



# The St. Helens Council Permit Scheme for Road and Street Activities

Annual Report 12 – 2023 / 24



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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 St Helens Council (SHC) has been operating a Street Works Permit Scheme since April 2012. The Scheme operates as the St Helens Council Permit Scheme for Road and Street Activities.
- 1.1.2 The statutory 12-month Annual Review and report to DfT was completed in 2013 following the first full 12 months of operating the Permit Scheme, '*St Helens Council Annual Report 01, 2012-13*'.
- 1.1.3 The purpose of the 12-month Annual review was to;
- Demonstrate a reduction in the duration of works.
  - Demonstrate a reduction in the number of Permit applications (through an increase in collaborative working).
  - Report the monitored Key Performance Indicators (KPI 1, KPI 2, KPI 3 & KPI 7).
  - Re-evaluate the Cost Benefit Assessment to show an economic return on the investment.
  - Report the annual scheme benefit to all road users.
- 1.1.4 Annual reviews have been carried out and reported as required by the statutory guidance – at Years 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9. The Council has also carried out full reviews for intermediate Years 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11.
- 1.1.5 The introduction of the Permit Scheme reduced the average duration of works by 20% and reduced the calculated cost of delays encountered at traffic management by 33%. The calculated Scheme benefit was 4 times greater than value for money threshold required by the Department for Transport (DfT).
- 1.1.6 The performance of the Scheme through to Year 8 shows slight variation in the average duration, but generally showed the benefits to be maintained around the level achieved in the first year. Years 9 through 11 showed further large reductions in average durations for utility and highways works.
- 1.1.7 This has to a degree reduced the effect of a 50% increase in the number of utility works completed in the previous two years. However, network occupancy is at the highest level recorded since the scheme went live due to the significant increase in utility works since 2022.

## 1.2 Year 12 review

- 1.2.1 This report presents a full review of the performance during Year 12, '*St Helens Council Annual Report 12, 2023-24*'.
- 1.2.2 The objectives of the Year 12 review are to;
- Review the scheme against the stated scheme objectives.
  - Report the total number of Permit applications.



- Evaluate key performance measures (e.g. average duration of works, number by works category/traffic management type, etc.) and identify any significant changes from year 1 and the previous year.
- Report the monitored Key Performance Indicators (KPI 1, KPI 2, KPI 3 & KPI 7).
- Review the staff resource required to process applications in Year 12.

### **1.3 Report Structure**

1.3.1 Following the twelfth anniversary of the Permit Scheme in April 2023, GK-TC has been commissioned to undertake a detailed review of the operation during Year 12 and to determine whether benefits achieved since the scheme was introduced have been maintained.

1.3.2 The following chapters present the results of the review with respect to:

- Scheme objectives
- Duration of works
- Key Performance Indicators
- Staffing & resources



## 2 OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 Scheme Objectives

2.1.1 The specific objectives as set out in the 'The St Helens Council Permit Scheme for Road and Street Activities' scheme document are:

- reduce occupation of the highway to benefit all road users;
- obtain greater control of all activities on the public highway;
- minimise/avoid/manage delays to all road users;
- enhance co-ordination of all activities on the highway;
- achieve an improvement in air quality;
- enhance safety of all road users at road and street activities;
- reduce potential incidents/accidents at road activities;
- improve public perception of managing road activities;
- enhance reliability of journey times;
- enhance journey experience;
- reduce long-term damage to the highway asset;
- encourage collaborative activities between all activity promoters;
- enhance reliability of activities taking place at a particular time, especially on the strategic road network;
- promote best practices across St Helens;
- promote common activity practices across the region to ensure ease of operation for activity promoters;
- enhanced cross-boundary co-operation;
- demonstrate parity for all activity promoters;
- reduce instances of customer complaints regarding road and street activities;
- reduce the impact of noise on residents by having greater control of timing of activities.

2.1.2 Many of these objectives are subjective in nature, but where they can be objectively evaluated, the annual review will report on the impact towards achieving the stated objectives, for example;

- The reduction in occupancy of the highway to benefit all road users by reducing works duration (Chapter 3)
- Minimise/avoid/manage delays to all road users by reducing works duration and providing more effective control of the appropriate traffic management practices (Chapter 3)
- Demonstrating parity for all activity promoters by presenting approval and refusal rates for all applications (Chapter 4)



2.1.3 Others will require to be evaluated over several years of the scheme to identify changes and progress towards the objective, for example;

- Demonstrate a year-on-year increase in collaborative working between works promoters
- Enhancing reliability of activities taking place at a particular time, especially on the strategic road network
- Reducing long-term damage to the highway asset
- Enhancing safety of all road users at road and street activities





### 3 PERMIT APPLICATIONS

#### 3.1 Methodology

3.1.1 Data sources available for this review are:

- Permit Scheme work stops notices, April 2023 - March 2024
- Previous year Permit Scheme work stops notices, April 2012 - March 2023

3.1.2 This review assesses the year-on-year change in the number of Permit applications and to monitor the key performance indicators. The purpose of the review is to identify any significant changes from the previous years. Any large changes will be investigated in more detail and the potential impact on the Scheme performance and value will be considered.

3.1.3 The key metrics are compared with the previous year, to monitor changes and avoid a small creeping increase going unnoticed for several years.

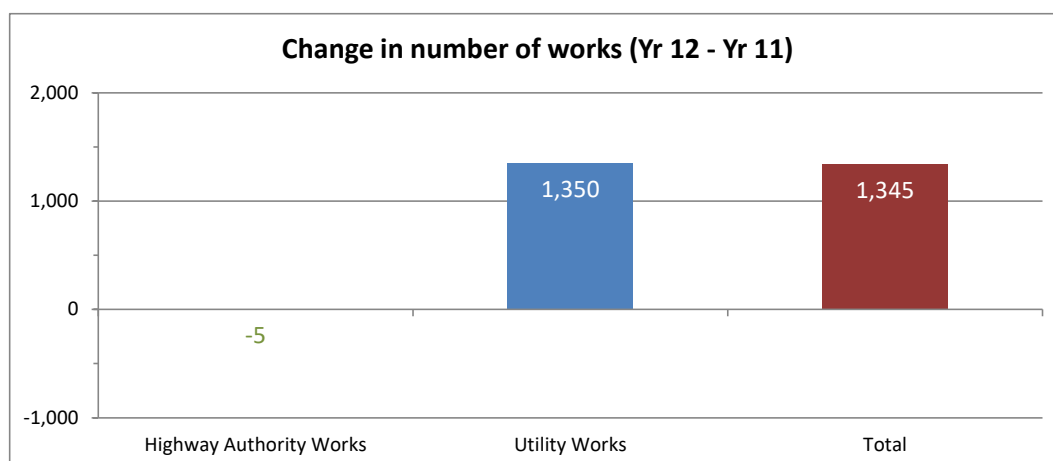
#### 3.2 All works

3.2.1 The following series of charts and tables present a comparison of the Year 12 2023-24 data with the previous two years.

3.2.2 The total number of works completed and a breakdown by highway authority and utility company is shown in Table 1 and the accompanying chart.

**Table 1 Number of works completed**

PROMOTER TYPE	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)
Highway Authority Works	5,814	4,960	4,955	-5
Utility Works	4,302	5,443	6,793	1,350
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,748</b>	<b>1,345</b>



3.2.3 The number of works completed in Year 12 has increased overall by 13% compared with the previous year. Highway authority works have been very stable over the last two years.

3.2.4 Utility works increased by 25% from 5,443 to 6,793 in Year 12. This follows a similar increase in Year 11 and represents a 58% increase over the two-year period from 2021-22.

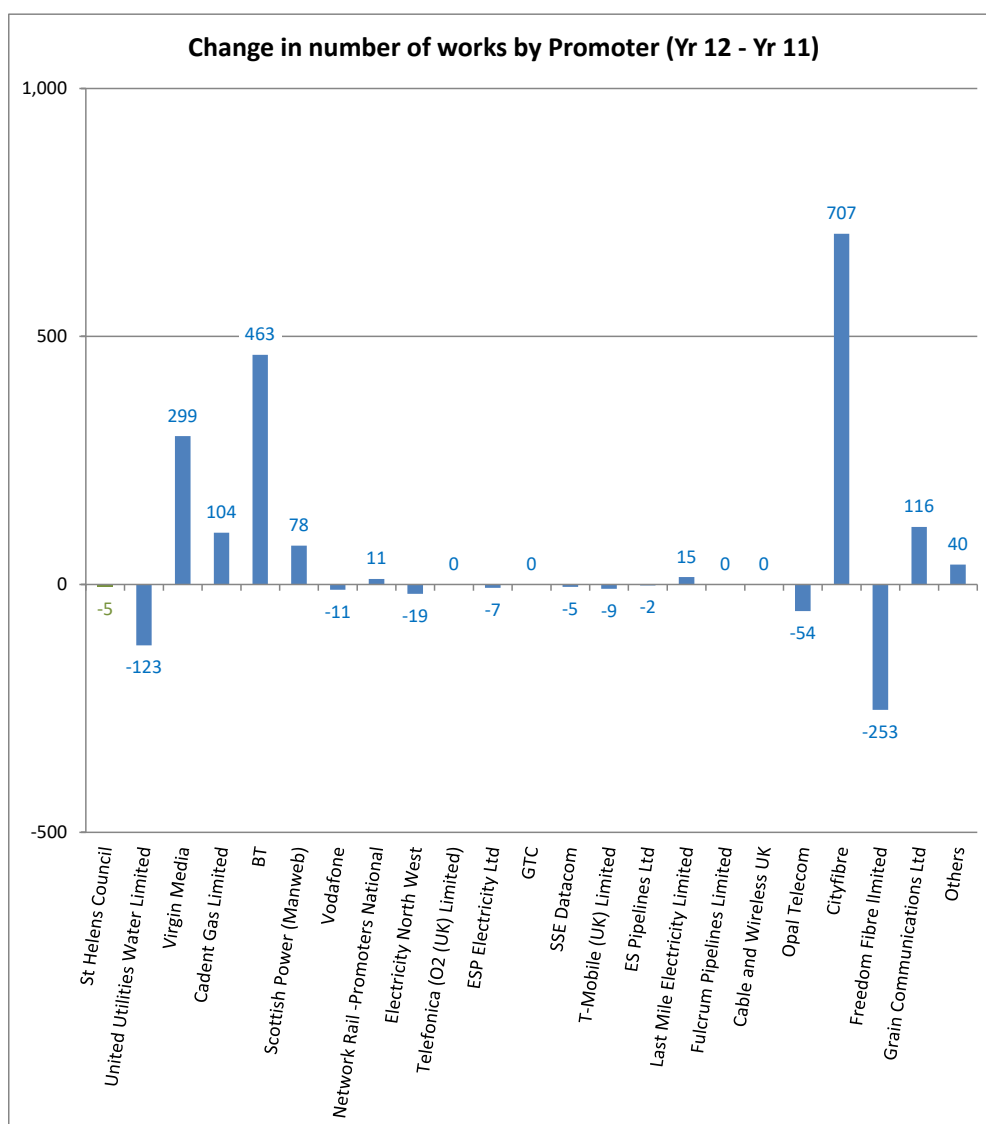


- 3.2.5 The average number of utility works completed in each of the first 10 years is 4,300, so the increase evident in the eleventh and twelfth years is a significant change since the inception of the scheme in 2012.
- 3.2.6 The effect of the increase is more pronounced given dip in the number of utility works completed in Years 8 and 9, which were approximately 15% lower than average possibly due to COVID lockdown measures during 2020 and 2021.
- 3.2.7 The change in number of works completed by works promoter is presented in Table 2 and the accompanying chart.

**Table 2 Change by works promoter**

PROMOTER	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)
St Helens Council	5,814	4,960	4,955	-5
United Utilities Water Limited	1,615	1,712	1,589	-123
Virgin Media	701	764	1,063	299
Cadent Gas Limited	472	362	466	104
BT	583	1,041	1,504	463
Scottish Power (Manweb)	401	421	499	78
Vodafone	13	17	6	-11
Network Rail -Promoters National	16	12	23	11
Electricity North West	152	120	101	-19
Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited)				
ESP Electricity Ltd	4	7		-7
GTC	1			
SSE Datacom	11	7	2	-5
T-Mobile (UK) Limited	39	21	12	-9
ES Pipelines Ltd	3	2		-2
Last Mile Electricity Limited	7	9	24	15
Fulcrum Pipelines Limited	4			
Cable and Wireless UK				
Opal Telecom	181	71	17	-54
Cityfibre		372	1,079	707
Freedom Fibre Limited		295	42	-253
Grain Communications Ltd		64	180	116
Others	99	146	186	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,748</b>	<b>1,345</b>





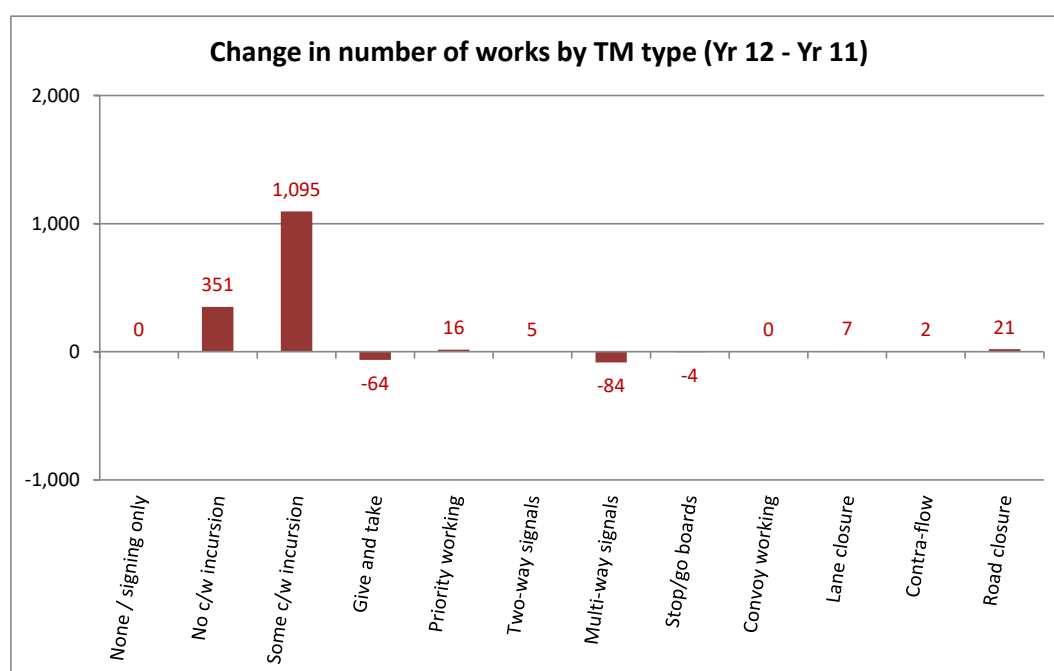
- 3.2.8 The chart shows that most of the increase in the last year is a result of works completed by telecoms promoters. With Virgin Media, BT and Cityfibre contributing an additional 1,469 works completed compared with the previous year.
- 3.2.9 Telecoms promoters account for 4,024 works, 60% of all works completed by external works promoters in the twelfth year. This is a 50% increase over the 2,650 utility works recorded in Year 11.
- 3.2.10 The summary analysis in this section is presented for works completed by all works promoters. A more detailed analysis is presented in Appendix A for all works, and separately for highway authority works and utility company works.



3.2.11 Table 3 and the accompanying chart presents a comparison of the change in number of all works completed by traffic management type.

**Table 3 Number of applications by traffic management type**

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TYPE	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)
None / signing only				
No c/w incursion	857	654	1,005	351
Some c/w incursion	2,503	3,453	4,548	1,095
Give and take	5,711	4,955	4,891	-64
Priority working	8	4	20	16
Two-way signals	405	431	436	5
Multi-way signals	326	511	427	-84
Stop/go boards	59	90	86	-4
Convoy working				
Lane closure	115	140	147	7
Contra-flow	1	2	4	2
Road closure	131	163	184	21
Temp Obstruction 15 min Delay			10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,758</b>	<b>1,355</b>



3.2.12 Year 12 saw a further increase in the number of works recorded as operating with no or some carriageway incursion. This is consistent with the large number of additional telecoms works mostly related to broadband fibre roll out and typically taking place on or adjacent to footways in residential areas.

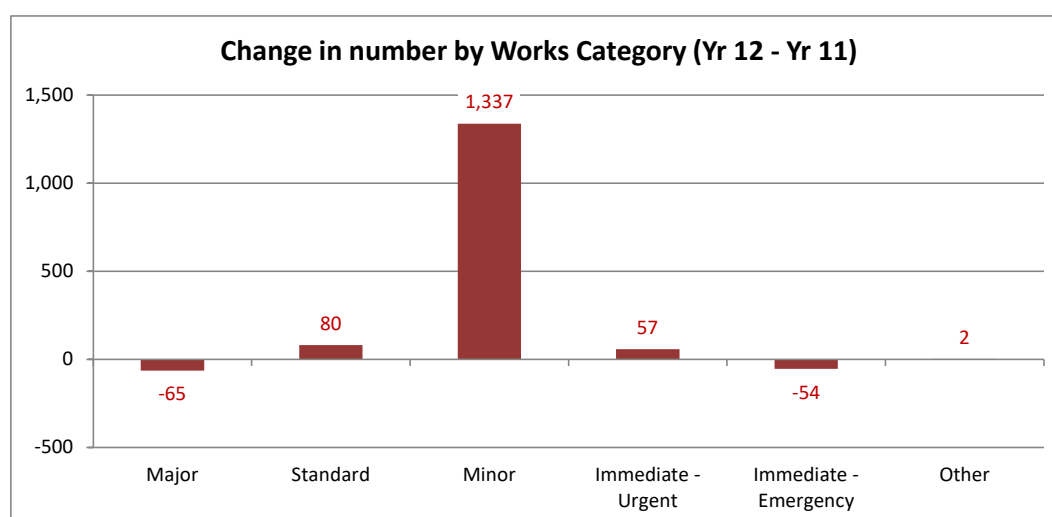
3.2.13 The change in number of works operating with other traffic management types is relatively small and reflects typical year-on-year changes.



3.2.14 The total number of works completed by Works Category is shown in Table 4 and the accompanying chart.

**Table 4 Applications by works category**

WORKS CATEGORY	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)
Major	291	335	270	-65
Standard	427	582	662	80
Minor	2,874	3,746	5,083	1,337
Immediate - Urgent	6,243	5,486	5,543	57
Immediate - Emergency	281	254	200	-54
Other			2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,760</b>	<b>1,357</b>



3.2.15 Categories other than Minor show a change of less than +/- 20% compared with the previous year. Minor works have increased by 35% with an additional 1,337 Minor works completed in Year 12.

3.2.16 Table 5 shows a comparison of the average duration for all works completed in Year 11.

**Table 5 Average works duration**

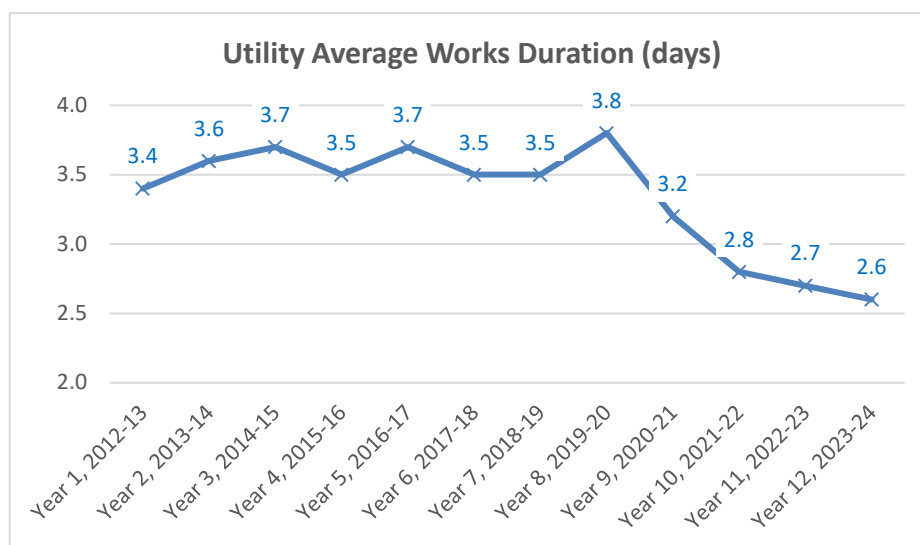
DURATION	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)
Average duration (days)	2.0	2.3	2.2	-0.1
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>20,293</b>	<b>24,015</b>	<b>26,285</b>	<b>2,270</b>

3.2.17 The overall average works duration has reduced from 2.3 in Year 11 to 2.2 days last year.

3.2.18 While the number of days worked in Year 12 has increased, the reduction in occupancy means the 13% increase in works completed only resulted in a 9.5% increase in occupancy.



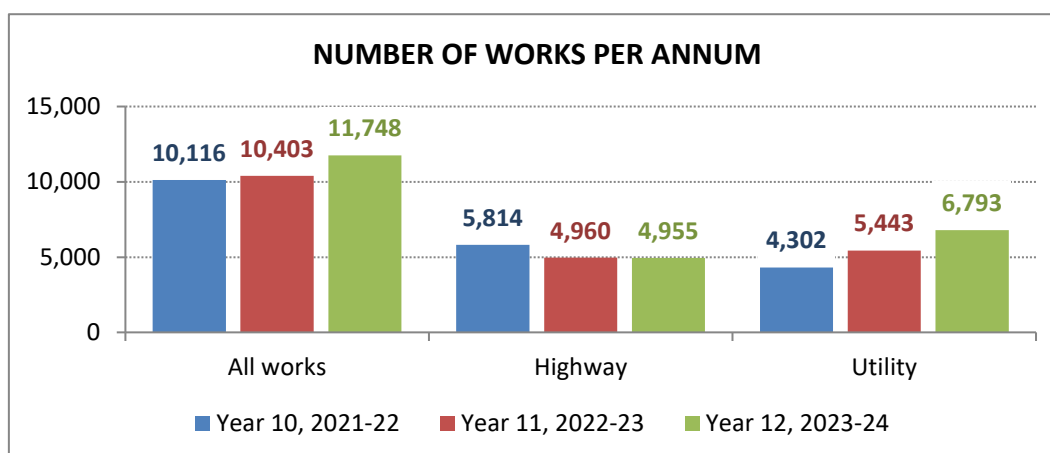
3.2.19 The average duration of utility works has continued to reduce steadily over the last four years, with last year's average the lowest recorded since the start of the scheme (see Figure 1).



**Figure 1 Annual average duration of utility works**

### 3.3 Scheme Benefits

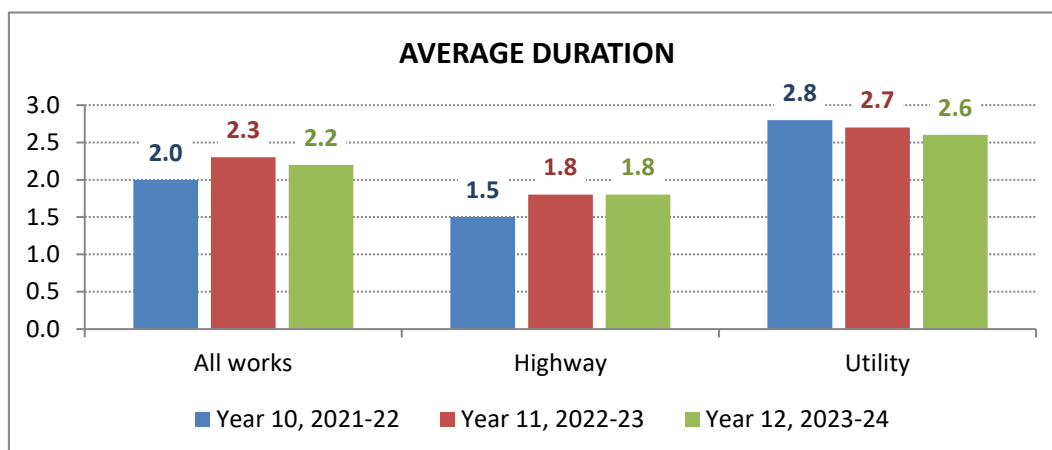
3.3.1 Figure 2 presents the number of works per annum during the last three years 2021-24.



**Figure 2 Number of works completed annually**

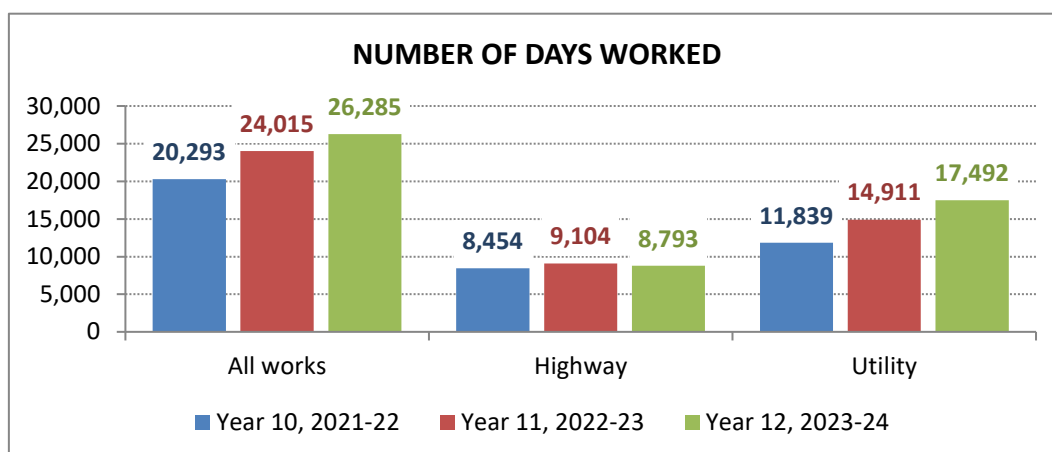
3.3.2 Utility works have increased by 25% compared with the number of works completed in the previous year. The number of utility works completed in Year 12 is almost 60% higher than the average number completed in each of the first 10 years.

3.3.3 A comparison of the average duration of works completed is presented in Figure 3.



**Figure 3 Average duration of completed works**

- 3.3.4 The average duration of utility works continues to show a downward trend by the twelfth year, reaching the lowest level recorded since the scheme was introduced in 2012. The average duration of highway works increased last two years due to the reduction in the number of shorter duration Immediate works.
- 3.3.5 The total occupancy of the network (total number of days worked in any year) is compared in Figure 4.



**Figure 4 Number of days worked per annum**

- 3.3.6 The total number of days worked has increased by 17% compared with Year 11 but is still 30% lower than the occupancy recorded in Year 1.
- 3.3.7 While the number of days recorded for utility works increased by 17%, this must be considered in the context of an overall 25% increase in the number of utility works completed.
- 3.3.8 The analysis has demonstrated that the significant benefits achieved in the first year of the Permit Scheme have been substantially improved in Year 12 by driving down works durations across all permit activities.



## 4 KPI MONITORING

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The four Key Performance Indicators committed for inclusion in the annual review are;
- **KPI 1**, the number of Permit and Permit Variation applications received, and a breakdown of the number granted and refused
  - **KPI 2**, the number of conditions applied by condition type
  - **KPI 3**, the number of approved Permit variations (extensions)
  - **KPI 7**, the number of inspections carried out to monitor conditions
- 4.1.2 The above data should be presented separately for highway authority and utility company applications to demonstrate parity in the application of the Scheme.

### 4.2 KPI review

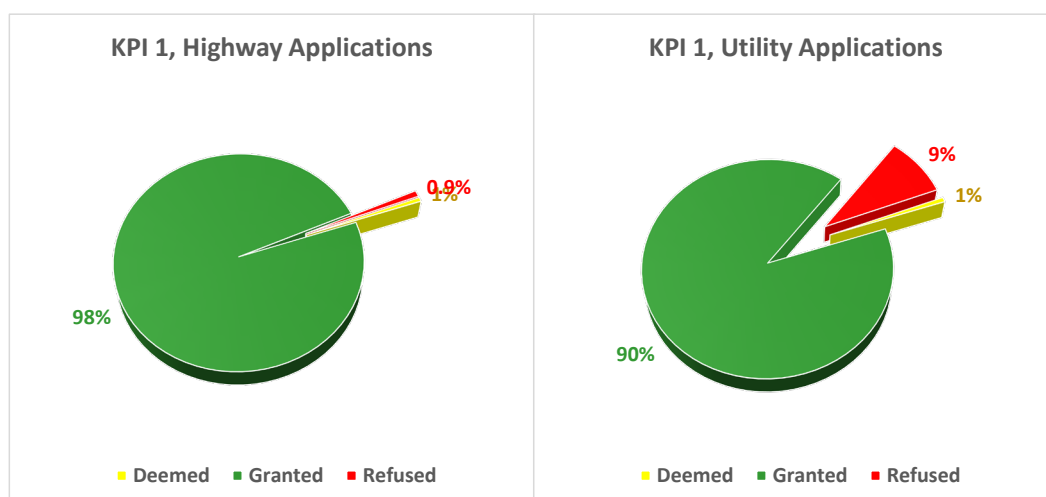
- 4.2.1 **KPI 1** – the number and proportion of Permit and Permit Variation applications received and refused.
- 4.2.2 Table 6 shows the number of permits granted, deemed and refused for highway authority and public utility works promoters.

**Table 6 KPI 1 Permit and Permit Variation Applications**

Promoter	Granted	Deemed	Refused	% Refused
Highway authority	5,243	32	48	0.9%
Utility	9,878	73	979	9.0%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>15,121</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1,027</b>	<b>6.3%</b>

- 4.2.3 The number of all permit and permit variation applications submitted in Year 12 was 8% higher than the previous year and follows a 6% increase recorded in Year 11.
- 4.2.4 The proportion of all applications refused is similar, with 6% of all applications refused compared with 7% recorded in Year 11. The refusal rate for utility works is slightly lower at 9% compared with 11% in Year 11.
- 4.2.5 The number of permits deemed increased to 105 from 55.
- 4.2.6 The proportion of permit and permit variation applications granted, refused and deemed are shown in Figure 5.





**Figure 5: KPI 1, Permit and Variation Applications Refused**

- 4.2.7 979 of the applications refused were submitted by utility works promoters.
- 4.2.8 48 applications for highway works were refused; a refusal rate of 0.9%. The refusal rate for highway applications is lower as the department sits together in the same office, so liaise closely before applications are submitted.
- 4.2.9 The number of permit refusal codes issued is shown in Table 7.

**Table 7 KPI 1 Permit Refusal Codes**

Permit Refusal Codes (PRC)		Utility	Highway	All
Refusal - RC10	Missing Information	56	0	56
Refusal - RC11	Condition not provided	9	0	9
Refusal - RC12	TM not received	3	0	3
Refusal - RC20	Incorrect details on permit	314	25	339
Refusal - RC21	Incorrect primary recipient	0	0	0
Refusal - RC22	Location Issues	23	1	24
Refusal - RC23	Conflict Information	2	0	2
Refusal - RC30	Co-ordination Issues	21	0	21
Refusal - RC31	Conflict of works	251	15	266
Refusal - RC32	Timing of works	18	0	18
Refusal - RC33	Collaboration/Co-ordination	2	0	2
Refusal - RC40	Lack of approval	100	2	102
Refusal - RC41	Incorrect TM	3	0	3
Refusal - RC42	Early Start Agreement	0	0	0
Refusal - RC43	S58 Approval needed	7	0	7
Refusal - RC44	Duration	94	0	94
Refusal - RC50	Other	75	5	80
Number of refusal codes issued		978	48	1,026
Number of permit applications refused		979	48	1,027

- 4.2.10 The data shows many permit applications were refused for a conflict with works already taking place (RC31) and for incorrect details submitted (RC20). These two refusal codes amount more than 50% of refusals given. Other reasons for refusal include missing



information (RC10), a lack of approval for traffic management proposals (RC40) and for over long estimated works duration (RC44).

4.2.11 With regards to KPI 1, the high amount of granted permits does not reflect the actual amount of work involved by St Helens permit coordinators, as they only refuse permits where the activity promoters fail to update the permit. Permit modification requests are issued in the first instance in an attempt to avoid permit refusals.

4.2.12 Table 8 shows the number of permit modification requests (PMR) issued in the last year.

**Table 8 KPI 1 Permit Modification Requests**

Permit Modification Requests (PMR)		Utility	Highway	All
PMR - RC10	Missing Information	10	2	12
PMR - RC11	Condition not provided	11	0	11
PMR - RC12	TM not received	0	0	0
PMR - RC20	Incorrect details on permit	47	1	48
PMR - RC21	Incorrect primary recipient	0	0	0
PMR - RC22	Location Issues	2	0	2
PMR - RC23	Conflict Information	0	0	0
PMR - RC30	Co-ordination Issues	3	0	3
PMR - RC31	Conflict of works	4	0	4
PMR - RC32	Timing of works	1	0	1
PMR - RC33	Collaboration/Co-ordination	0	0	0
PMR - RC40	Lack of approval	1	0	1
PMR - RC41	Incorrect TM	0	0	0
PMR - RC42	Early Start Agreement	0	0	0
PMR - RC43	S58 Approval needed	0	0	0
PMR - RC44	Duration	131	0	131
PMR - RC50	Other	2	0	2
Number of PMR issued		212	3	215
Number of permit applications granted		9,878	5,243	15,121

4.2.13 The data shows the permit officers requested the inclusion of missing conditions or other information required, the correction of details submitted on the permit application and a change in proposed works duration.

4.2.14 **KPI 2** – number of permit conditions applied by conditions type.

4.2.15 Table 9 shows the total number of each standard condition applied to highway authority and public utility works promoters.

**Table 9 KPI 2 Permit Conditions**

All Conditions	Utility	Highway	All
TOTAL	15,692	1,495	17,187
	91%	9%	

4.2.16 The number of conditions applied in Year 12 has increased by 29% compared with the previous year. This follows a 40 % increase recorded in the previous year.



4.2.17 The number of highway conditions has increased by 57% changing ratio between utility and highway permits to 91:9 (was 94:6 in Year 11).

4.2.18 A breakdown listing the number of conditions submitted is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10 KPI 2 Number and Type of Conditions Applied**

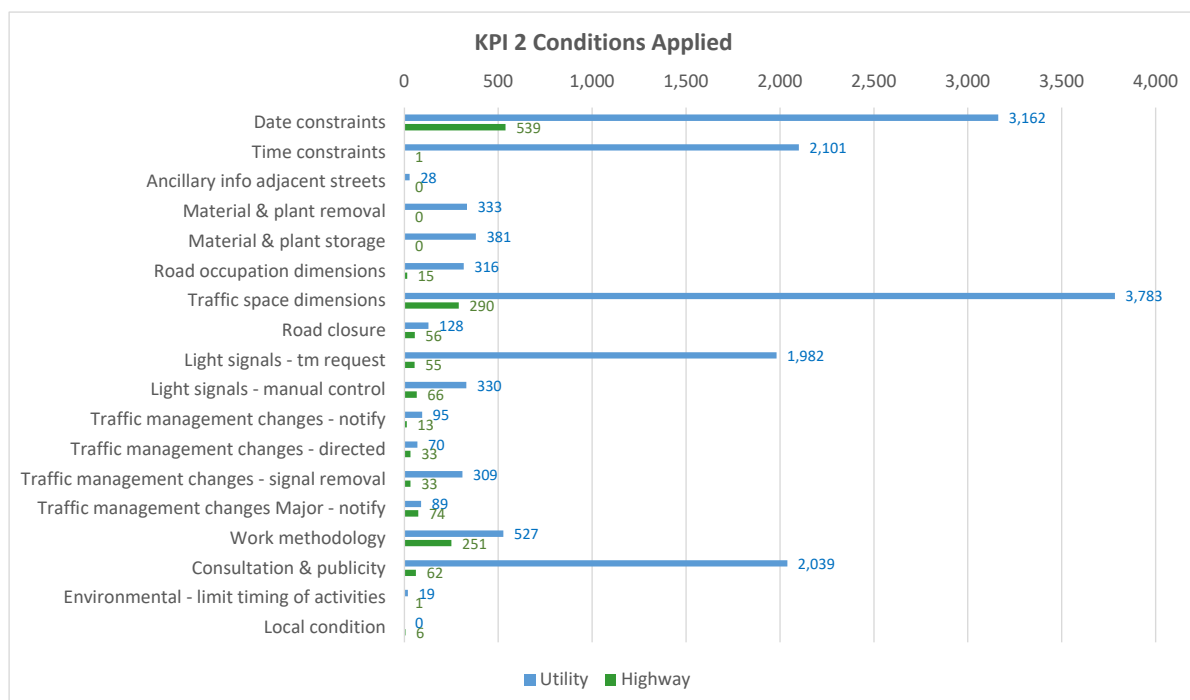
Condition	Condition Description	Utility	Highway	All
NCT02a	Date constraints	3,162	539	3,701
NCT02b	Time constraints	2,101	1	2,102
NCT03	Ancillary info adjacent streets	28	0	28
NCT04a	Material & plant removal	333	0	333
NCT04b	Material & plant storage	381	0	381
NCT05a	Road occupation dimensions	316	15	331
NCT06a	Traffic space dimensions	3,783	290	4,073
NCT07a	Road closure	128	56	184
NCT08a	Light signals - tm request	1,982	55	2,037
NCT08b	Light signals - manual control	330	66	396
NCT09a	Traffic management changes - notify	95	13	108
NCT09b	Traffic management changes - directed	70	33	103
NCT09c	Traffic management changes - signal removal	309	33	342
NCT09d	Traffic management changes Major - notify	89	74	163
NCT10a	Work methodology	527	251	778
NCT11b	Consultation & publicity	2,039	62	2,101
NCT12a	Environmental - limit timing of activities	19	1	20
NCT13	Local condition	0	6	6
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,692</b>	<b>1,495</b>	<b>17,187</b>

4.2.19 The table above excludes mandatory conditions NCT01a and NCT01b which relate to permit duration.

4.2.20 The biggest change from the previous year is a near doubling of the number of utility works with condition NCT06a traffic space dimensions. Otherwise, the spread of conditions is similar to previous years.

4.2.21 Utility works account for a larger proportion of NCT10a and NCT11b relating to work methodology and consultation & publicity, respectively.

4.2.22 The number applied by condition type are shown in Figure 6. The blue bars show public utility permits and green show highway authority permits.



**Figure 6: KPI 2, Conditions Applied**

4.2.23 **KPI 3** - the number of extensions granted and refused, for all promoters and for statutory undertakers only.

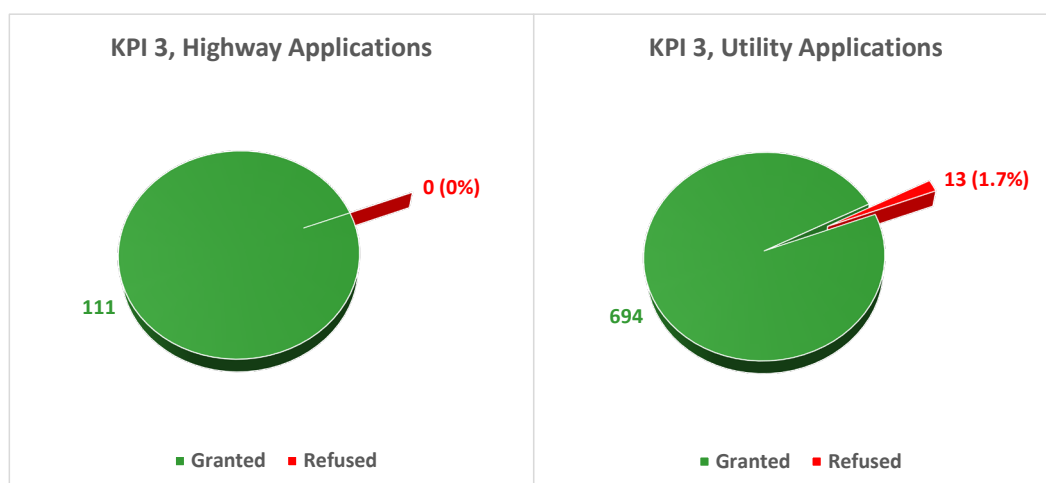
4.2.24 Table 11 shows the number of requests to extend the permit duration, and the number granted and refused.

**Table 11 KPI 3 Duration Extension Requests**

Promoter	Applications	Granted	Refused	% Refused
Highway authority	111	111	0	0.0%
Utility	707	694	13	1.8%
<b>ALL</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.6%</b>

4.2.25 The number of extension requests submitted for both highway works and utility works reduced by 15% from the previous year. The number submitted by utilities reduced from 840 to 707 in Year 12. Extension requests for highway permits reduced from 134 to 111 over the same period.

4.2.26 Only 13 applications to extend the duration of a permit refused; 1 fewer than the previous year.



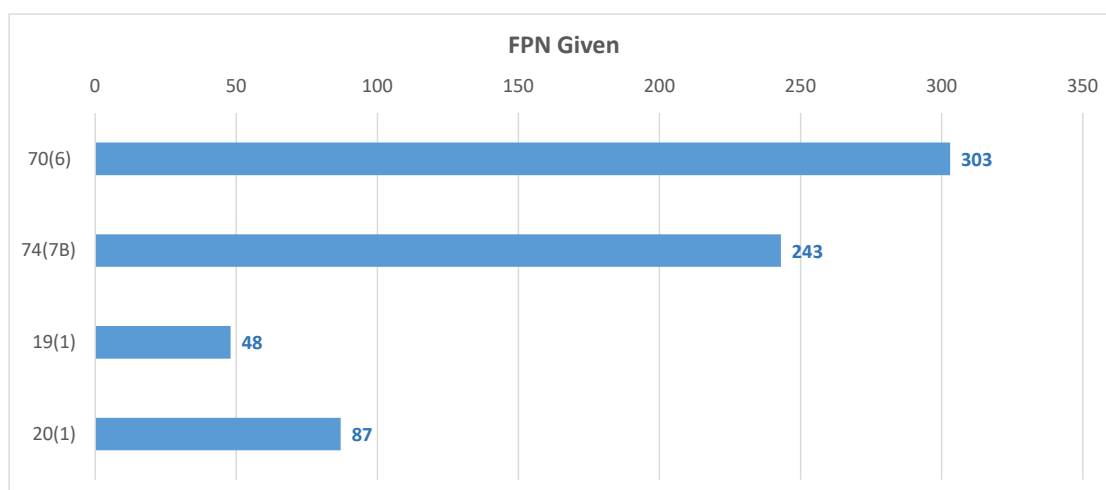
**Figure 7: KPI 3, Permit Extensions Refused**

- 4.2.27 In general, permit extension requests are not refused, but are granted and any requests that are not deemed to be acceptable are duration challenged back to the original duration.
- 4.2.28 **KPI 7** - the number of inspections carried out to monitor conditions.
- 4.2.29 Table 12 shows the number of inspections carried out to monitor permit conditions.

**Table 12 Permit Inspections**

Permit Condition Inspections	Passed	Non-Compliant	Abortive	Number of Inspections	Fail %
Highway authority	1	3	0	4	75%
Utility	457	268	1	726	37%
ALL	458	271	1	730	37%

- 4.2.30 730 permit inspections were recorded last year, compared with 1,233 in Year 11.
- 4.2.31 The failure rate reduced from 59% to 37%. Only 271 non-compliant inspections were recorded in Year 12, compared with 722 the previous year.
- 4.2.32 135 Fixed Penalty Notices for a breach of permit conditions were given during the course of the year; 48 for working without a permit (19(1)) and 87 for a breach of permit conditions (20(1)).
- 4.2.33 This is 25 fewer than recorded for the previous year, when 160 FPN were given for non-compliance.
- 4.2.34 The number of FPN given for Section 74 overstays reduced from 432 to 243 and Section 70 failure to provide registration details also reduced from 358 to 303.
- 4.2.35 The number of fixed penalty notices given by type are shown in Figure 8.



**Figure 8: KPI 7, FPN Given**

4.2.36 Table 13 shows the number of inspections carried out in each year since the introduction of the Permit Scheme in 2012.

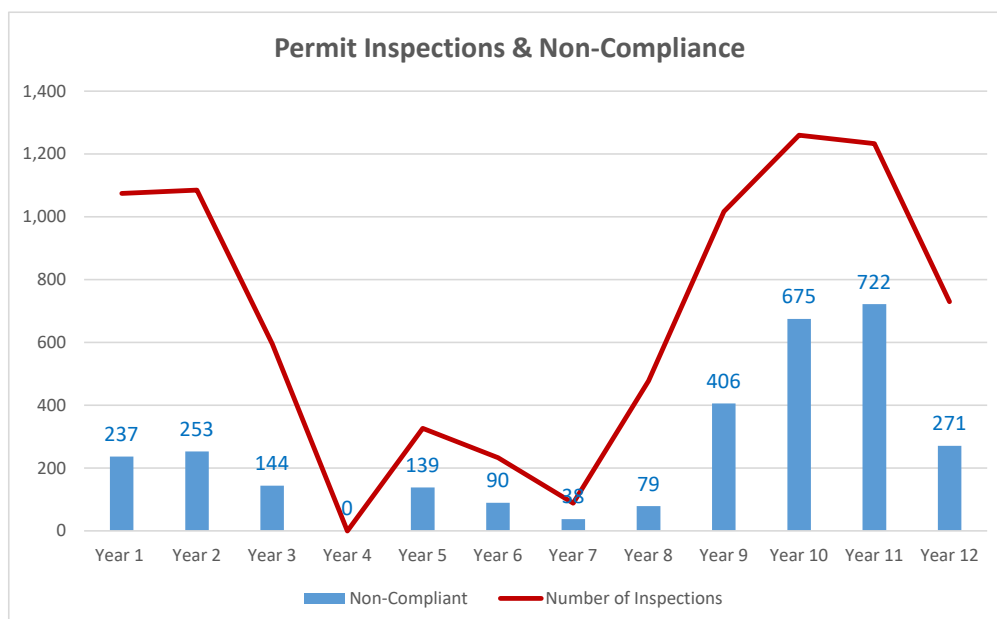
**Table 13 Permit Inspections – Annual Comparison**

Permit Condition Inspections	Passed	Non-Compliant	Abortive	Number of Inspections	Fail %
Year 1	838	237	0	1,075	22%
Year 2	831	253	1	1,085	23%
Year 3	451	144	1	596	24%
Year 4	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
Year 5	188	139	0	327	43%
Year 6	143	90	0	233	39%
Year 7	51	38	0	89	43%
Year 8	399	79	0	478	17%
Year 9	611	406	0	1,017	40%
Year 10	585	675	0	1,260	54%
Year 11	511	722	0	1,233	59%
Year 12	458	271	1	730	37%

4.2.37 Following an increase in recorded permit inspections between Years 9 and 11, the number recorded has reduced by 40% in Year 12.

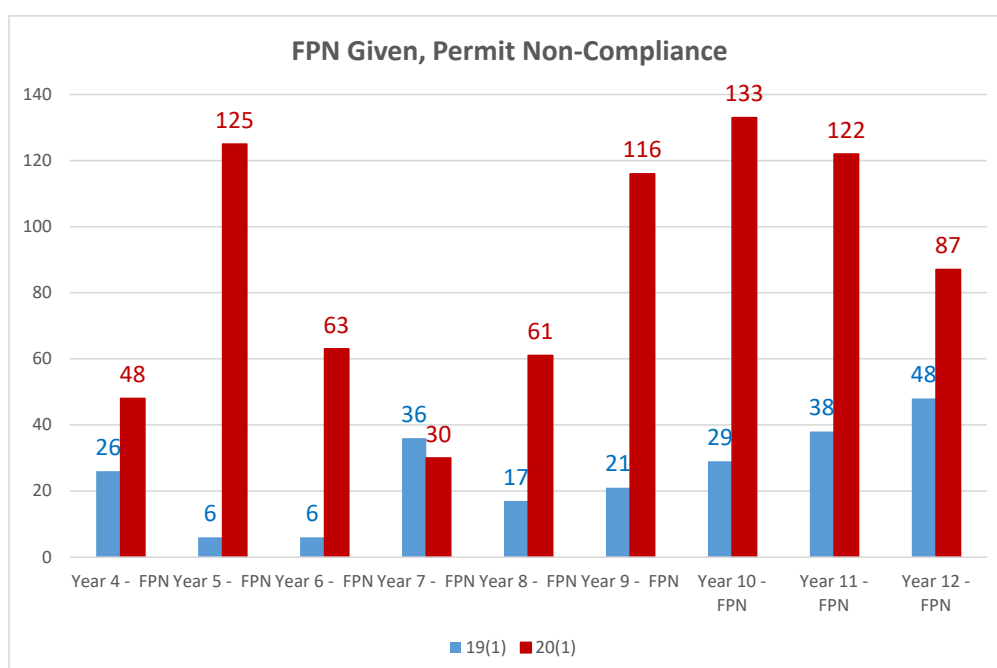
4.2.38 The number of non-compliant permits found during inspection has reduced from between 675 and 722 in the two previous years to 271 in Year 12. This pattern is highlighted in Figure 9.





**Figure 9: Number of Permit Inspections & Non-Compliance**

4.2.39 Over the same period, the number of FPN given following breaches of permit conditions has followed a similar pattern, with an increase over the previous three years then a reduction in Year 12.



**Figure 10: FPN Given, Permit Non-compliance**

### 4.3 Conclusions

4.3.1 The analysis demonstrates that only a small proportion of permit and permit variation applications are refused.

4.3.2 The number of all permit and permit variation applications by statutory undertakers refused has reduced slightly to 9%.



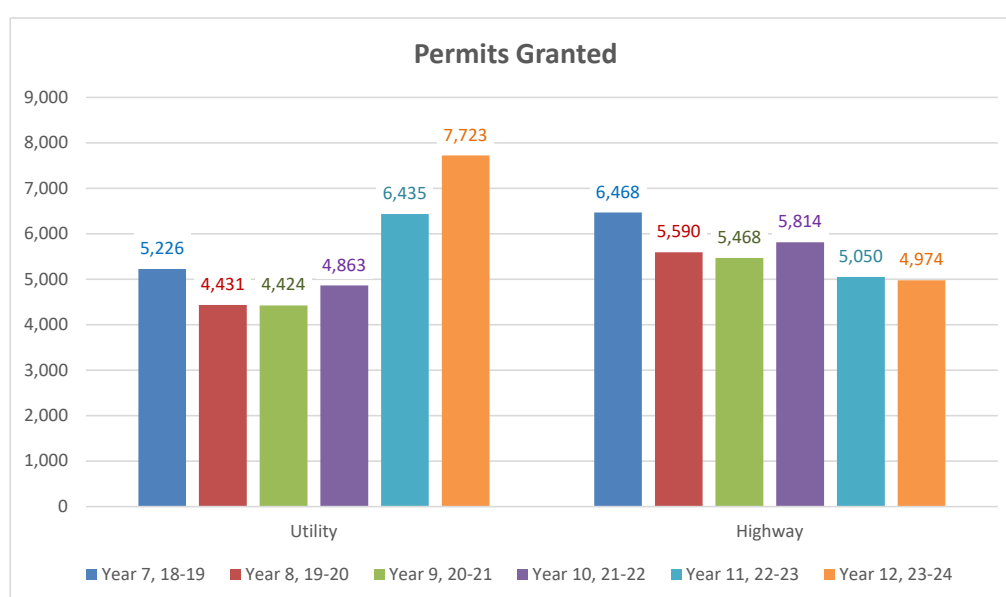
- 4.3.3 The number of extension requests submitted reduced despite an increase in number of permits granted. The number submitted by utilities reduced from 840 to 707 in Year 12. Extension requests for highway permits reduced from 134 to 111 over the same period.
- 4.3.4 135 Fixed Penalty Notices for a breach of permit conditions were given during the course of the year; 48 for working without a permit (19(1)) and 87 for a breach of permit conditions (20(1)). This is 25 fewer than recorded for the previous year, when 160 FPN were given for non-compliance.
- 4.3.5 Following an increase in recorded permit inspections between Years 9 and 11, the number recorded has reduced by 40% in Year 12. The number of non-compliant permits found during inspection has reduced from between 675 and 722 in the two previous years to 271 in Year 12.



## 5 STAFFING & RESOURCE

### 5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 The DfT Fees Matrix used to estimate staff numbers and set the permit fee charges for the original CBA business case, has been re-run with the actual number of permit applications granted in Year 12, to determine whether the staff numbers forecast in the business case are still appropriate.
- 5.1.2 Overall, the number of works completed in Year 12 is lower than originally forecast in the 2010 business case, at 12,697 compared with 14,209 forecast in 2010.
- 5.1.3 Utility permits granted have increased significantly in the last two years from under 5,000 to 6,435 in Year 11 and then 7,723 last year. Highway works have reduced from 10,281 in the first year to 4,974 in Year 12.
- 5.1.4 The number of permits granted in each of the last six years is shown in Figure 11.



**Figure 11: Number of Permits Granted**

- 5.1.5 The ratio of highway:utility works has changed from 72:28 in the first year to around 39:61 Year 12.
- 5.1.6 The assessment is based on the following inputs:
- 7,723 permits granted for utility works promoters (an increase of 1,288 from Year 11)
  - 4,974 permits granted for highway authority promoters (a reduction of 76 from Year 11 and more than 50% lower than the 10,281 forecast in 2010 CBA)
  - Permit variation applications for utility works granted at 28% of total permits granted

### 5.2 Staff Resource

- 5.2.1 The DfT Fees Matrix calculates the number of staff required to process the granted permit applications.



- 5.2.2 The original business case assessment carried out for the Cost Benefit Assessment forecast the number of staff required to process the estimated number of permit applications at 9.0 full time equivalent (FTE) staff (Table 14).

**Table 14 CBA business case forecast, 2010-11**

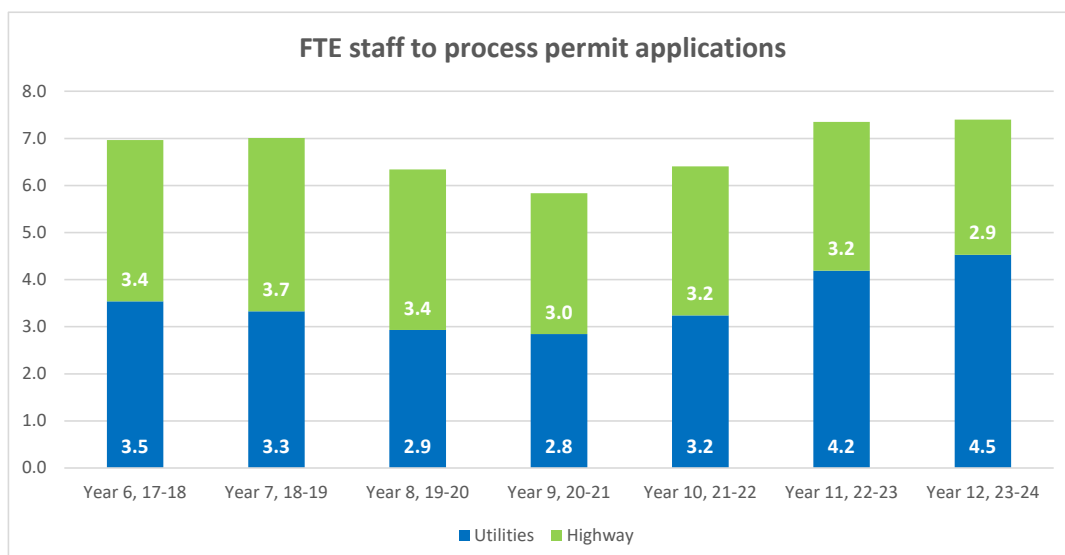
PERSONNEL LEVEL	All Works	Utilities
Street Works Officer	4.1	1.2
Street Works Co-ordinator	3.5	1.0
Traffic Manager	1.4	0.4
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>8.99</b>	<b>2.56</b>

- 5.2.3 The high number of staff required was due to the large number of highway works notices recorded before the permit scheme was introduced. 2.6 FTE staff were calculated to be required to process utility applications.
- 5.2.4 Using the actual number of utility and highway authority permit applications recorded in Year 12, the same Fees Matrix spreadsheet calculates the total number of FTE staff requirement at 7.4 (Table 15).

**Table 15 Year 12 staff resource, 2023-24**

PERSONNEL LEVEL	All Works	Utilities
Street Works Officer	3.4	2.1
Street Works Co-ordinator	2.8	1.7
Traffic Manager	1.2	0.7
<b>Total employees</b>	<b>7.40</b>	<b>4.53</b>

- 5.2.5 The number of staff required to process utility permits in Year 12 increased from 4.2 to 4.5 from the previous year. This was a result of the 20% increase in the number of permit applications granted.
- 5.2.6 The number of staff required to process highway applications has been relatively steady at between 3 and 3.5 FTE over the last 6 years.
- 5.2.7 The number of FTE staff required and calculated using the DfT fees matrix spreadsheet for the number of permits granted in each year since Year 6 is shown in Figure 12.



**Figure 12: FTE staff resource, Years 6 to 12, 2017-24**

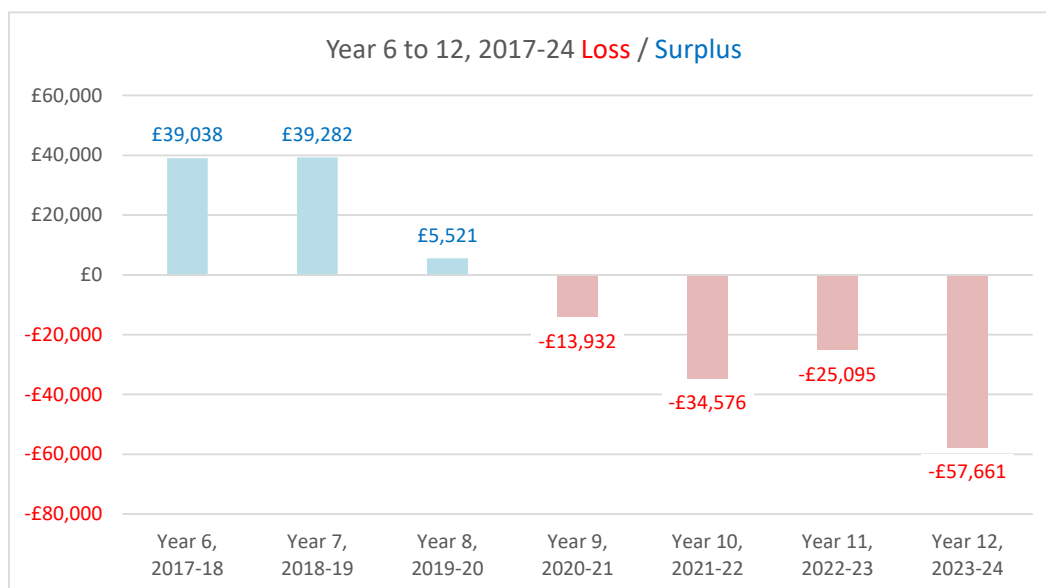
- 5.2.8 Other than an increase of 1 to 1.3 FTE to process utility permit applications in Years 11 and 12, the number of staff has been relatively consistent over the last six years.

### 5.3 Operating Cost

- 5.3.1 Using the same Fees Matrix spreadsheet, the cost to process all permit applications granted in Year 12 is £932,563.
- 5.3.2 The cost to process utility permits granted is £594,276. This is broken down as £443,648 for staff costs to process utility permit applications granted, £76,124 for the additional fees charged for permit variations and a surcharge towards the cost of allowable overheads recovering £74,503. The increase in the number of utility permits granted has over-recovered the utilities' share of the allowable overheads by £20,829.
- 5.3.3 The operating cost to process utility permit applications has increased by nearly £84,000 compared with the previous year.

### 5.4 Fee Income

- 5.4.1 Permit fee income in Year 12 was £515,786, an increase of £44,755 on the previous year. This follows an increase of £117,812 in Year 11 from a fee income of £353,219 billed in the tenth year.
- 5.4.2 The total charge for granted permits was £522,278 with adjustments for discounts and incentives reducing the fees billed by £6,492.
- 5.4.3 The calculated annual loss or surplus in each year between 2017 and 2024 is shown in Figure 13.



**Figure 13: Annual Loss or Surplus, Years 6 to 12, 2017-24**

- 5.4.4 The analysis shows that after adjusting the calculated cost to allow for the over-recovery of allowable costs (£20,829) the scheme reported a loss of £57,661 or 11% of operating costs.
- 5.4.5 Following surpluses in the first three years since permit fees were adjusted in 2017 the scheme has been operating at a loss since Year 9.
- 5.4.6 Since the accumulated loss over the last 6 years is less than 4% of the fee income billed over the same period, it is recommended that the Council continue to monitor permit fee income and operating costs annually with a view to adjusting permit fees if losses continue to increase.

***Recommendation Yr12-01: Continue to monitor permit fee income and operating costs annually and consider adjusting permit fees if losses continue to increase year-on-year.***





## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

### **6.1 Summary**

- 6.1.1 St Helens Council (SHC) has been operating a Street Works Permit Scheme since April 2012. The Scheme operates as the St Helens Council Permit Scheme for Road and Street Activities.
- 6.1.2 Annual reviews have been carried out and reported as required by the statutory guidance – at Years 1, 2, 3, 6 and 9. The Council has also carried out full reviews for intermediate Years 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11.
- 6.1.3 The introduction of the Permit Scheme reduced the average duration of works by 20% and reduced the calculated cost of delays encountered at traffic management by 33%. The calculated Scheme benefit was 4 times greater than value for money threshold required by the Department for Transport (DfT).

### **6.2 Year 12 Review**

- 6.2.1 Year 12 shows a further incremental reduction in average duration of utility works, to 2.6 days overall from a high of 3.8 days recorded in Year 8. This is the lowest average duration since the introduction of the scheme in 2012.
- 6.2.2 While the total number of days worked has increased by over 2,000 or 17% compared with Year 11, the total is still 30% lower than the occupancy recorded in Year 1.
- 6.2.3 The analysis has demonstrated that the significant benefits achieved in the first year of the Permit Scheme have been substantially improved in Year 12 by driving down works durations across all permit activities.

### **6.3 Permit Fees**

- 6.3.1 Permit fee income in Year 12 was £515,786, an increase of £44,755 on the previous year. This follows an increase of £117,812 in Year 11 from a fee income of £353,219 billed in the tenth year.
- 6.3.2 The analysis shows that after adjusting the calculated cost to allow for the over-recovery of allowable costs (£20,829) the scheme reported a loss of £57,661 or 11% of operating costs.
- 6.3.3 Following surpluses in the first three years since permit fees were adjusted in 2017 the scheme has been operating at a loss since Year 9.
- 6.3.4 Since the accumulated loss over the last 6 years is less than 4% of the fee income billed over the same period, it is recommended that the Council continue to monitor permit fee income and operating costs annually with a view to adjusting permit fees if losses continue to increase.

### **6.4 Recommendations**

- 6.4.1 One recommendation has been included with this review, recommending an annual review of cost and income with a view to adjusting permit fee charges if the reported losses continue to increase year-on-year.



*Duration & occupancy;*

***none***

*Key Performance Indicators;*

***none***

*Permit Fees;*

***Recommendation Yr12-01: Continue to monitor permit fee income and operating costs annually and consider adjusting permit fees if losses continue to increase year-on-year.***

## **6.5 Conclusions**

- 6.5.1 Monitoring the key performance indicators and evidence gained from the ninth year of operation demonstrates that the Permit Scheme continues to;
- improve coordination of activities
  - improve safety at road and street works
  - improve communication between authority and utility companies
  - reduce occupancy of the highway
  - improve accuracy of works records recorded in the Register
  - reduce customer complaints
- 6.5.2 This review has demonstrated that Scheme continues to meet its key objectives, as defined in the Scheme document.

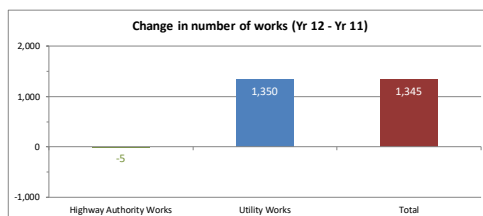


## APPENDIX A. YEARS 12 DETAILED ANALYSIS

### All works promoters

Table A.1: Number of works p.a., year on year comparison

PROMOTER TYPE	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Highway Authority Works	5,814	4,960	4,955	-5	-0.1%
Utility Works	4,302	5,443	6,793	1,350	24.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,748</b>	<b>1,345</b>	12.9%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
5,771	5,243	-528	-9.1%
4,025	5,513	1,487	36.9%
<b>9,796</b>	<b>10,756</b>	<b>959</b>	9.8%

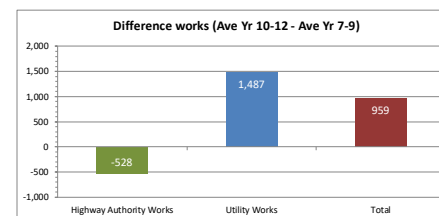
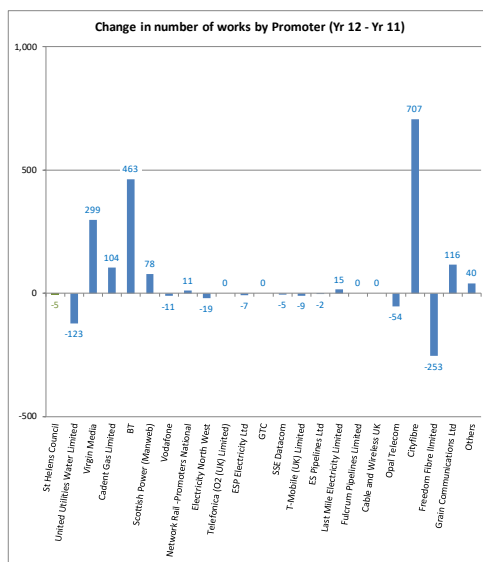


Table A.2: Number of works by Promoter, year on year comparison

PROMOTER	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
St Helens Council	5,814	4,960	4,955	-5	-0.1%
United Utilities Water Limited	1,615	1,712	1,589	-123	-7.2%
Virgin Media	701	764	1,063	299	39.1%
Cadent Gas Limited	472	362	466	104	28.7%
BT	583	1,041	1,504	463	44.5%
Scottish Power (Manweb)	401	421	499	78	18.5%
Vodafone	13	17	6	-11	-64.7%
Network Rail -Promoters National	16	12	23	11	91.7%
Electricity North West	152	120	101	-19	-15.8%
Telefonica (O2 (UK) Limited)					
ESP Electricity Ltd	4	7		-7	-100.0%
GTC	1				
SSE Datalog	11	7	2	-5	-71.4%
T-Mobile (UK) Limited	39	21	12	-9	-42.9%
ES Pipelines Ltd	3	2		-2	-100.0%
Last Mile Electricity Limited	7	9	24	15	166.7%
Fulcrum Pipelines Limited	4				
Cable and Wireless UK					
Opal Telecom	181	71	17	-54	-76.1%
Cityfibre		372	1,079	707	190.1%
Freedom Fibre Limited		295	42	-253	-85.8%
Grain Communications Ltd		64	180	116	181.3%
Others	99	146	186	40	27.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,748</b>	<b>1,345</b>	12.9%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
5,771	5,243	-528	-9.1%
1,531	1,639	108	7.1%
632	843	211	33.4%
549	433	-116	-21.1%
571	1,043	471	82.5%
491	440	-51	-10.3%
12	12	0	-2.7%
15	17	2	15.9%
161	124	-37	-22.9%
1		-1	-100.0%
8	6	-3	-31.3%
4	1	-3	-76.9%
11	7	-4	-39.4%
4	24	20	500.0%
10	3	-7	-74.1%
6	13	8	135.3%
6	4	-2	-33.3%
	90	90	
	726	726	
	169	169	
	122	122	
17	144	127	762.0%
<b>9,800</b>	<b>11,100</b>	<b>1,301</b>	13.3%

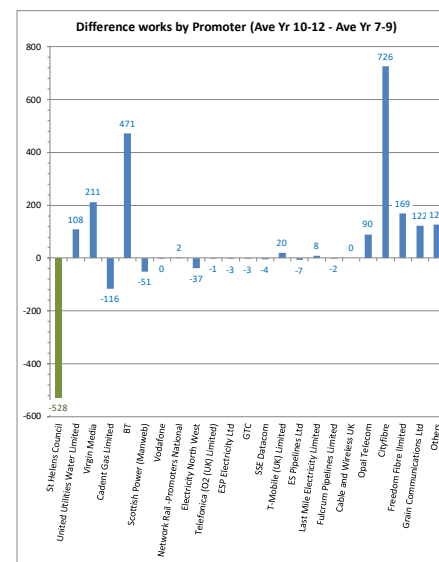
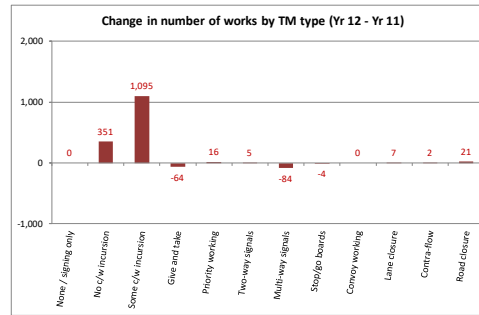




Table A.3: Number of works by traffic management type, year on year comparison

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TYPE	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
None / signing only					
No c/w incursion	857	654	1,005	351	53.7%
Some c/w incursion	2,503	3,453	4,548	1,095	31.7%
Give and take	5,711	4,955	4,891	-64	-1.3%
Priority working	8	4	20	16	400.0%
Two-way signals	405	431	436	5	1.2%
Multi-way signals	326	511	427	-84	-16.4%
Stop/go boards	59	90	86	-4	-4.4%
Convoy working					
Lane closure	115	140	147	7	5.0%
Contra-flow	1	2	4	2	100.0%
Road closure	131	163	184	21	12.9%
Temp Obstruction 15 min Delay			10	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,758</b>	<b>1,355</b>	13.0%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
1,008	839	-169	-16.8%
2,178	3,501	1,324	60.8%
5,595	5,186	-409	-7.3%
8	11	3	33.3%
355	424	69	19.3%
294	421	127	43.1%
60	78	19	31.3%
11		-11	-100.0%
122	134	12	9.5%
7	2	-4	-65.0%
159	159	1	0.4%
	3	3	
<b>9,796</b>	<b>10,759</b>	<b>963</b>	9.8%

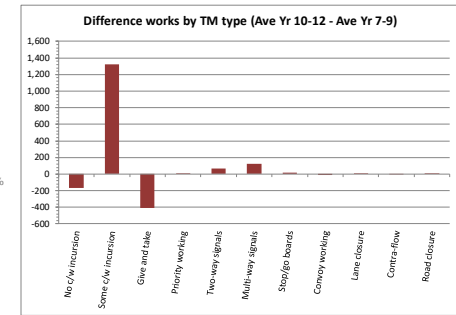
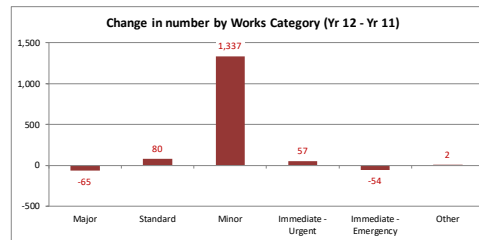


Table A.4: Number of works by works category, year on year comparison

WORKS CATEGORY	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Major	291	335	270	-65	-19.4%
Standard	427	582	662	80	13.7%
Minor	2,874	3,746	5,083	1,337	35.7%
Immediate - Urgent	6,243	5,486	5,543	57	1.0%
Immediate - Emergency	281	254	200	-54	-21.3%
Other			2	2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,116</b>	<b>10,403</b>	<b>11,760</b>	<b>1,357</b>	13.0%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
312	299	-14	-4.4%
519	557	38	7.3%
2,461	3,901	1,440	58.5%
6,271	5,757	-513	-8.2%
233	245	12	5.3%
	1	1	
<b>9,796</b>	<b>10,760</b>	<b>963</b>	9.8%

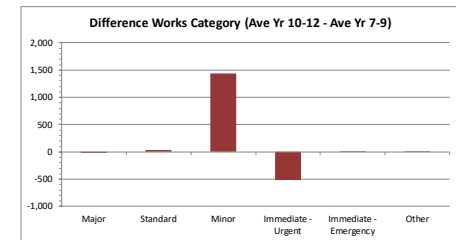


Table A.6: Average works duration, year on year comparison

DURATION	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Average duration (days)	2.0	2.3	2.2	-0.1	-4.3%
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>20,293</b>	<b>24,015</b>	<b>26,285</b>	<b>2,270</b>	9.5%

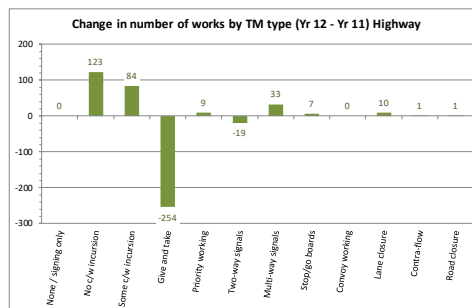
Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
2.6	2.2	-0.4	-16.7%
<b>25,385</b>	<b>23,531</b>	<b>-1,854</b>	-7.3%



## Highway authority works promoter

Table A.7: Number of works by traffic management type, year on year comparison

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TYPE	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
None / signing only					
No c/w incursion	280	189	312	123	65.1%
Some c/w incursion	54	103	187	84	81.6%
Give and take	5,232	4,341	4,087	-254	-5.9%
Priority working	2	1	10	9	900.0%
Two-way signals	79	110	91	-19	-17.3%
Multi-way signals	32	58	91	33	56.9%
Stop/go boards	8	6	13	7	116.7%
Convoy working					
Lane closure	77	82	92	10	12.2%
Contra-flow			1	1	
Road closure	50	70	71	1	1.4%
Temp Obstruction 15 min Delay					
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,814</b>	<b>4,960</b>	<b>4,955</b>	<b>-5</b>	-0.1%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
267	260	-7	-2.6%
85	115	30	34.9%
5,067	4,553	-514	-10.1%
0	4	4	1200.0%
104	93	-11	-10.3%
49	60	11	22.3%
26	9	-17	-64.9%
10		-10	-100.0%
87	84	-3	-3.8%
1	0	0	-50.0%
74	64	-11	-14.3%
<b>5,771</b>	<b>5,243</b>	<b>-528</b>	-9.1%

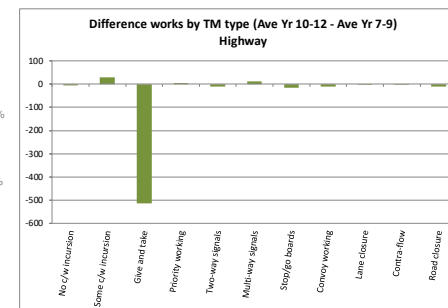
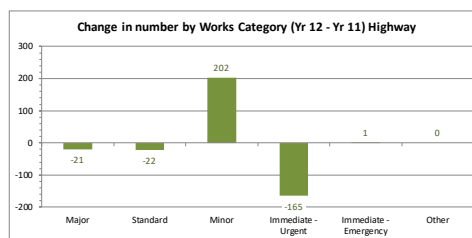


Table A.8: Number of works by works category, year on year comparison

WORKS STOPPED	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Major	86	120	99	-21	-17.5%
Standard	183	166	144	-22	-13.3%
Minor	467	396	598	202	51.0%
Immediate - Urgent	5,072	4,277	4,112	-165	-3.9%
Immediate - Emergency	6	1	2	1	100.0%
Other					
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,814</b>	<b>4,960</b>	<b>4,955</b>	<b>-5</b>	-0.1%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
148	102	-46	-31.3%
163	164	1	0.6%
446	487	41	9.2%
5,008	4,487	-521	-10.4%
5	3	-2	-43.8%
<b>5,771</b>	<b>5,243</b>	<b>-528</b>	-9.1%

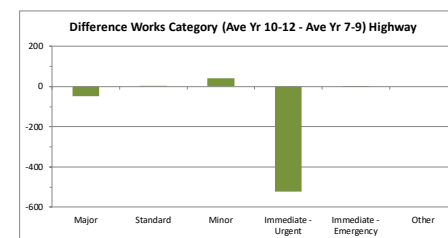


Table A.9: Average works duration, year on year comparison

DURATION	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Average duration (days)	1.5	1.8	1.8		
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>8,454</b>	<b>9,104</b>	<b>8,793</b>	<b>-311</b>	-3.4%

Year 12, 2023-24					
DURATION	MAJOR	STANDARD	MINOR	IMMED. (URGENT)	IMMED. (EMERG.)
Average duration (days)	22.8	7.9	2.1	1.0	5.0
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>2,260</b>	<b>1,132</b>	<b>1,271</b>	<b>4,120</b>	<b>10</b>

Year 11, 2022-23					
DURATION	MAJOR	STANDARD	MINOR	IMMED. (URGENT)	IMMED. (EMERG.)
Average duration (days)	21.7	6.1	1.3	1.2	1.0
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>2,609</b>	<b>1,015</b>	<b>522</b>	<b>4,957</b>	<b>1</b>

Year 10, 2021-22					
DURATION	MAJOR	STANDARD	MINOR	IMMED. (URGENT)	IMMED. (EMERG.)
Average duration (days)	21.5	4.7	1.3	1.0	1.5
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>1,849</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>591</b>	<b>5,149</b>	<b>9</b>

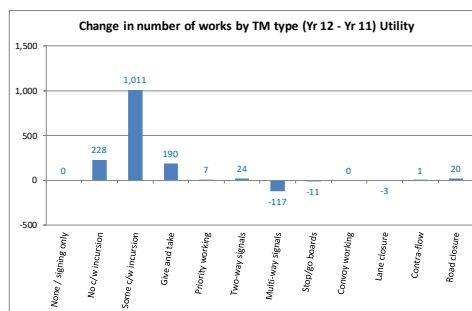
Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
1.9	1.7	-0.2	-12.1%
<b>11,190</b>	<b>8,784</b>	<b>-2,407</b>	-21.5%



## Utility works promoters

Table A.10: Number of works by traffic management type, year on year comparison

TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TYPE	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
None / signing only					
No c/w incursion	577	465	693	228	49.0%
Some c/w incursion	2,449	3,350	4,361	1,011	30.2%
Give and take	479	614	804	190	30.9%
Priority working	6	3	10	7	233.3%
Two-way signals	326	321	345	24	7.5%
Multi-way signals	294	453	336	-117	-25.8%
Stop/go boards	51	84	73	-11	-13.1%
Convoy working					
Lane closure	38	58	55	-3	-5.2%
Contra-flow	1	2	3	1	50.0%
Road closure	81	93	113	20	21.5%
Temp Obstruction 15 min Delay			10	10	
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,302</b>	<b>5,443</b>	<b>6,803</b>	<b>1,360</b>	25.0%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
741	578	-162	-21.9%
2,093	3,387	1,294	61.8%
528	632	105	19.8%
8	6	-1	-17.4%
251	331	79	31.6%
245	361	116	47.3%
34	69	35	103.9%
1		-1	-100.0%
35	50	15	42.5%
6	2	-4	-66.7%
84	96	11	13.4%
	10	10	
<b>4,025</b>	<b>5,523</b>	<b>1,497</b>	37.2%

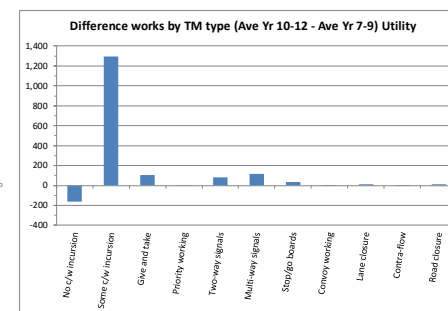
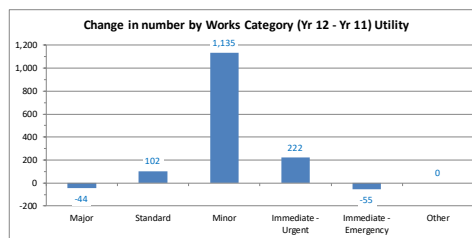


Table A.11: Number of works by works category, year on year comparison

WORKS STOPPED	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Major	205	215	171	-44	-20.5%
Standard	244	416	518	102	24.5%
Minor	2,407	3,350	4,485	1,135	33.9%
Immediate - Urgent	1,171	1,209	1,431	222	18.4%
Immediate - Emergency	275	253	198	-55	-21.7%
Other					
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,302</b>	<b>5,443</b>	<b>6,803</b>	<b>1,360</b>	25.0%



Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
164	197	33	19.9%
356	393	37	10.3%
2,015	3,414	1,399	69.4%
1,262	1,270	8	0.6%
227	242	15	6.5%
<b>4,025</b>	<b>5,516</b>	<b>1,491</b>	37.0%

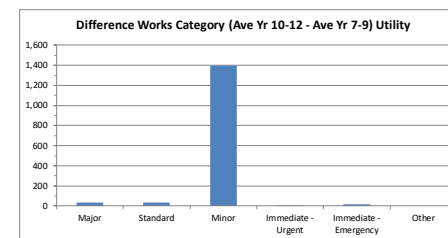


Table A.12: Average works duration, year on year comparison

DURATION	Year 10 2021-22	Year 11 2022-23	Year 12 2022-23	Difference (Yr 12 - Yr 11)	
Average duration (days)	2.8	2.7	2.6	-0.1	-3.7%
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>11,839</b>	<b>14,911</b>	<b>17,492</b>	<b>2,581</b>	17.3%

Year 12, 2023-24

DURATION	MAJOR	STANDARD	MINOR	IMMED. (URGENT)	IMMED. (EMERG.)
Average duration (days)	12.9	6.0	1.6	2.9	4.5
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>2,206</b>	<b>3,097</b>	<b>7,138</b>	<b>4,161</b>	<b>890</b>

Year 11, 2022-23

DURATION	MAJOR	STANDARD	MINOR	IMMED. (URGENT)	IMMED. (EMERG.)
Average duration (days)	9.8	5.1	1.6	3.4	4.8
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>2,108</b>	<b>2,111</b>	<b>5,329</b>	<b>4,158</b>	<b>1,205</b>

Year 10, 2021-22

DURATION	MAJOR	STANDARD	MINOR	IMMED. (URGENT)	IMMED. (EMERG.)
Average duration (days)	10.3	5.2	1.5	3.4	3.6
<b>Total number of days worked</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>1,275</b>	<b>3,507</b>	<b>3,950</b>	<b>991</b>

Average 2018-21	Average 2021-24	Difference Yr7-9 - Yr 10-12	
3.5	2.7	-0.8	-22.9%
<b>14,195</b>	<b>14,747</b>	<b>552</b>	3.9%



## APPENDIX B. SCHEME BENEFIT SUMMARY

NUMBER OF WORKS (number)			
	All works	Highway	Utility
Year 10, 2021-22	10,116	5,814	4,302
Year 11, 2022-23	10,403	4,960	5,443
Year 12, 2023-24	11,748	4,955	6,793
Change, Year 12 - Year 11	1,345	-5	1,350
Change (%)	12.9%	-0.1%	24.8%
AVERAGE DURATION (days)			
	All works	Highway	Utility
Year 10, 2021-22	2.0	1.5	2.8
Year 11, 2022-23	2.3	1.8	2.7
Year 12, 2023-24	2.2	1.8	2.6
Change, Year 12 - Year 11	-0.1	0.0	-0.1
DAYS WORKED (days)			
	All works	Highway	Utility
Year 10, 2021-22	20,293	8,454	11,839
Year 11, 2022-23	24,015	9,104	14,911
Year 12, 2023-24	26,285	8,793	17,492
Change, Year 12 - Year 11	2,270	-311	2,581
Change (%)	9.5%	-3.4%	17.3%

