



Annual Permit Scheme Review

Hartlepool Borough Council

2023/24



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Executive Summary

The Hartlepool Borough Council Permit Scheme commenced on 1st April 2020 and replaced the noticing system which had been in place previously. Permits are required for works on all streets adopted by Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC), including Utility street works and HBC works. This evaluation report covers the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

The scheme since it was introduced and has led to much greater control over road and street works taking place in Hartlepool. We have reduced the impact of works by ensuring they are carried out at the least disruptive time and with suitable traffic management and we hope to see continual improvements in compliance and performance in comparison to the information contained in this report.

Since the beginning of the permit scheme improvements in both coordination and communication have been recognised from works promoters, this is especially apparent in the case of HBC internal works of which were issuing permits for the first time. This indicates better planning by a number of HBC services, including Highways, Streetlighting, Horticulture, Facilities Management, Engineering Consultancy etc, and their commitment to ensuring that their works are permitted correctly. HBC internal works have been noted historically for a higher rate of permit errors than any other works promoter, examples being footpath closures not requested, overrunning of permits, notifying of start / end dates etc. This is attributed to initial transitional issues during the early days of the scheme and the challenges in administering the large number of permits, but improvements have been gradually recognised and it is hoped to see this reflected in future evaluation reports.

Good communication between Hartlepool Borough Council and Work Promoters has meant that the vast majority of early starts were agreed. Hartlepool Borough Council recognises the need to allow works promoters to be flexible in their work and effort is made to accommodate where possible. Pre-booked conflicting works, where collaboration is not possible, tend to be the main reason to date as to why an early start would be rejected. Requesting to excavate on private land, where HBC have no jurisdiction, is also common. The authority makes a continued effort to grant early start requests where road space is available, particularly when this relates to new customer connections, and assists with coordination of works or other time sensitive work when called upon.

Introduction

This report sets out Hartlepool Borough Council's operational performance during the financial year April 2022 to March 2023.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA), Part 3 Sections 32 to 39 and the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007 and Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 make provision for Permit Schemes to be introduced in England. The Hartlepool Borough Council Permit Scheme was formerly adopted by the council on 29th March 2020 and reflects the requirements of this legislation.

The scheme supports our duties under both section 59 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Overview of Hartlepool Borough Council Permit Scheme to Date.

The purpose of the scheme is to provide HBC with more powers to effectively manage and coordinate both Utility and Highway Authority works, therefore allowing HBC to improve its performance relating to duty of network management.

By using permit conditions and having regular discussions with all Works Promoters, and increasing our site presence, we have reduced average occupation of the highway by Utility Companies from 13 days down to 9 days per permit. This figure has reduced even further during 2022/23 to 6 days. It is recognised that this figure may be compromised due to the high level of fibre optic works taking place in the town which tend to accommodate relatively short occupancy durations for each permit application. (These figures take into account Statutory Undertakers only in order to display a fair comparison)

Communication is being encouraged between works Promoters where both need to work in the same location simultaneously. Collaborative working has seen an increase, particularly on schemes involving HBC. The Hartlepool Borough Council Permit Scheme makes use of discounts to encourage collaborative working and notifies works Promoters when substantial traffic management is being applied so they can undertake works collaboratively where possible.

Examples of such collaborative working are on Major Highways schemes as well as for private development works where multiple utility connections were required. Where such connections are required we try to ensure they are all carried out under the same road closure or traffic management to reduce disruption to the public and reduce costs to the Utility Companies.

Hartlepool Borough Council has recently agreed to partake in a trial flexi permit scheme with BT Openreach during the current financial year. This government led initiative is a way of attempting to reduce permit administration on the undertakers side by allowing a single permit to be raised to cover previously non notifiable works and allow minor civils works to be undertaken without pre notification. Financially this will have little impact upon Local Authorities as reinstatements will still need to be registered to allow the usual fees to be collected and sample inspections to be recorded. There is some apprehension as to how this will work from a Highway Authority perspective but it is hoped that the trial will allow such concerns to be raised, feedback appropriately and remedied in time for the scheme commencing on a nationwide level. At the time of writing Hartlepool Borough Council and BT Openreach have commenced the trial and have instigated weekly meetings in an effort to iron out any issues that may arise.

Both internal and external schemes are discussed at our regular coordination meetings and where clashes are identified discussions take place to ensure the best outcome.

Where permits clash with other works taking place at a similar location we advise the works promoters involved and provide information, so they can discuss the

option of collaborative working directly with each other. Permits are only refused for clash of works where there is no opportunity of collaboration taking place.

Hartlepool Borough Council have seen some improvement regarding planning notices for HBC Highway works, allowing more time for Section 58 restrictions to be used to protect our assets. Through our regular coordination meetings, we are identifying potential instances where maintenance and renewal works are undertaken before resurfacing works.

The improved information coming through for internal and private developer works also means we can try to coordinate any required utility works in advance of major schemes commencing. This largely reduces the need for excavations to be carried out once scheme have completed.

Enforcement of the permit scheme also helps to protect the structure of the street, as compliance officers are visiting sites more regularly than they would be under noticing system. If any issues are identified as part of the permit inspection process, then these can be raised with the operatives on site.

We have recruited additional officers to drive best practice throughout the town. Where noncompliance is identified meetings are arranged with the works Promoter to identify how improvements can be made. Issues are raised on site as soon as they are identified so the site can be made safe immediately instead of waiting for an instruction from the office.

Non permit works are also being targeted in this manner so as to drive improvements throughout the Borough. An example being the 'cable pulling' teams for the Telecom industry. These works, due to their nature, are not required to apply for a permit to work in the highway, however, Hartlepool Borough Council through its pro-active approach regarding its on-site personnel have worked with site managers of the respective works gangs to bring about improvements in the use of advanced signing where the use of was previously non-existent. The result is a much more consistent approach from all teams working in the public highway.

Use of the permit scheme means that we can request more information on a job. Works are being planned much more efficiently as more time is being taken to ensure that the permit isn't rejected. Where certain types of traffic management are being used, such as lane and footway closures, we can now request traffic management plans in advance of agreeing the permit. This helps us to ensure that the needs of all users of the highway are being met.

Hartlepool Borough Council Highways works, during 2022/23, made up over 50% of all permit applications as we require them to submit permits for all works including short duration remedial works. KPI1 shows broadly similar permit approval rates for both internal and external works Promoters and in addition early start and extension approval rates are similar.

Fee Structure

The Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require that the permit authority shall consider whether the fee structure needs to be changed in light of any surplus or deficit.

The current fee structure for the Hartlepool Borough Council Permit Scheme is as follows:

Permit Type	Reinstatement Category	
	Category 0,1,2 or Traffic Sensitive	Category 3&4 and Non-Traffic Sensitive
PAA	£76	£58
Major: Over 10 days	£138	£92
Major: 4-10 days	£110	£69
Major: Up to 3 days	£63	£43
Standard	£110	£69
Minor	£63	£43
Immediate	£44	£34

The table below highlights income / expenditure relating to the Hartlepool Borough Council Permit Scheme.

Year	Income	Expenditure	Difference
2020/21	£143,455	£74,682	£68,773
2021/22	£197,418	£175,202	£22,216
2022/23	£230,957	£221,374	£9,583
Running Totals	£571,830	£471,258	£100,572

These figures seem to show an overall surplus income generated from the permit scheme however the trend seems to indicate a reduction in this figure which is mainly a result of ongoing maintenance of IT solutions, salary increases to Permit staff, and a 'slowing down' of the fibre optic works in the town. As a result, we feel that changes to the fee structure are not necessary at this time.

Key Performance Indicators

To demonstrate that the Authority is operating a Permit Scheme in a fair and equitable way HBC have applied a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). This data was extracted from both the CONFIRM Streetworks system and the national Street Manager register for the dates 01/04/2022 to 31/03/2023 and is discussed in detail below.

KPI 1 : Permit and Permit Applications Received, Granted and Refused

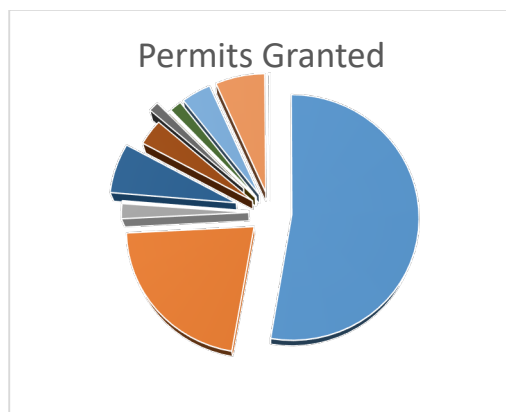
This table shows the number of permit applications received, granted, refused and deemed during financial year 2022/23.

Permit Applications

Works Promoter	Permits Granted	Permits Refused	Permits Deemed
Hartlepool Borough Council	5717	1	3
ANGLIAN WATER	2335	35	28
BT	214	0	6
GTC	4	2	1
Last Mile Electricity Limited	2	0	0
NETWORK RAIL -PROMOTERS NATIONAL	15	0	1
Northern Gas Networks	714	12	15
Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited	373	9	6
NORTHUMBRIAN WATER	144	7	1
Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited)	10	0	3
T-Mobile (UK) Limited	13	4	0
VIRGIN MEDIA	173	6	2
Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...	422	11	3
CityFibre	701	8	9
HUTCHISON 3G LTD	9	0	0
ROMECC LTD	4	0	0
MURPHY POWER DISTRIBUTION	4	0	0
West Northamptonshire Council	0	0	2
Grand Total	10854	95	80

HBC received a total of 10,854 Permits between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023, an average of 904 applications per month.

HBC works accounted for over 50% of this total, with nearly 20 external works Promoters making up the other half. As graphically displayed below.



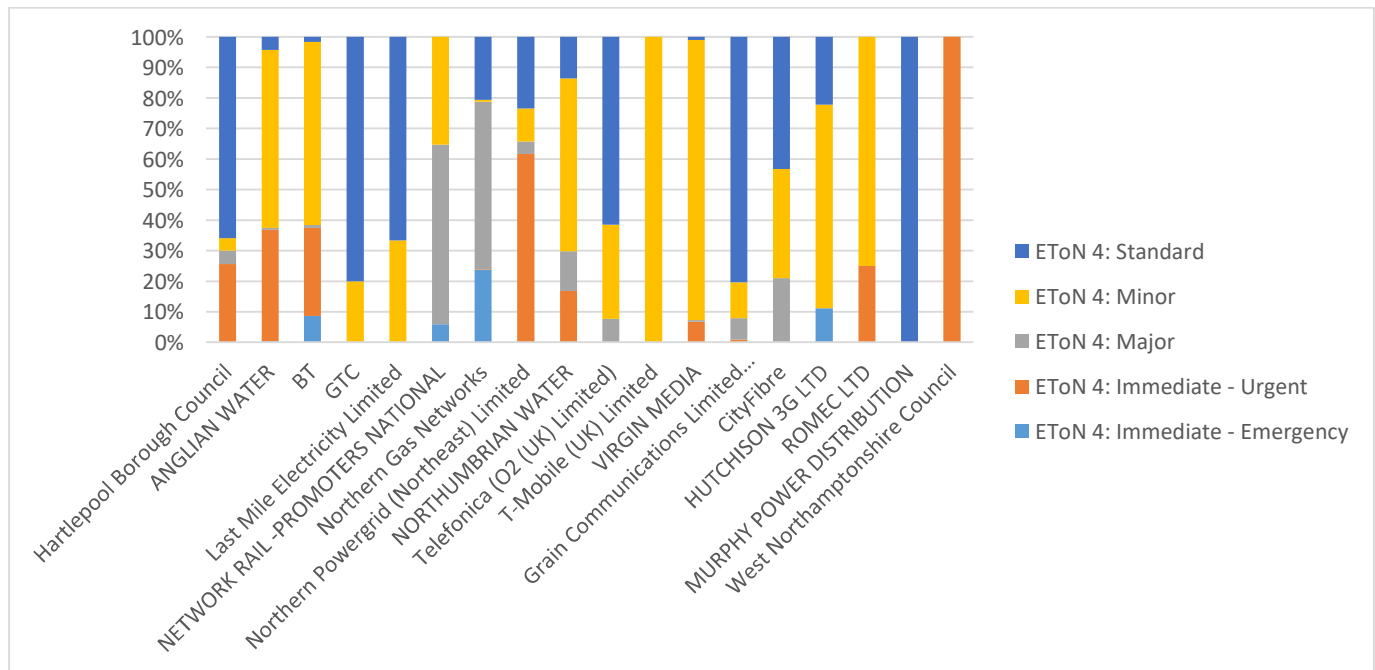
The data shows a very high rate of permits granted (98.0%), and improvement on the previous year, with very few permits being refused or deemed.

The low refusal rate of permits can be due to several reasons. Discussions take place with the Traffic Operations team prior to any permits being submitted for a lot of works considered to be 'high impact', so conditions can be discussed in advance, thereby reducing refusals. A lot of internal works, for example, are simple footway repair jobs that have minimal carriageway impact, so are more likely to be granted than a more complex utility job. Internal works Promoters are also more aware of traffic sensitivity, which again reduces the likelihood of a permit being refused.

However, the 99% of Utility Permit applications granted compares very favorably with other Highway Authorities in the region and suggests that parity is being observed between HBC and External works.

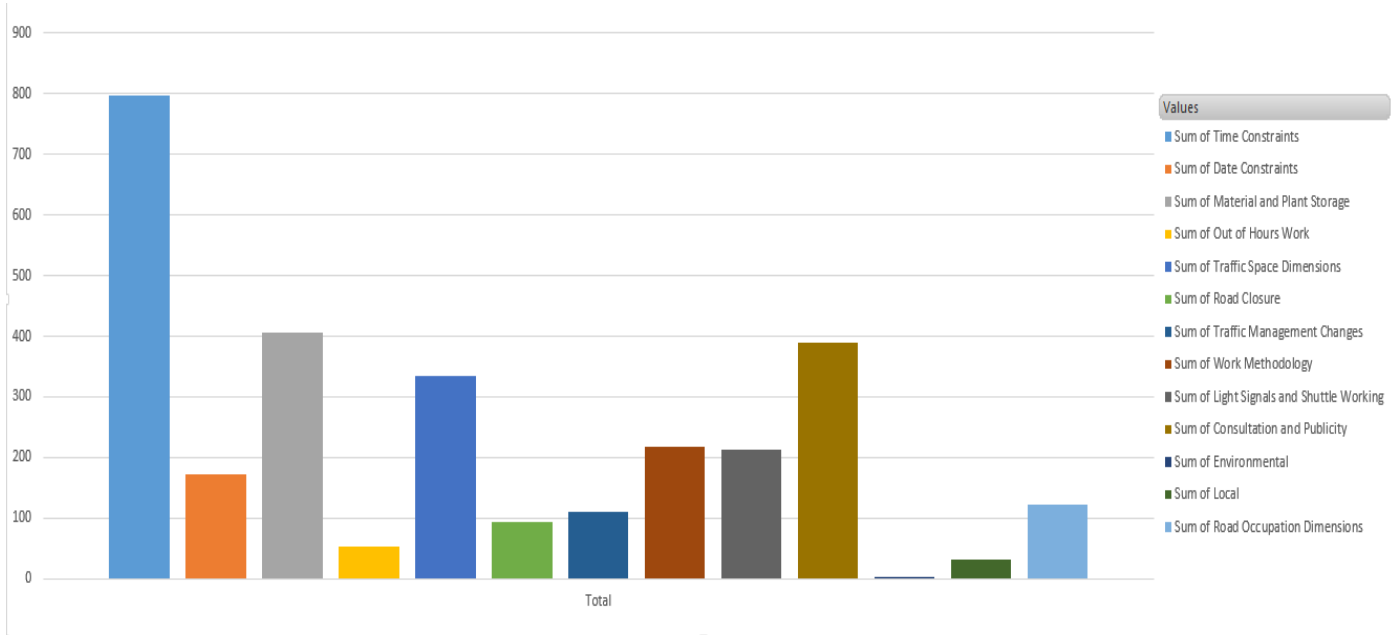
Less than 1% of permits were deemed during this financial year which basically means the permit wasn't granted prior to works commencing and a fee was subsequently not charged. Ideally this figure would have a zero return but staff absenteeism, for example, can lead to a small number of permits being missed.

The chart below illustrates a breakdown of the types of permit for each works promoter.



KPI 2: The Number of Conditions Applied by Condition Type

The below chart shows the number of times each condition was applied for External Promoter works.



Time constraints conditions were used on almost 800 permits, demonstrating the authority’s efforts to restrict works to the times of day when they will have least disruption on the network. Additionally time constraints are regularly being used on utility works to state standard working hours, where this does not necessarily need to be included.

KPI 3: The Number of Approved Revised Durations

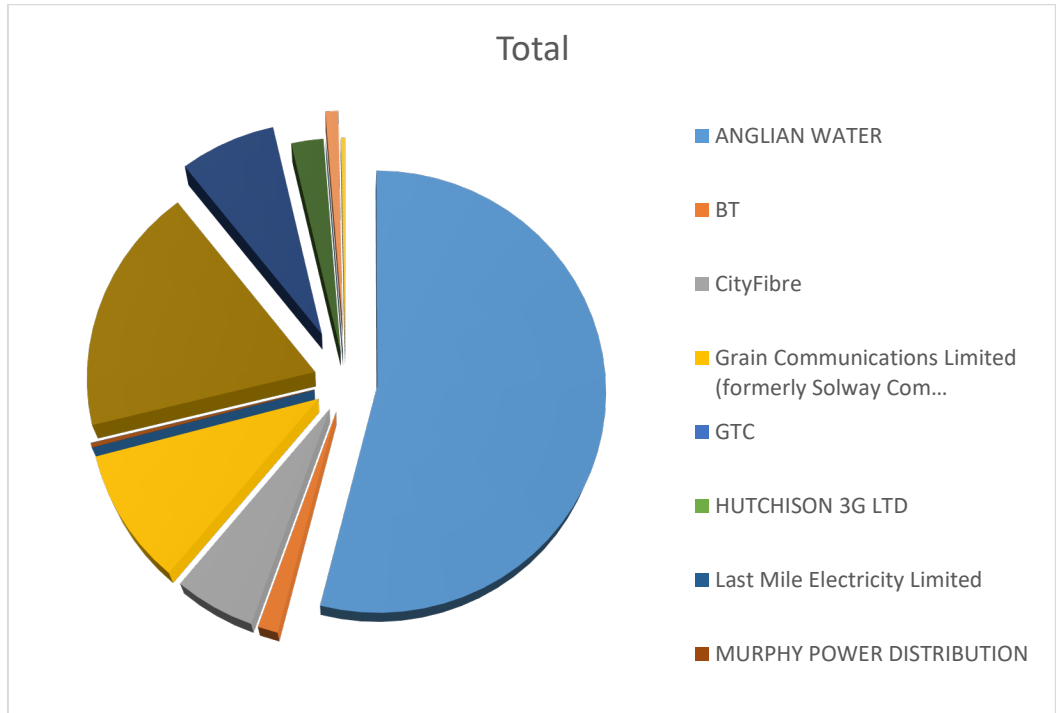
The below table shows the number of Revised Duration (Extension) requests received for external works – these are in addition to amendments to permits such as changes to TM layout, trench dimension alteration etc.

Row Labels	Quantity of permit extensions
ANGLIAN WATER	346
BT	9
CityFibre	36
Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...	63
GTC	0
HUTCHISON 3G LTD	0
Last Mile Electricity Limited	0
MURPHY POWER DISTRIBUTION	2
NETWORK RAIL -PROMOTERS NATIONAL	0
Northern Gas Networks	117
Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited	45
NORTHUMBRIAN WATER	15
ROMECLTD	0
Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited)	6
T-Mobile (UK) Limited	0
VIRGIN MEDIA	2
West Northamptonshire Council	0
Grand Total	641

The above results do not include Internal works promoters as direct comparison is made difficult due to the type and quantity of works carried out by internal works gangs. All such extensions, internal and external, were granted (after relevant checks carried out) as it is HBC policy to work closely with all works promoters at all times and attempt to accommodate modifications such as these.

The number of extensions requests for external works is likely due to difficulties in coordination of excavations, reinstatements and traffic management that may all be provided by different companies. A lot of utility work involves complex renewal work where it may be difficult to give an accurate end date at the beginning of, say, a 12-week programme of works or due to faults where the actual work required on site is unknown at the time of submitting the permit application.

The chart below allows for ease of comparison between works promoters.



KPI 4: The Number of Occurrences of Reducing the Application Period (Early Starts)

The below table shows the number of early start requests received from External Promoters along with the number of reduced working periods where it varied from the original permit.

Row Labels	Early Start Agreements	Reduced Periods
ANGLIAN WATER	317	343
BT	3	15
CityFibre	375	389
Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...	35	79
GTC	7	7
HUTCHISON 3G LTD	0	0
Last Mile Electricity Limited	1	1
MURPHY POWER DISTRIBUTION	0	0
NETWORK RAIL -PROMOTERS NATIONAL	0	1
Northern Gas Networks	205	246
Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited	2	27
NORTHUMBRIAN WATER	9	13
ROMECLTD	0	1
Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited)	0	1
T-Mobile (UK) Limited	0	0
VIRGIN MEDIA	16	18
Grand Total	970	1141

Hartlepool Borough Council actively encourages consideration of early start requests, where possible, to free up the public highway for its road users and other utility / HBC works. As the permit scheme progresses it is anticipated that year on year comparisons will be carried out, and included in this report, in an attempt to display trends of early start requests across the Borough.

HBC received a number Permit applications for internal Major Highway works. A significant number of these 55 required an early start. In all cases such schemes are checked against planned utility works and programs from either are adjusted if the need arises.

The chart below shows a breakdown of early start requests for utility organisations only.

No. of Early Starts



- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| ■ Airband Community Internet Ltd | ■ ANGLIAN WATER |
| ■ BT | ■ GEO |
| ■ Gigaclear | ■ GTC |
| ■ HARTLEPOOL WATER | ■ Last Mile Electricity Limited |
| ■ Last Mile Gas Limited | ■ NETWORK RAIL -PROMOTERS NATIONAL |
| ■ NextGenAccess Ltd | ■ Northern Gas Networks |
| ■ Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited | ■ NORTHUMBRIAN WATER |
| ■ STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL | ■ Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited) |
| ■ T-Mobile (UK) Limited | ■ VIRGIN MEDIA |

KPI 5: The number of agreements to work in section 58 restrictions

The following Table and chart explains the numbers of permits submitted where permission was required to excavate on a Section 58 protected street, i.e. one where a two year resurfacing guarantee was in place.

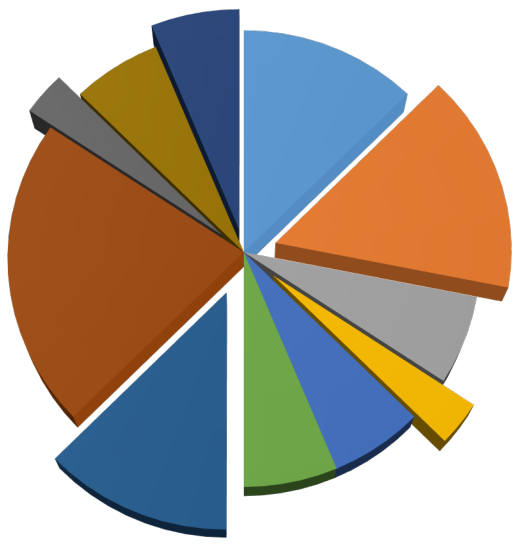
If carriageway excavation is required on a Section 58 protected street then a site meeting is arranged between representatives from the works promoter and HBC to discuss requirements. Where possible such work is delayed until the restriction period has expired.

Utility companies are also notified in advance of impending resurfacing schemes to allow advance work to take place prior to the new surface being laid. This advance warning is usually done via the quarterly regional Coordination meeting.

The figures below for 2022/23 have significantly reduced since the permit scheme commenced in 2020 partly due to improved early communication between HBC and the various statutory undertakers.

Row Labels	Wrks within Restricted Streets
ANGLIAN WATER	4
BT	5
CityFibre	2
Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...	1
GTC	2
HUTCHISON 3G LTD	2
Northern Gas Networks	4
Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited	7
NORTHUMBRIAN WATER	1
Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited)	2
VIRGIN MEDIA	2
Grand Total	32

Total



- ANGLIAN WATER
- BT
- CityFibre
- Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...
- GTC
- HUTCHISON 3G LTD
- Northern Gas Networks
- Northern Powergrid (Northeast) Limited

KPI 7: Inspection of permit Conditions

The table and chart below show the number of permit condition inspections which are carried out for each utility. The inclusion of conditions when applying for a permit are statutory and involve such things as :

- Works times
- Materials and plant storage
- TM requirements
- Out of hours working etc

All live sites are checked for compliance against these conditions and noted as such on the inspectors report. Hartlepool Borough Council experiences very low numbers of failures to comply with permit conditions and, upon discovering such anomalies, will attempt to resolve through communication initially rather than issuing Fixed Penalty Notices. FPN's will, and have been, issued for repeat offences.

It is worth noting that these inspections run alongside the statutory sample inspections and 'end of guarantee' checks the latter of which HBC employs as an extra safeguard against failing reinstatements.

Internal HBC works (Cat 1 and Cat 2 defects) are not yet subject to such conditions and hence no formal inspection is in place. Such works are fairly repetitive in nature and rather short in their durations hence most of the permit conditions will not actually apply to these works. Regular checks involving sign, lighting and guarding are carried out by the Streetworks Inspector on internal works and, as a result, steady improvements in the use of such equipment is immediately apparent when comparing to works prior to permits.

Row Labels	No. of Permit Cond Inspections
Anglian Water (Hartlepool)	85
AWS Clancy Docwra Ltd-Metering& Dev Services	1
BT	1
BT: OR DL Civils	6
CityFibre - Granemore Group Ltd	31
CityFibre - Newcastle FTTH	1
Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...	4
Hartlepool BC - Internal Works	9
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Connections ...	2

NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Large Network...	3
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Network Inves...	2
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Network Opera...	13
Northumbrian Water - District 1	3
Tees DSP Replacement	1
Tees Repair	3
Tees Replacement	1
Telent - ONSA	1
Virgin Media - Avonline Plc	4
Grand Total	171

Local Indicator – Permit Duration Measurement

The following data illustrates a comparison of permit durations for works marked as 'closed' within the financial year covered by this report.

Taking 'Grain Communications' as an example, for closed works, their works had a total of 3276 proposed days stated on the permit application, the actual duration of the works once the closed permits had been submitted came to 2972 days duration which means Grain managed to reduce their time spent working on the Boroughs highway by approximately 300 working days of the original estimate. Grain also suffered from 24 days over the year where they exceeded the proposed duration on submitted permit(s).

The table below illustrates that Anglian Water's overrun days of 43 is higher than other utilities but has dropped considerably (202) since 2019/20 which is a vast improvement and, given the high volume of works they carry out in Hartlepool, this figure represents a small percentage of their overall works.

Row Labels	Sum of actual duration	Sum of Proposed duration	Over Run Days
Anglian Water (Hartlepool)	6431	7914	43
AW - WR Networks and Maintenance	30	25	3
AWS - Planned Works	5	5	0
AWS Clancy Docwra - Water Maint& Repair	5	9	0
AWS Clancy Docwra Ltd-Metering& Dev Services	116	164	14
AWS Clancy Docwra-Water Recycling Maint& Repair	6	5	0
AWS CONTRACTOR EASTERN NORTH AREA	2	2	0
AWS Kier - Water Maint& Repair	2	2	0
BT: DC Transport - BT Enterprise - Payphones	0	1	0
CityFibre - Granemore Group Ltd	3689	3463	2
CityFibre - Newcastle FTTH	162	183	0
CITYFIBRE METRO NETWORKS LTD: CA Telecoms UK Limi...	3	3	0
CITYFIBRE METRO NETWORKS LTD: Pioneer Civils Engi...	1	1	0
CITYFIBRE METRO NETWORKS LTD: Rapid Response Tele...	0	1	0
EE Ltd: T-Mobile (UK) Ltd ARC Communications	7	6	0
EPLSR-GTC direct	13	12	0
Grain Communications Limited (formerly Solway Com...	2972	3276	24
HUTCHISON 3G LTD: Clarke Telecoms Ltd	0	1	0
HUTCHISON 3G LTD: Wilkinson Helsby Projects Ltd	1	7	0
Last Mile Warrington	27	27	0
MTS - NEMSA	0	1	0

Network Rail-LNE IMDM YORK	1	2	0
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Connections ...	45	42	0
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Connections -...	211	236	2
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Large Network...	148	143	0
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Network Inves...	277	323	1
NORTHERN POWERGRID (NORTHEAST) PLC: Network Opera...	753	1102	3
Northumbrian Water - District 1	162	220	0
NR-LNE IMDM LINCOLN	2	9	0
NR-LNE IP BUILDING AND CIVILS (B&C)	0	2	0
O2 (GS Hall)	0	1	0
O2(Mono Consultants)	0	3	0
Power On Connections	28	30	0
Powergrid ASSET CONSTRUCTION	14	14	0
RJ Utilities	39	38	0
ROMECLTD: Full access including permits	0	1	0
Tees DSP Replacement	3851	4936	0
Tees NGN Connections	195	211	3
Tees Repair	1323	1566	20
Tees Replacement	116	121	0
Telent - ONSA	108	140	0
T-Mobile (UK) Ltd (Ericsson)	0	1	0
T-Mobile Ltd - Ericsson (MW)	1	5	0
Virgin Media - Avonline Plc	53	120	0
Virgin Media - John Henry Group	2	31	0
Wear NGN Connections	1	5	0
West Northamptonshire Council: Northamptonshire H...	0	1	0

Grand Total	20802	24411	115
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Conclusions

Overall, Hartlepool Borough Council considers the first three years of the Permit Scheme operation to have been a success. As part of this review we have identified some recommendations in order to improve the service and lessen the impact that such works have on the general public

Recommendations

The following recommendations will continue to be improved upon as a continuation from year 1.

Recommendation 01: Ensure the number of deemed permits is reduced, regularly monitor in house IT systems for outage.

Recommendation 02: Continue to work closely with works promoters upon permit revision requests to ensure disruption to members of the public is kept to a minimum.

Recommendation 03: Improve internal processes for permit applications to ensure more accurate start / end dates are supplied and adhered to.

Recommendation 04: Ensure that all resurfacing works are communicated regularly to relevant parties to encourage early and accurate planning of works from all promoters and reduce the need for Section 58 discussions.

Recommendation 05: Internal schemes (major works) and TM permits will be communicated internally on a regular basis to encourage improved planning and possible sharing of TM costs.

Recommendation 06: Continue to undertake 'permit condition inspections' of all live sites (where possible) and initiate a mechanism of feedback to works promoters where issues arise.

Recommendation 07: Incorporate regular checks for overrun works to ensure all have formal revised duration requests in place beforehand.

Document Control

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Date	Description
19/04/2021	Year 1 Report
10/09/2023	Year 3 Report