

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY PERMIT SCHEME 2019 / 2020. YEAR 1 REPORT

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1 Executive Summary

On 1 April 2019 the HCPS commenced. The scheme had been developed over the preceding 18 months using National guidance, legislation and taking good practice from other existing permit schemes in the region, notably the Kent and West Sussex Schemes. Authority to commence the HCPS was given at the Executive Member for Environment and Transport Decision Day on 29 September 2018, and the legal order to commence the scheme was enacted on 31 January 2019.

After the first year of operation, data analysis shows that the HCPS has been successful in meeting its objectives and has improved the management of all works and has reduced the impact of works on the flow of traffic around Hampshire.

Assessment of the financial aspects of the scheme confirms that the actual income for the 2019 to 2020 year is slightly under the costs of actually running the scheme. However, there are no plans to increase permit charges at the current time.

In the first year of operation, National processes and guidance regarding permit schemes has changed and in addition a new National IT system has been implemented. This has revealed a need to review the HCPS documents and processes to ensure the continued use of good practice and to correct minor mistakes.

2 Introduction

The Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA), Part 3 Sections 32 to 39, and the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007 make provision for Permit Schemes to be introduced in England. The legal Order for the Hampshire County Permit Scheme (HCPS) came into force on the 31st January 2019. The scheme commenced on the 1st April 2019.

This report sets out an overview of the HCPS operational performance in its 1st year. The report provides detailed scrutiny of the available data in relation to street works and highway works in Hampshire.

3 Objectives of the Hampshire County Permit Scheme

Permit schemes must have stated objectives that revolve around the Traffic Authority's legal duty to facilitate the free flow of traffic on their network and the networks of neighbouring Authorities. The specific Objectives for the HCPS are as follows;

- to proactively manage the local highway network;
- to maximise the efficient use of road space;

- to minimise traffic disruption arising from activities on key routes;
- to minimise disruption to residents arising from significant schemes in residential areas;
- to improve the compliance with relevant specifications and Codes of Practice;
- to improve the quality, reliability and accuracy of works information to the public;
- to improve stakeholder engagement for significant works schemes; and
- to ensure parity of treatment for all promoters. (This is a requirement of all permit schemes)

4 Finance

Legislation allows Authorities to charge for works permits. The charges can only cover the costs of additional resources needed to review the permits and cannot recover costs for additional inspections or for activities not directly related to administering the scheme. Costs for operating the HCPS for County Council works cannot be included in the charges for utility company works. Any additional funds recovered must be returned to the utility companies in following years via reduced permit charges. If a scheme fails to cover its costs, then permit fees may be increased up to the maximum levels set by legislation.

Permit schemes have to offer discounted permits where works are carried out in such a manner as to minimise traffic disruption or where the scheme is of strategic importance. In the HCPS a 30% discount is offered where works are timed to avoid peak times or for schemes of National importance, and a 50% reduction is offered where works promoters share workspace. The HCPS also does not charge for minor or immediate works on non-traffic sensitive category 3 and 4 roads. i.e., works that are anticipated to have minimal impact on low traffic roads.

During scheme development, studies were undertaken to model the costs of the scheme which would drive the cost of the permits. The anticipated costs for running the scheme for utility works were determined to be approximately £990,000 per annum generated by utility permits. This cost was generated from the additional resources, IT systems, management costs and all associated overheads, including the need to employ four more staff to manage the utility company permits.

In the first year of operating (April 2019 to the end of March 2020) the HCPS recovered approximately £910,000 from utility company permits. This indicates that the HCPS has made a slight loss in the first year of operation.

5 Costs and Benefits

The Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 require that the permit authority shall give consideration to whether the permit scheme is meeting key performance indicators where these are set out in the Guidance. These performance indicators and measures are described below.

6 Performance Indicators

6.1 PI1 The number of permit and permit variation applications

The data presented below shows a breakdown of permit applications received, granted and refused for the first year of operation in Hampshire as determined by running reports in the County Councils permitting software

Table 1 Permits

	Permit Numbers				Total Permit Applications
	Granted	Refused	Deemed	Unknown	
Internal	30635	5161	4	10895	46695
Utility	61648	10306	18	21474	93446
	Permit Percentages				
	Granted	Refused	Deemed	Unknown	
Internal	66%	11%	0.01%	23%	
Utility	66%	11%	0.02%	23%	

Table 2 Variations

	Variation Numbers				Total Variation Applications
	Granted	Refused	Deemed	Unknown	
Internal	25225	2254	3	1062	28544
Utility	14940	2192	13	750	17895
	Permit Percentages				
	Granted	Refused	Deemed	Unknown	
Internal	88%	8%	0.01%	4%	
Utility	84%	12%	0.07%	4%	

The following considerations must be noted in relation to this data

1. Each application has an appropriate response period which means that the number of applications received in any one period does not correspond to the permits granted and refused within that same period. In other words, a permit application received in one period may be responded to within the next period.
2. The 'unknown' status of permits and variations relates to situations where permits are updated before the County Council could respond to the initial application. Such instances occur where immediate works are started and completed in short timescales or over the weekend. Or where an initial application is submitted then updated very shortly after being sent.

Analysis of Permits Granted and Refused

From the data it can be determined that the County Council treats utility and internal applications in the same manner (similar grant and refusal percentages), thereby demonstrating parity.

6.2 PI2 The number of conditions applied by condition type.

The data below describes the numbers of conditions applied to permits, broken down into conditions type and as a percentage of total permits granted for both internal works promoters and utility companies. This data was derived by running reports within the County Councils permitting software.

Table 3 Condition Application

National Condition Text (NCT) Category	Internal		Utility	
	No.	%age	No.	%age
NCT01 Date Constraints	1182	2%	3338	4%
NCT02 Time Constraints	30468	55%	8313	11%
NCT03 Not Applicable	704	1%	1247	2%
NCT04 Material Storage	199	0.4%	801	1%
NCT05 Road Occupation Dimensions	384	0.7%	3809	5%
NCT06 Traffic Space Dimensions	1858	3%	7498	10%
NCT07 Road Closures	5457	10%	1559	2%
NCT08 Light Signals and Shuttle Working	4280	8%	5285	7%
NCT09 Traffic Management Changes	987	2%	3506	6%
NCT10 Work Methodology	212	0.4%	3105	4%
NCT11 Consultation and Publicity	10832	19%	8442	11%
NCT12 Environmental	97	0.2%	104	0.1%
NCT13 Exceptional Circumstances	28	0.1%	1094	1%

The following considerations must be noted in relation to this data

1. Conditions can be applied to a permit or variation by both the works promoter and the permitting / coordination officer.
2. The percentages have been based on a comparison with the number of permits and variations that have been granted. (Internal = 55860, Utility = 76558)

Analysis of the application of conditions

Application of NCT's is sometimes different between internal works and utility works (for example, 55% of internal works had NCT02 applied to them compared to 11% of utility works). This is likely to be a result of internal works promoters applying the NCT to their own permit as a result of contractual drivers. Similar reasons will apply to other differences on other NCT's.

The NCT's applied most often to both internal and utility works relate to time constraints, traffic lights and consultation. This shows that regulation of works aligns with the scheme objections, particularly as regards works publicity which is the focus of a specific Authority Measure described in Section 8 below.

NCT03 should not be used at all, however, some promoters and permit officers / coordinators are still applying them to permits. This suggests that further training / awareness is needed to minimize the use of this NCT. Similarly NCT13 should only be used in exceptional circumstances. It is believed that the use of NCT13 in the 2019/2020 year was likely owing to special measures put in place to manage traffic problems as a result of Brexit.

6.3 The number of approved revised durations

Also known as "duration extensions". This data has been derived from the County Councils permit management system. The table below shows the number of revised durations requested and approved for both internal and utility works promoters.

Table 4 Extension Requests

	Requested	Granted	%age Granted
Utility	2221	2083	94%
Internal	1479	1370	93%

Analysis of the duration extensions

A high number of extension requests are granted and there is parity between granting of internal and utility duration extension requests.

6.4 The number of occurrences of reducing the application period

Also known as “early starts”. This data has been derived from the County Councils permit management system. The table below shows the number of early starts requested and approved for both internal and utility works.

Table 5 Early Start Requests

	Requested	Granted	%age Granted
Utility	4672	2103	45%
Internal	37447	16983	45%

Analysis of the early start requests

Less than half the early starts could be accommodated. Comparing the percentages granted between internal and utility promoters indicates that all works promoters are treated equally. It should also be noted that internal works promoters submit a high volume of early start requests when compared to utility promoters.

7 TPI measures

This section outlines the Permit Indicators (TPI) contained as Annex A within the Statutory Guidance for Highway Authority Permit Schemes .

These indicators for permit schemes are additional to the general TMA Performance Indicators (TPIs), which are already being produced.

7.1 TPI1 Works Phases Started

Utility	Highway
30214	27370

7.2 TPI2 Works Phases Completed

Utility	Highway
30375	26938

7.3 TPI3 Days of Occupancy Phases Completed

Utility	Highway
193147	237961

7.4 TPI4 Average Duration of Works (Working Days)

Utility	Highway
6.8	5.3

7.5 TPI5 Phases Completed on time

Utility	Highway
99.6%	99.3%

7.6 TPI6 Number of deemed permit applications

Utility	Highway
31	7

7.7 TPI7 Number of Phase One Permanent Registrations

Utility	Highway
21671	N/A

8 Authority Measures

To assist in determining the effectiveness of achieving the objectives of the HCPS an number of scheme specific measures have been adopted as follows;

KPI 1 Number of activities completed in one phase. Some works promoters utilise a temporary reinstatement, then return later to replace it with a permanent reinstatement. Sometimes this is out of necessity, to quickly reopen a road, or to source specialist materials. Other times is it because of the works processes or contractor's choice. Undertaking the works in one phase reduces the disruption.

The data for this KPI comes from National scorecard results. It is not possible to accurately measure the similar data for County Council works because of the differing nature of the works and the process being used to register County Council works and the fact that County Council works rarely make use of a temporary reinstatement. Therefore, this data only applies to utility works.

- In 2018/2019 83% of utility works were fully registered after phase one.
- In 2019/2020 92% of utility works were fully registered after phase one.

The number of single-phase reinstatements has increased by 12% under the permit scheme. This reveals that the permit scheme has had a positive effect on reducing disruption.

KPI 2 Number of activities with collaborative working. Planning works to share road space reduces the number of times a road is closed or subjected to additional works thereby reducing traffic disruption.

Measurement of collaborative works prior to the HCPS was a manual process. Under the HCPS it is an automated process. The data is reliant on works promoters confirming that they worked collaboratively.

- In 2018/2019 there were 142 cases of collaborative working.
- In 2019/2020 there were 228 cases of collaborative working.

The number of instances of collaborative working has increased by 60%. This confirms that the HCPS has had a positive effect on reducing disruption, increased proactive planning and an effective use of road space.

KPI 3 Number of activities where conditions relating to advance publicity were applied by either the works promoter or the County Council. One of the conditions that can be applied to a permit is the requirement for advanced publicity of the works to alert motorists and residents to upcoming works (NCT11b). This gives the public time to plan journeys and minimise disruption to day to day activities. Such conditions are generally only effective on highly disruptive works or works in a residential area.

This data has been derived from manually collating data of all NCT11 results taken from the County Councils permit management system. It should be noted that the figures will be an underestimate of the amount of advanced publicity being recorded as a result of the method of collating the data. Use of this condition is generally only effective on major works (works that will last a long time or that will require a road closure) i.e., the most disruptive kind of works. Prior to the HCPS there was no method of recording or measuring the amount of publicity for works so the data only covers works since the start of the HCPS.

- In the first year of the HCPS 61% of all Major County Council works and 66% of all major utility works implemented additional publicity measures.

This volume of publicity conditions suggests a high level of additional engagement and information is being made available to the public and stakeholders. It also indicates a high level of planning and management of the more highly disruptive schemes.

KPI 4 Number of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN's) served. When a works promoter fails to submit permits on time, fails to comply with permit conditions or works without a permit it reduces the chance for the County Council to coordinate effectively and could result in unplanned disruption. The County Council can serve a 'Fixed Penalty Notice' for each offence. Each FPN results in a charge of between £80-£120 to the works promoter. Charge levels are set by legislation.

The data is taken from management reports found within the County Councils permit management system. This software does not include a facility to accurately measure the FPNs that would apply to County Council works. Accordingly, the data relates only to utility works. It is hoped that the new National IT system recently implemented will provide the ability to measure FPNs for County Council Works for future reports.

FPNs come in two forms; ones that measure permit accuracy and ones that measure failing to comply with permit conditions or working without a permit. Prior to the HCPS coming into force notice accuracy could be measured, but there were no conditions to fail to comply with. So, under the HCPS there are additional ways for a works promoter to fall foul of an FPN.

- In 2018/2019 there were 408 FPN's served on utility companies (out of a total of 34658 works) for late or inaccurate noticing. This means a utility notice accuracy rate of 98.8%
- In 2019/2020 there were 322 FPN's served on utility companies (out of a total of 30375 works) for late or inaccurate permits. This means a utility permit accuracy of 98.9%
- In 2019/2020 there were 143 FPN's served on utility companies (out of a total of 30375 works) for failing to comply with permit conditions or working without a permit. This means that 99.5% of utility works were compliant with permit conditions.

The levels of notice/permit accuracy suggest that accuracy of information sent to the County Council by utility companies has increased under the HCPS and the overall accuracy and compliance with conditions and permitting rules is extremely high.

Other Data Measured – Number of Works. Data for both utility works and County Council works has been analysed. The initial Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA) for the HCPS suggested that the number of works may drop as a result of better planning, and more single-phase works.

- In 2018/2019 34,658 Utility works were undertaken on the County Councils network
- In 2019/2020 30,375 Utility works were undertaken on the County Councils network

This data reveals a 12% drop in the number of utility works under the HCPS. A 'health-warning' is attached to this analysis as the drop in works could be as a result of economic factors. However, even taking this into account it suggests that the HCPS has improved works planning, proactive management of the network and a reduction in disruption across the network as a result of less works.

- In 2018/2019 15,484 County Council works were undertaken on the County Council's network.
- In 2019/2020 26,938 County Council works were undertaken on the County Council's network.

The data for County Councils work does not reflect an increase in works, rather it reveals that the HCPS has significantly improved the amount of County Council works that are being permitted. This demonstrates parity in the way that County Council works, and utility works are managed in the HCPS.

9 Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

In July 2020 an internal audit was undertaken on the HCPS to assess the effectiveness of the management and processes related to the scheme. The audit found that the HCPS had a sound framework of internal control with opportunities to improve controls and/or compliance with the control framework. No significant risks to the achievement of system objectives were identified in the audit. The report also concluded that permit conditions were being applied equally to County Council schemes and utility schemes.

Analysis of the 2019 National Highways and Transport (NHT) survey data reveals levels of satisfaction with Authority services relating to works coordination that are higher than the National average. It is too early to determine whether the HCPS has had an impact on the 2019 but future reports will consider the results of NHT surveys.

Obtaining performance data from the original IT system used to manage the HCPS has proved to be challenging. Lockdown and the global impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has also created delays in obtaining data.

In July 2020 a new IT system was implemented. The Department for Transport's 'Street Manager' IT product has been rolled out across the Country in order to manage permits and notices in a unified manner. This IT system is still 'bedding in' and there are some issues to iron out, but ultimately it should improve the quality of permit data and make it more accessible for future reports.

During the first year of operating the HCPS several typographical errors in the scheme document have been discovered. In addition, good practice and IT systems

have changed. Accordingly, the scheme documentation needs to be amended to correct the errors and update it to be in line with the latest practice. These are minor changes and will not materially affect the way that the scheme operates.

Conclusions

From the discussions and data analysis the following conclusions can be drawn;

- The HCPS has met all of its objectives in effectively managing the network, minimising traffic disruption and enhancing information to the public
- Parity between coordinating County Council and utility works can be demonstrated.
- The HCPS is being effective in helping the County Council executing its Network Management Duty.
- There is a small cost to the County Council in operating the HCPS however, no amendments to the scheme charges are proposed at the moment.
- The documentation for the scheme needs to be amended to correct minor errors and incorporate the latest guidance.

10 Glossary

- HCPS – Hampshire County Permit Scheme
- TMA – Traffic Management Act 2004
- NCT – National Condition Text