

Gateshead Permit Scheme For Road Works and Street Works

Year 2 Review - 2021/2022



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Executive Summary

Following the request from The Department of Transport (DFT) for all local authorities to implement the permit scheme, Gateshead Council commenced the scheme on the 23rd March 2020.

This is the second annual evaluation report showing the key performance indicators and performance of the scheme in managing, road works and street works throughout the Borough of Gateshead.

The first year was very challenging, with the new scheme having to be implemented at the start of the global pandemic, which affected all activities undertaken by the Highway Authority and Statutory Undertakers.

The second year has seen an increase in all activities from both the Highway Authority and the Statutory Undertakers as restrictions were relaxed and deferred projects were actioned.

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 as set out in Gateshead's Permit Scheme. In both respects, the Scheme is already demonstrating successful outcomes.

Year 2021/22 (April 21 – March 22)	Total
Total number of permits and variations received	9011
Total granted (inc. those permits subsequently cancelled)	8635
Total refused (inc. those permits subsequently cancelled)	892

The data was collated from Mayrise, Gateshead Council's highway asset management system.

Introduction

Permit Schemes were introduced by Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) and are regulated in England by the Traffic Management Scheme (England) Regulations 2007. The 2007 Regulations were amended by the Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2015 to reflect changes made by the Deregulation Act 2015 and other changes to the operation of permit schemes.

Permit Authorities must evaluate their scheme every 12 months of operation for the first three years of operation and then every three years thereafter. This is the second-year review of Gateshead's permit scheme for roadworks and streetworks.

The primary objectives of Permit Schemes in England are:

- Manage and coordinate street works more effectively
- Help to minimise delays/disruption to road users.
- Improved safety at all works
- Improved communication about the purpose and duration of activities taking place on the Boroughs road network

The objectives stated here are by no means intended to be exhaustive.

The Permit Scheme will help to improve the strategic and operational management of the highway network through the better planning, scheduling, and management of road work activities to minimise avoidable traffic disruption to all road users. Achieving this aim will contribute to the efforts of the borough to meet its Network Management Duty under the Traffic Management Act.

Gateshead Permit Scheme Objectives

The objectives of the Gateshead Council Permit Scheme are stated in section 1.7 of the scheme.

Obtain greater control and consistency over all activities on the highway

We use permit refusals to ensure that information is accurate, and Fixed Penalty Notices to drive the quality of information. We encourage pre works engagement to discuss the appropriate traffic management and site requirements.

This greater level of planning helps to ensure permits contain all the necessary information allowing for first time granting of the permit. Inspections are carried out and sites are visited to ensure compliance with the code of practice.

Compliance checks on site-specific permit conditions are also carried out to ensure that the operatives are adhering to the conditions on which the permit was granted.

Manage and minimise delays and other impacts on all road users

Careful use of conditions is employed to ensure works are undertaken at suitable times. We encourage weekend working where appropriate to reduce the number of working days disruption.

Permit conditions are applied to manage activities, for instance on strategic routes, working times are used to ensure that these activities commence outside of traffic sensitive times, thereby reducing delays and minimising disruption.

Promote best practice and enhance coordination, collaboration, and cross boundary cooperation across the North East region, particularly in the area covered by the North East Joint Transport Committee

There are significant savings in occupation of the highway from activities through the use of conditions to manage these activities, coordinating works to avoid clashes, seeking collaborative opportunities and challenging durations. Planned, immediate and ongoing works can be viewed in real time by the public on the <https://one.network> platform.

The permit team ensure that permit applications contain descriptions that are easy to understand, including the duration and description of works activities.

Key Performance Indicators, Operational Measures and Authority Measures

The following set of key performance indicators are intended to assist in demonstrating parity between work promoters.

This data was collected using Gateshead's street work register system, Mayrise.

- KPI 1 – The number of permit applications and variations received, the number granted, and the number refused.
- KPI 3 – The number of requests received to extend an ongoing activity
- KPI 7 - Permit Inspections to check compliance with permit conditions
- OM 6 - Collaborative phases and the numbers of calendar and working days

- AM 5 – Fixed Penalty Notices Permit Breaches

KPI 1 – The total figures received of permit types, variations, granted and refused applications

These will be shown as Highway Authority (HA) and Statutory Undertaker (SU).

Permit Applications (Includes all types)	HA	SU
Received	2745	6266
Granted	2576	5330
Refused	62	429
Cancelled (after either granting or refusing)	198	932

Breakdown of the various types of permit received

Type	HA	SU
Major (excludes PAA)	432	784
Standard	559	1444
Minor	1662	2081
Immediate (Urgent)	1	1625
Immediate (Emergency)	91	332

The data shows that roughly 30% of all permit applications received are from the Highway Authority while the remaining 70% are from Statutory Undertakers.

Number of permits received per Statutory Undertaker (SU)

SU	Total number of Permits submitted	Number of Permits Refused
Openreach	1293	73
Northern Powergrid	1149	56
Network Rail	79	16
Dept of Transport	2	1

Virgin Media	519	35
Telefonica O2	56	8
GTC	4	0
EE/T Mobile	185	78
ES Pipelines	1	0
Northern Gas Networks	857	41
GEO	3	1
City Fibre	217	59
Arqiva	1	0
Energy Assets Ltd	28	5
Wildcard	9	0
Murphy Power Distribution	6	0
Northumbrian Water	1775	53
National Highways	12	0

Most permits were granted first time as can be seen in the above table. The statutory undertakers are now used to submitting permits and as such, the quality of the permits submitted has enabled the permit team to grant the application first time.

There are various reasons for refusals, such as clashes of works where collaborative working is not possible, to time constraints or activities are required to only take place at specified times to minimise the disruption to the highway. Other reasons for refusals include insufficient information provided, incorrect location shown on the permit, or inappropriate traffic management to name but a few.



KPI 3 – The number of requests received to extend an ongoing activity

Identifying and controlling instances of approved extensions support the objectives of the Gateshead Permit Scheme to reduce unnecessary occupation

The reasons for requesting an extension to ongoing works varied from unforeseen engineering difficulties discovered when works commenced, additional time to find leaks on emergency permits to adverse weather conditions. Given the number of permits granted, the extension requests remain low; this shows that most activities were planned with accurate durations applied to them upon submission of the initial permit.

Highway Authority	Statutory Undertaker	Total
257	433	690



KPI 7 – Permit Condition Inspections

For the period 2021/22 the streetworks permit team only had 1 streetworks inspector and along with all his other functions he undertook 457 permit inspections, and these were **all** Statutory Undertaker works. In May 2022 the Streetworks team employed an additional streetworks inspector allowing more permit condition inspections to be undertaken and this data will be available in the year 3 Permit review document.

As can be seen from the table below, the average failure rate of permit inspections is 7.88%, but this varies between Statutory Undertakers. The breaches of permit conditions can include not displaying the correct permit number, not complying with the agreed working hours as stipulated on the permit or failure to adhere to the traffic management arrangements in place, amongst others.

SU	Number of passed permit inspections	Number of non-compliant inspections	Total number of permit inspections	% fail
Openreach	67	2	69	2.90%
Northern Powergrid	71	5	76	6.58%
Network Rail	1	0	1	0.00%
Virgin Media	3	4	7	54.14%
Northern Gas Networks	62	6	68	8.82%
City Fibre	4	6	10	60.00%
Northumbrian Water	213	13	226	5.75%
Total	421	36	457	7.88%

In addition to the Department for Transport's KPIs, the Gateshead Scheme sets out several Operational Measures that provide further

insight into the way scheme is being operated and the success of the scheme

The number of permit applications where collaborative working took place reducing the duration of the activities.

Operational Measure OM6 details the total of collaborative phases and the numbers of calendar and working days saved for the Highway Authority and Statutory Undertaker works for April 2021 to March 2022.

Period	Collaborative Phases			Working Days Saved			Calendar Days Saved		
	HA	SU	Total	HA	SU	Total	HA	SU	Total
April 2021	0	4	4	0	283	283	0	403	403
May 2021	0	3	3	0	16	16	0	20	20
June 2021	0	6	6	0	57	57	0	77	77
July 2021	0	3	3	0	22	22	0	30	30
Aug 2021	0	2	2	0	13	13	0	17	17
Sept 2021	2	1	3	5	5	10	7	5	12
Oct 2021	0	1	1	0	6	6	0	8	8
Nov 2021	0	3	3	0	7	7	0	9	9
Dec 2021	0	1	1	0	6	6	0	8	8
Jan 2022	0	3	3	0	64	64	0	86	86
Feb 2022	0	1	1	0	5	5	0	7	7
Mar 2022	0	2	2	0	8	8	0	10	10
Total	2	30	32	5	492	497	7	680	687

The table above shows how disruption on the network was reduced as a result of collaborative works taking place. Gateshead Council actively promotes collaborative works where possible. In the quarterly streetworks coordination meetings works promoters and works programme information on planned future activities are shared this helps identify potential collaborative working.

Authority Measure AM5 – Fixed Penalty Notice – Permit Breaches

Year 2 data has been gathered from Mayrise, which shows the number of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for permit breaches (including those FPNs which were subsequently withdrawn).

The table below shows that the permit authority served Fixed Penalty Notice and were withdrawn

The reasons for the Fixed Penalty Notices are listed here

- 70(6) Failure to comply with requirements to give notice of completion of reinstatement
- 74(7B) Failure to give a notice required by regulations under s74 (charge for occupation of the highway where works unreasonably delayed)
- 19(1) Working without a permit
- 20(1) Breach of permit conditions

Gateshead streetworks permit team only had 1 streetworks inspector for 2021/22 so the amount of FPNs relating to 19(1) and 20(1) working without a permit and working in breach of permit conditions is severely limited, and this is demonstrated in the data below.

In May 2022, the Streetworks team employed an additional streetworks inspector allowing more permit condition inspections to be undertaken. However, this is obviously outside the scope of this 2021-22 report.

The Highway Authority figure for working without a permit of 10 has been generated by starting works prior to the permit granted start date. If this number is removed from the figures, then the 'true' amount of Fixed Penalty Notices issued for working without a permit is 24

	Fixed Penalty Notices Issued					Fixed Penalty Notices Withdrawn					
	70	74	19	20	Total		70	74	19	20	Total
Highways England	0	44	0	0	44		0	0	0	0	0
Openreach	17	40	1	6	64		1	6	0	1	8

Gateshead Council	1	154	10	3	168		11	0	0	0	11
Northern Powergrid	5	28	5	5	43		1	1	1	0	3
Virgin Media	1	3	0	4	8		0	0	1	1	2
Telefonica O2	0	1	0	0	1		0	0	0	0	0
Northern Gas Networks	3	37	2	7	49		0	1	1	0	2
GEO	1	0	0	0	1		0	0	0	0	0
City Fibre	0	2	1	4	7		0	0	0	0	0
Energy Assets Networks Ltd	0	3	0	0	3		0	0	0	0	0
Northumbrian Water	7	145	15	10	177		0	9	0	1	10
TOTAL	35	457	34	39	565		13	17	3	3	36

Financial Information

It is accepted that permit schemes can take up to three years become financially stable. A full review of the cost benefit analysis will be undertaken after the third anniversary of the scheme. Gateshead Council anticipates additional permit scheme-related costs within this three-year period.

The permit authority will review its level of fees in line with regulations to ensure that all allowable costs are covered whilst not exceeding the total amount allowed. This will ensure that the scheme remains as close to financial balance as possible over the medium term and does not result in any additional costs on the Council's General Fund.

In the table below, our financial years run from 1 April to 31 March.

	Permit Fee Income	Expenditure	Net Surplus
2020-21	£238,004	£143,986	£94,018
2021-22	£271,818	£266,543	£5,275

Conclusion

Since its introduction the Gateshead permit scheme has been successful with benefits being delivered against the initial objectives. There has been clear alignment between the delivery of the permit scheme across the authority in between all statutory and non-statutory work promoters as well as the Highway Authority. Improvements in assessment and coordination have reduced the number and duration of works and help reduced their impact on motorists and other road users.

Overall, several of the scheme's aims tie directly into Gateshead Council's strategic approach, *Thrive*. However, the council recognises that the introduction of a permit scheme does not deliver instant success and relies upon achieving the objectives and continuous review.

Whilst Gateshead has done well in its second year, the team will always be seeking to improve its operations. This will ensure the permit scheme operates in a cost effective and efficient manner.