



Worcestershire Streetworks Permit Scheme

Year 1 Evaluation Report Summary
February 2018

Find out more online:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Worcestershire County Council Permit Scheme

Evaluation Summary 2016 to 2017

February 2018

The Benefit to Cost Ratio for the current Worcestershire Permit Scheme is 10.23:1. This indicates the Permit Scheme has been beneficial to society even though the time and resources available to co-ordinate works on Non-Traffic Sensitive Streets is minimal.

Summary Findings

The data indicates that the Permit Scheme has had some effect on reducing traffic delay on the network.

Traffic volume in Worcestershire has risen by 2.05% which is in line with the increase of 2.05% across all of England.

There was a slight decrease of 0.09% on journey times based on the assumption that all other network outcomes are equal.

Traffic flows have increase by 1% which would have an effect on journey times.

There has been a decrease of 6% in collisions compared to the 2015 collisions and is in line with predicted trends.

Due to the increases in traffic flow there has been a decrease in traffic speed of 1% and carbon emissions have increased by 1%.

During the first year of operation; 26,919 Permit and PAA applications were received from all Promoters. This Utility total is in-line with the volume indicated by the historical Notice volumes.

During the first year of operation; 15,861 Permit and PAA applications were received from Utility Promoters. This Utility total is in-line with the volume indicated by the historical Notice volumes.

2,096 variations requests were received which is more than double the number expected.

£395,475 of Permit fee income was received. This is circa 40% less than anticipated.

£368,187 of costs were incurred. This is circa 40% less than anticipated.

Issues Identified

Difficulties during the first year of operation have been in four key areas;

1. In line with the scheme design, no fees were charged for works on Non-Traffic Sensitive Streets greatly reducing the resources available to co-ordinate this large volume of works
2. Staff recruitment
3. Not enough staff to manage the volume of Permit applications
4. Not enough staff to effectively manage Non-Traffic Sensitive Permit Applications
5. The ability to produce reports consistent with the industry's agreed indicators and measures

Conclusions

Overall, the Worcestershire Permit Scheme has been operationally designed and implemented well.

The team now attempt to co-ordinate all road and street works in Worcestershire and take the time to review each and every application and apply conditions to minimise the impact of the works on the users of the network.

Worcestershire County Council Permit Scheme

However, the fee income and the funding from internal budgets does not allow for sufficient resources to fully manage all applications and applications on Non-Traffic Sensitive Streets are not co-ordinated effectively. This reduces that ability of the team to minimise the impact of these works on society.

The Permit Scheme has delivered its core objectives and is an outstanding achievement by the team considering the reduced number of resources and lower than expected revenue.

- Volumes of Permit Applications were in-line with expectations
- Fee income was less than expected
- Costs were less than expected
- Costs and Income are well balanced
- Traffic is up 2.05%, in line with than the national trend
- Journey times have only decreased by 0.09%
- Collisions have decreased by 6%, which is better than the national trend
- The Societal Benefit to Cost Ratio was considerable higher than expected, however the lower the anticipated revenue and costs account for this
- Variations to granted Permits were greater than anticipated but were managed by the team effectively

Major works and those on Traffic Sensitive Streets are the focus of Permit team's activities.

An assessment of the impact of increasing the resources available, so that further co-ordination of works on Non-Traffic Sensitive Streets can be undertaken, may indicate that this is a desirable approach.

The introduction of the Permit Scheme has clearly led to a better control of the network and delivered an essential element of the Traffic Management Duty placed on Worcestershire County Council by the Traffic Management Act.

Recommendations

1. An assessment should be made of the impact of increasing the available resources so that further co-ordination of activities can be undertaken.
2. A Cost Benefit Analysis of the societal impact of full co-ordination of all applications on Non-Traffic Sensitive Streets should be prepared.
3. IT system improvement work and increased data recording and reporting should be undertaken.
4. Staff training and development should be a focus to ensure the skills are available to deliver these opportunities.
5. Internally agreed budgets need to be defined and monitored to ensure full recovery of all overheads and operational costs. In addition to staff overheads, these are reasonable budget figures for on-going yearly operating costs. These are the 'Additional Operational Factors' within the fees matrix.

Defined as:

- KPI Production
- Invoicing (finance support)
- IT support
- Unauthorised / Abandoned works (the cost of time not recovered from fees)
- Management Overhead (which could include training)