-operation
- Reducing the impact of noise on residents by having greater control of timing of activities
- Reduce instances of customer complaints regarding road and street activities
- Public transport benefits which come from more structured and coherent engagement with all stakeholders at all stages of the activity life cycle.
- Promote common activity practices across the region to ensure ease of operation for activity promoters
- Demonstrate parity for all activity promoters
- Enhance reliability of activities taking place at a particular time.

The headlines from this review are:

- 9787 permit applications were checked and co-ordinated, with 91% being granted and 9% refused for various reasons
- 1925 variations have been checked and co-ordinated
- Whilst there has been on an overall increase in days of occupancy this is accounted for the submission of permits by Sunderland the focus by Sunderland on ensuring all promoters submit permits appropriately.
- Individual promoter performance reflects a positive reduction in days of occupancy which will only serve to support the Sunderland economy in reduced congestion.

### **3 SCHEME OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Sunderland Permit Scheme are set out in the scheme along with the aligned objectives to the Tyneside and Wear Local Transport Plan.

The Sunderland Permit Team has provided support, guidance and training to all stakeholders (Highway Authorities and Utilities) in order to enable them to deliver the Permit Scheme and meet their Network Management Duty. This has supported the drive to ensure all works which take place on the highway are managed appropriately and in accordance with the scheme.

Sunderland, having considered the current performance of works promoters, regards the introduction of the permit scheme as having a positive effect to their network in respect of.

The control of the way in works are carried out has improved by use of conditions.

- Supported and encouraged the drive to minimise delays on the network
- Promoted of best practices across all works promoters

Better visibility of works for network management co-ordination

- The scheme places significant value on ensuring parity amongst *all* Promoters.
- Enhanced cross boundary co-operation by submission of permits
- Where possible collaborative working has been investigated

Improving public perception of management of road works

- The Permit register available online via [www.roadworks.org](http://www.roadworks.org) shows all activity across the Highway Network in real time.
- This allows all stakeholders including the public to view Roadworks that may impact on their journeys and plan their route(s) accordingly.

#### 4 Key Performance Indicators

The scheme was developed using the mandatory Key Performance Indicators which were part of the statutory guidance determining schemes at the time of development. Further indicators were added as agreed during consultation.

KP1 - The number of applications for Permits and variations received, the number granted, and the number refused.

KPI2 - The number of conditions applied by condition type

KPI3 - The number of approved variations (extensions)

KPI4 – The number of deemed permits

KPI5- The number of early entries applied for

**KP1 - The number of applications for Permits and variations received, the number granted, and the number refused.**

**Number of works received compared to the permits in the equivalent period (not including variations)**

Type	2019/20	2020/20	% Difference
<b>Immediate</b>	1715	2887	+68.34%
<b>PAA<sup>1</sup></b>	-	682	
<b>Major</b>	1034	727	-29.69%
<b>Standard</b>	1662	1101	-33.75%
<b>Minor</b>	1785	2465	+38.10%
<b>Totals</b>	6196	7180 <sup>1</sup>	+15.88% <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PAA has been removed from the statistics as there is no direct comparison in the previous year.

Across all permit types except at Minor and Immediate, the volume of permits has reduced. The increase at minor is reflective of the permits now being submitted by Sunderland as a works promoter in carrying out its own works to ensure parity across the scheme.

This statistic is encouraging in that across the whole, the number of permits required is reducing this suggests that.

- Unnecessary applications are not being made
- All applications are being carefully considered and potential collaborations applied

## Number of permits received per utility

Type	PAA	PA	Standard	Minor	Immediate	Variations	Total
B Sky B				1			1
Openreach	12	15	92	493	260	268	1140
Energy Assets Ltd				1			1
GTC			9	1	1	6	17
Highways England				5		3	8
Hyperoptic Ltd				1			1
INGN Ltd				7		5	12
Murphy Power Distribution			1				1
National Grid PLC				2			2
Netomnia				1			1
Network Rail	6	7		9	1		23
New World Payphones				2			2
Northern Gas Networks	164	167	200	41	264	288	1124
Northern PowerGrid	156	154	337	213	489	317	1666
Northumbrian Water	42	44	186	211	667	263	1413
SSE Datacom				1			1
Sunderland	114	117	184	981	1171	454	3021
O2	28		5			4	37
T Mobile			6	24		3	33
Virgin Media	188	223	81	223	34	314	1283
<b>Total</b>	<b>710</b>	<b>727</b>	<b>1101</b>	<b>2217</b>	<b>2887</b>	<b>1925</b>	<b>9787</b>

## Number of variations received compared to the extensions in the equivalent period.

Type	2019/20	2020/21	% change
Immediate (E)	57	123	+115.79%
Immediate (U)	129	404	+213.18%
Major	158	450	+184.81%
Standard	43	436	+913.95%
Minor	144	404	+180.56%

<b>Totals</b>	531	1925	+262.52%
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Variations have increased quite significantly which on review is due to the following factors.

- Increase in highway authority permits
- Understanding of permit types and associated durations
- Variations can include non-duration changes
- Variations prior to works start
- Variations after works start

The number of variations against the total number of permits has shown that Major permits are subject to a significant number of variations

<b>No of PAA's submitted</b>	682
<b>No of PA's submitted</b>	727
<b>No of variations</b>	450

Of these variations it has been identified that most variations occur on Major (Over 10 days) - Cat 3, 4(Non-Traffic Sensitive) at 248

Across the rest of the data Major permits are subject to the following multiple variations. There were 273 individual Major permits that received extensions of varying numbers.

<b>Number of Variations</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Variations x 1</b>	<b>163</b>
<b>Variations x 2</b>	61
<b>Variations x 3</b>	35
<b>Variations x 4</b>	11
<b>Variations x 5</b>	2
<b>Variations x 6</b>	1

This shows that Major works may not have been planned with adequate durations in the first instance and multiple durations are evident.

### **KPI2 - The number of conditions applied by condition type**

The table below reflects the number of conditions applied against the permit type

<b>NCT Code</b>	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Major</b>	<b>Minor</b>	<b>Standard</b>	<b>Urgent</b>
<b>NCT02a</b>	15	790	672	707	832
<b>NCT02b</b>	0	31	194	56	101
<b>NCT04a</b>	2	484	151	82	21
<b>NCT04b</b>	0	5	2	6	3

<b>NCT05a</b>	116	2	195	23	6
<b>NCT06a</b>	98	525	492	381	165
<b>NCT07a</b>	3	158	12	6	100
<b>NCT08a</b>	41	139	225	168	92
<b>NCT08b</b>	0	11	79	19	12
<b>NCT09a</b>	1	31	13	6	6
<b>NCT09b</b>	0	3	11	6	0
<b>NCT09c</b>	0	14	71	30	2
<b>NCT10a</b>	12	138	171	95	87
<b>NCT11b</b>	1	589	83	126	7
<b>NCT12a</b>	0	0	1	0	0
<b>NCT13</b>	1	21	3	15	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>275</b>	<b>2120</b>	<b>1509</b>	<b>963</b>	<b>501</b>

### KPI3 - The number of approved variations

Type	Number
Immediate (E)	123
Immediate (U)	404
Major	450
Standard	436
Minor	512
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1925</b>

### KPI4 - The number of deemed permits

Street Manager shows 105 permits automatically deemed during the period in question. Closer examination however shows a number of anomalies in the data that reduce the number of avoidable deemed permits to 49. Some issues are attributable to issues with the API and workflow issues, which have now been corrected.

Reason	Considered avoidable	number
<b>Not responded to in the timescales</b>	YES	49
<b>Immediate works closed before a response</b>	NO	1
<b>Refused permits put into progress</b>	NO	2
<b>Works marked as deemed after works were completed</b>	NO	27
<b>Private street</b>	NO	25
<b>Abandoned permit deemed</b>	NO	1

### KPI5- The number of early entries applied for



Early Entry Type	Number	% against permits
Early start	2018	29.8%
Error correction	300	4.43%
Validity Extension	268	3.96%

The above statistic illustrates the number of early starts requested as a percentage against the total number of permits.

### Additional Measures

#### Average Durations

The durations compared between the year prior to the implementation and the first year of operation has been measured. While it is not expected to see a marked improvement whilst the scheme beds in, there have been some clear improvements in durations on certain permit types.

The table below displays the average variance in duration (measured in days) pre/post implementation. Table ordered by volume of permits in 2020,

Undertaker	Immediate (E)	Immediate (U)	Major	Minor	Standard
<b>Sunderland</b>	+1	-12.73	-7.6	+1.12	-3.85
<b>NPG</b>	-1.2	-0.74	+2.6	-0.29	-0.75
<b>NWL</b>	0	+0.1	-19.89	-0.33	0
<b>Virgin</b>	-0.23	+0.6	+10	-0.43	-1.05
<b>BT</b>	+0.2	-0.43	-6.64	-0.38	-1.02
<b>NGN</b>	+0.64	+0.43	+4.7	+0.14	+0.4
<b>O2</b>			-3	-0.01	+3.67
<b>T Mobile</b>		-1		+0.14	-0.25
<b>Network Rail</b>	+5		+24.87	-0.27	.5
<b>GTC</b>	+6		-15	-2.17	+1.9
<b>INGN</b>				+2.28	-10
<b>Highways England</b>			+4	3.2	
<b>ESP Electricity</b>					-10.67
<b>New World Payphones</b>				+1	
<b>National Grid Power</b>				0	
<b>Murphy Power</b>					+10
<b>Energy Assets</b>				-3	
<b>ES Pipelines</b>				-5	-8
<b>SSE Datacom</b>				+1.5	
<b>BskyB</b>					-9
<b>Netomnia</b>				+3	
<b>Romec</b>	-1			-1	

Vodafone				-1	
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The data above show that whilst major permit durations have increased and is identified as an area for review there has been definite improvement in other areas.

- Increased use of the urgent permit
- Reduction in duration on minor permits (including variations)

### Days of Occupancy

Days of occupancy has been measured between the year prior to implementation and the first year of operation. It had been expected that the days would increase as more works promoters were required to register works particularly Sunderland City Council. On reviewing the data, we can see that most works promoters have shown a reduction in their days of occupancy.

To give some context the number of works increased from 5740 to 9787 but the total days of occupancy decreased from 31,680 to 28,526 pre/post implementation

The table below shows the % increase or decrease in days of occupancy

- represents no change

Table ordered by number of permits in 2020

Undertaker	Immediate (E)	Immediate (U)	Major	Minor	Standard
Sunderland	-	+4360.47%	+2903.51%	+9739.29%	+77.23%
NPG	+50%	-21.75%	-36.13%	27.80%	-4.81%
NWL		-0.95%	-75.33%	-54.10%	-72.09%
Virgin	+400%	-38.89%	-50.66%	-32.70%	-43.24%
BT	-4.62%	-1.31%	-32.69%	-35.92%	-42.25%
NGN	-0.66%	-13.25%	-27.38%	-42.02%	-34.02%
O2			-100%	-25.64%	-42.11%
T Mobile		-100%		+73.33%	+42.11%
Network Rail	+100%	-	+5075%	-62.50%	-100%
GTC	-	-	+100%	-72.73%	-36.99%
INGN	-	-	-	+1600%	-100%
Highways England			+100%	+100%	
ESP Electricity	-	-	-	-	-100%
New World Payphones	-	-	-	+200%	-
National Grid	-	-	-	+100%	-
Murphy Power	-	-	-	-	+1000%
Energy Assets	-	-	-	+50%	-100%

<b>ES Pipelines</b>	-	-	-	-100%	-100%
<b>SSE Datacom</b>	-	-	-	+300%	-
<b>BSkyB</b>	-	-	-	-	-100%
<b>Netomnia</b>	-	-	-	+300%	-
<b>Romec</b>	-100%			-100%	
<b>Vodafone</b>				-100%	

The data above reflects that there has been, in some cases, quite significant reduction in the days of occupancy which is one of the key objectives of the scheme.

### Refusals

The scheme used a standard set of Refusal Reasons which focus on quality, standard conditions and works location.

The table below sets out the number of refusals against number of permits submitted (not inclusive of variations)

Type	Number	% against permits
<b>BT</b>	123	1.82
<b>GTC</b>	5	0.07
<b>Hyperoptic</b>	1	0.01
<b>Network Rail</b>	2	0.03
<b>NGN</b>	155	2.29
<b>NPG</b>	107	1.58
<b>NWL</b>	56	0.83
<b>SSE Datacom</b>	1	0.01
<b>Sunderland</b>	35	0.52
<b>O2</b>	1	0.01
<b>T mobile</b>	4	0.06
<b>Virgin</b>	120	1.77

### Incentives

The scheme offers several incentives for improved performance. To date the following incentive reductions have been applied:

Month	Collaboration	Multiple Permits
April 2020	£15.60	£659.70
May 2020	£49.00	£637.00
June 2020	£47.70	£1628.00
July 2020	£127.00	£4364.60
August 2020	£0.00	£3066.00
September 2020	0.00	£609.60
October 2020	£0.00	£262.50

November 2020	£21.00	£967.40
December 2020	£0.00	£2292.10
January 2021	£0.00	£193.50
February 2021	£0.00	£1261.80
March 2021	£59.10	£1789.00

There has been some uptake, though not as much as anticipated. To improve uptake we have provided advice to the utilities and expect they will apply for a greater number in future.

### Financial Information

It is generally accepted that permit schemes can take up to three years to become financially stable. A full review of the cost benefit analysis will be undertaken on the third anniversary of the scheme however a to ensure the scheme is complying with the appropriate regulations an analysis has been undertake of the first year of operation. The effect of Covid should also be considered as permit volumes are lower than anticipated. The recovery of setup costs should occur in years two and three.

The full set-up costs are not anticipated to be recovered until after 3 years of operation.

Operational Costs	First Year Set-up costs	Permit Revenue
£373,094	£49,927.79	£369,175

### Conclusion

The Sunderland Permit Scheme has been successful with the benefits being delivered against the initial objectives, most visibly in terms of consistency of approach to in the delivery of the Network Management Duty. There has been a clear alignment between the delivery of the street works across the Authority between all works promoters.

There has been a reduction, from pre-scheme levels; in the number of excavations being undertaken by Statutory Undertakers; the days of occupancy and the average durations.

There are areas which could be improved, and the scheme operating model will continually be challenged, to improve its operation. This will ensure the permit scheme operates optimally, in the most cost effective and efficient manner.

Areas for improvement include:

- Cross boundary co-ordination and works planning.
- Forward planning and communications around the extent, nature and disruption resulting from works.

- Constant improvement of the Highway Authority permitting their own works to ensure consistency.
- The potential to increase and improve collaborative working between promoters
- Reducing the number of cancelled or postponed works.

#### **Actions recommended from the review**

- Review Highway Authority permit applications to understand if variations are being utilised and understood correctly
- Review the original durations submitted on Major permits in collaboration with the works promoter to understand if incorrect durations and data are being submitted.
- Understand if resources being concentrated on the Major roads and Cat 3, 4(Non-T/S) roads being allowed extended durations as a result which is not reflective of the objectives of the scheme.
- Continued training and development of all works promoters to ensure all works undertaken on the highway are subject to a permit.
- Encourage the uptake of the incentives