



Bracknell Forest Council Street Works Permit Scheme

Street Works Permit Scheme Evaluation Report 2016/17

Third Year of Scheme

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Objectives of the Bracknell Forest Permit Scheme

1.1 BFC has a duty under Section 59 of New Roads & Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) to co-ordinate works of all kinds. In addition, Section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA), requires BFC to manage the road network, with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to its other obligations, policies and objectives, the following overriding objectives:

- a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and
- b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.

1.2 Effective co-ordination and management by the Permit Authority is therefore essential to minimise traffic disruption whilst allowing activity promoters the necessary time and space to complete their activities. BFC is committed to reducing congestion and managing the network more efficiently to secure the expeditious movement of traffic. We recognise that the long-term solution lies in using the network more efficiently.

1.3 The strategic objectives for the Bracknell Forest Permit Scheme (BFPS) are taken from the Council's Local Transport Plan, namely;

- Reduce delays associated with traffic congestion and improve reliability of journey times.
- Maintain and improve, where feasible, the local transport network.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transport.
- Reduce casualties and improve safety on the local transport network.

The aim of the Permit Scheme is to improve the management of the road network through the better planning, scheduling and management of activities so as not to cause avoidable traffic disruption to any road user.

1.4 Co-ordination of activities through the Permit Scheme will enable differences between those competing for space or time in the street, including traffic, to be resolved in a positive and constructive way.

The operational objectives for the Permit Scheme are to;

- Reduce occupation of the highway to benefit all highway users
- Improve safety of all highway users at road and street activities
- Enhance the reliability of journey times
- Enhance the journey experience
- Gain greater control of all activities on the public highway
- Minimise, avoid or manage delays to all highway users
- Improve public perception of managing highway activities
- Reinforce co-ordination of all activities on the highway
- Reduce long term damage to the highway asset
- Encourage collaborative working between all activity promoters

- Achieve an improvement in air quality
- Demonstrate parity for all activity promoters
- Strengthen cross-boundary co-operation

Evaluation of the Scheme

2.0 The BFPS continues to deliver efficiencies over and above those available under the old noticing regime mainly due to the requirements to proactively grant permits rather than acknowledge and challenge notices. There has been a significant increase in project meetings in advance of works in order to ensure the needs of the work promoter, permit authority and most importantly the public are considered and balanced.

2.1 The permit authority continues to consider highway authority and statutory undertaker works on an equal basis albeit under different financial bases. Whilst there is no requirement or appetite to charge the highway authority for permits or penalties there are contractual KPI's to manage performance.

2.2 The structure and resourcing of the permit authority has fluctuated during the initial three years partly due to staff turnover but mainly due to efforts to allocate resources in a cost effective and balanced way. The current structure appears to be the most efficient yet;

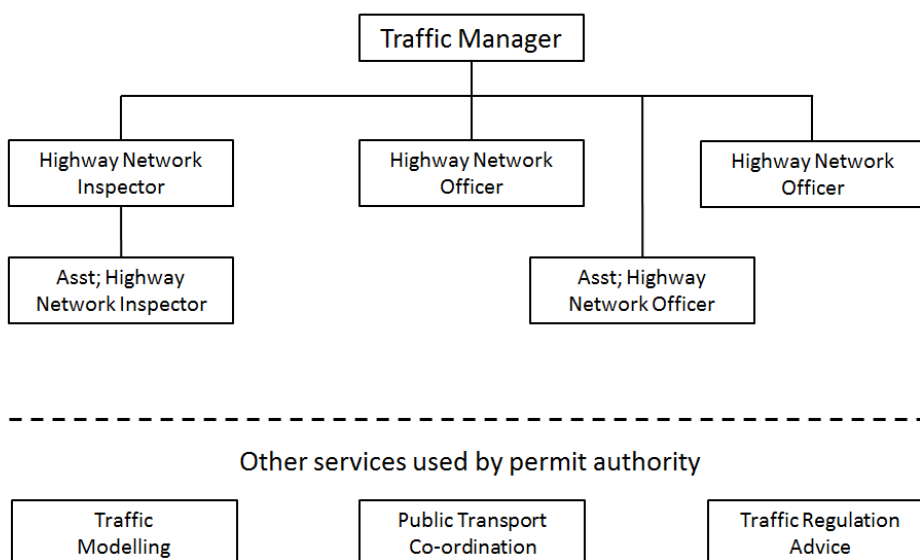


Fig 2. Permit Authority Structure

2.3 The first three years of the BFPS has seen growth in permit activity as large scaled housing, retail and commercial developments are delivered requiring service connections and alterations. The new structure is designed to cope with these increased demands and maintain effective oversight and delivery of the expeditious movement of traffic. The horizon shows no signs of reduction in development activity and so effective highway network management will remain an important mitigating factor to contend with this growth.

2.4 Following the results of the National Highway & Transport questionnaire for 2017 it has been identified that communication with the public is a significant influence on road traffic behavior and public satisfaction. The Highway Network Management team, who operate the BFPS, have used social media on an occasional basis during year 3 but this

will be increased going forward. The aim is to test how effective it can be alongside all other forms of media such as press releases and <https://roadworks.org>.

2.5 Overall it has taken the BFPS 3 years to settle in and become a highly efficient means of controlling street works over and above the prior notification system. The operation of the scheme is now in a solid position to withstand the forthcoming proposed changes within the industry and deal with the ongoing growth.

Fee structure

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

3.1 The BFPS finances were assessed during year 1 and 2 and a commitment was made in the year 2 evaluations report that changes would be required in order for the scheme to remain viable. Following consultation changes were made during 2017 leading to an increase in permit charges from 1st October 2017. The changes set the fees as the maximum allowable on all streets under the current regulations The Traffic Management Permit Scheme (England) Regulations 2007 as shown in fig 1 below.



**Charges for Permits
Bracknell Forest Council Permit Scheme
Commencing 1st October 2017**

	Main roads	Minor roads
	All 0, 1, 2 streets and Traffic Sensitive (at any time) 3 & 4 streets	3 and 4 / Non Traffic Sensitive streets
Provisional Advance Authorisation	£105	£75
Major Activity [over 10 days] and all major works requiring a traffic regulation order.	£240	£150
Major Activity [4 – 10 days]	£130	£75
Major Activity [up to 3 days]	£65	£45
Standard activity	£130	£75
Minor Activity	£65	£45
Immediate activity	£60	£40
Permit Variation	£45	£35

No fee will be charged if;

- the promoter is carrying out Works for Road Purposes (WFRP) as or on behalf of the highway authority
- if the permit is deemed
or
- if a permit variation is initiated by the permit authority

Fig. 1 BFPS Permit Charges 1st October 2017

3.2 With these changes along with some forced efficiencies the deficit in year 3 was significantly reduced. With this intelligence and a degree of estimation it is possible to forecast that the scheme may break even in year 6 at which point discounts may be applicable on the fee structure. Any discounts however, are completely reliant on the effects inflation may have on the costs of operating the scheme.

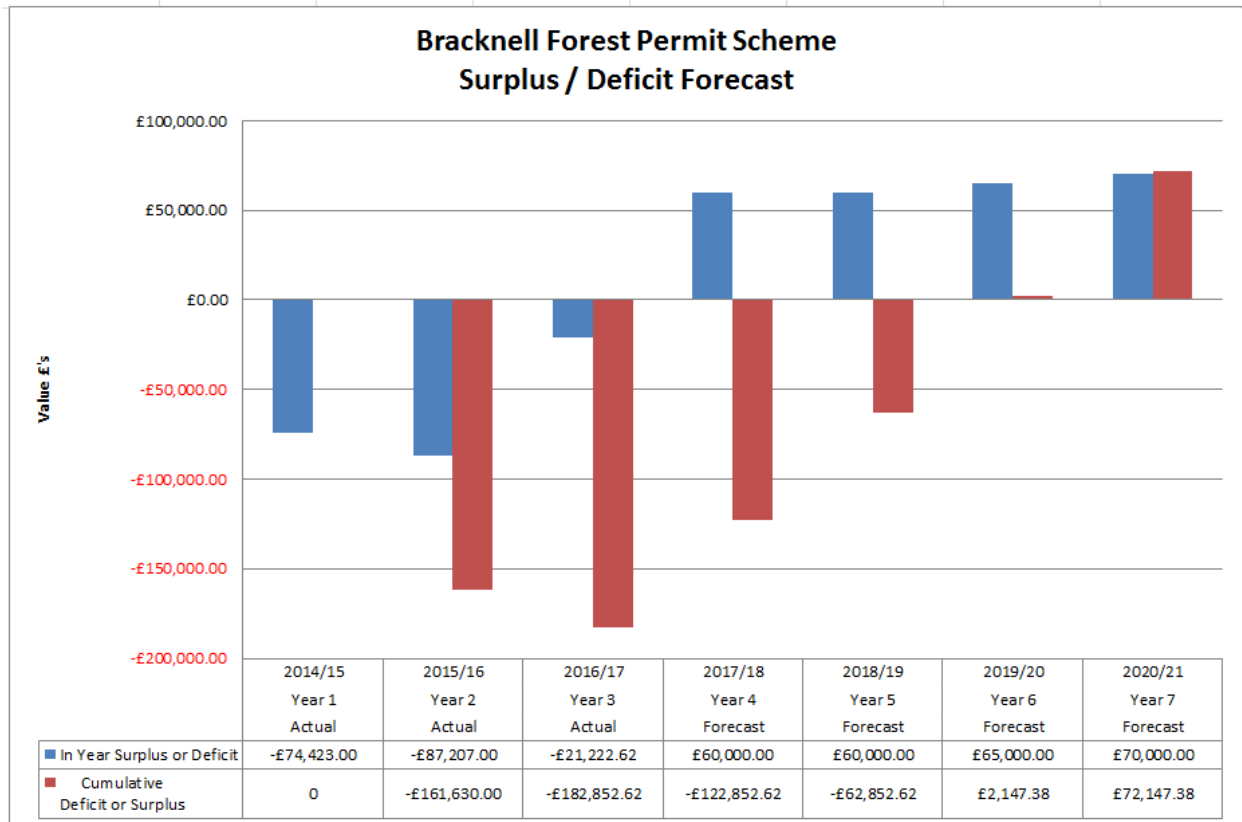


Table 1. Deficit/Surplus Actuals and Forecast

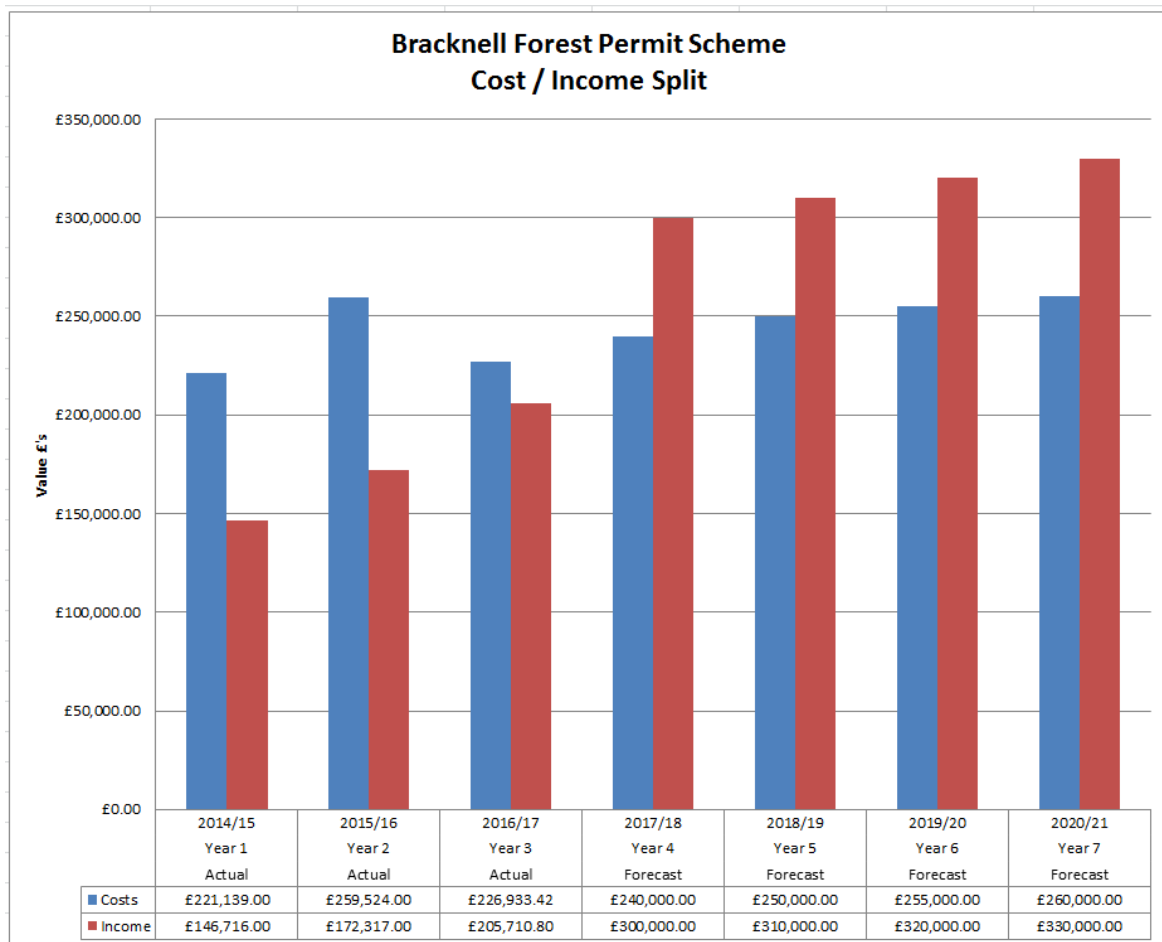


Table 2. Cost & Income Actuals and Forecast

The Permit Authority will continue to review the income and expenditure levels and report annually to stakeholders on the continued viability of the scheme.

Performance Indicators

4.0 PI 1 The number of permit and permit variation applications

The table below shows the trend of permit applications received, granted and refused for the first three years of operation in BFC.

Permits Received/Granted/Refused	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
Total permit applications received during each of the 3 years of scheme operation	5218	5979	6587 +10%
Total permit variation applications received during each of the 3 years of scheme operation	1546	3002	3063 +2%
Total permit and permit variations granted or refused	6764	8981	9305 +4%
Total permit applications granted	4716	4686	5066 +8%
Total permit variations granted:	1375	2126	2159 +2%
Total permit applications refused:	502	1292	1309 +1%
Total permit variations refused:	171	869	771 -11%

Table 3 Permits Received, Granted and Refused

4.1 PI 2 The number of permit applications granted

The number of permit applications granted as a percentage of the total applications made is 77% which is 1% less than in year 2 but statistically insignificant.

4.2 PI 3 The number of permit applications refused

The number of permit applications refused as a percentage of the total applications made is 20% which is a slight reduction from 22% in year 2.

4.3 PI 4 The number of occurrences of reducing the application period

Highway Authority			Statutory Undertaker		
Requests	Agreements	%	Requests	Agreements	%
210	65	31%	275	254	92%

The number of applications declined is a greater proportion for HA works than it is for SU's although a significant proportion of these were associated with the Bracknell regeneration project. This project was highly complex and involved a huge amount of co-ordination which was not always easy to manage.

HAUC England KPI measures

This section outlines the Permit Indicators (KPI) the full dataset is included in appendix A.

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

5.1 TPI 1 Works Phases Started (Base Data)

5322

5.2 TPI 2 Works Phases Completed (Base Data)

5262

5.3 TPI 3 Days of Occupancy Phases Completed

29425

5.4 TPI 4 Average Duration of Works

Major	Standard	Minor	Urgent	Emergency	Avg
22.56	7.53	2.25	4.79	4.65	8.36

TPI 4 Statutory Undertaker / Highway Authority Split

	Statutory Undertaker 16/17	Highway Authority 16/17
2016/17		
Minor	1.50	1.73
Standard	3.32	9.71
Major	8.59	18.70
Immediate - Urgent	1.68	2.44
Immediate - Emergency	1.20	0
	Statutory Undertaker 15/16	Highway Authority 15/16
2015/2016		
Minor	1.94	1.37
Standard	7.4	7.45
Major	30.69	22.44
Immediate - Urgent	5.23	2.16
Immediate - Emergency	4.15	0

2014/2015	Statutory Undertaker 14/15	Highway Authority 14/15
Minor	1.48	1.31
Standard	9.19	11.08
Major	33.49	24
Immediate-Urgent	2.89	1.15
Immediate-Emergency	5.3	0

5.5 TPI 5 Works Phases Completed after the reasonable period

	Major	Standard	Minor	Urgent	Emergency	Total
Non-TS	9	4	14	6	2	35
Traffic Sensitive	8	12	10	13	1	44
Total	17	16	24	19	3	79

5.6 TPI 6 Number of deemed permit applications (not included under Geoplace Figures)

0 (Zero deemed permits)

It remains the case that the BFPS has not had a single deemed permit since commencing the scheme. This is despite occasional issues of reduced resilience and peaks in workflow.

5.7 TPI 7 Number of Phase One Permanent Registrations

The results show that positive and negative changes have been experienced with the number of first time permanent reinstatements. The major concern is with the decline in first time reinstatements on traffic sensitive minor works however, recent meetings with SU's has resulted in commitments to increase their KPI's on those works.

	Major	Standard	Minor	Urgent	Emergency	Total
Non-TS	65 -20%	152 +54%	1421 +8%	523 -9%	44 -14%	2205 +4%
Traffic Sensitive	93 +58%	140 +3%	722 -9%	317 +5%	71 +18%	1343 -0.4%
Total	158 +13%	292 +24%	2143 +2%	840 -4%	115 +4%	3548 +2%

Year 2 Figures

	Major	Standard	Minor	Urgent	Emergency	Total
Non-TS	81	99	1318	573	51	2122
Traffic Sensitive	59	136	790	303	60	1348
Total	140	235	2108	876	111	3470

The TPI figures used are the nearest quarterly reports to the current operational permit scheme year (2016/17 Q3 & Q4, 2017/18 Q1 & Q2).

Authority Measures

The authority measures reflect the objectives of the scheme.

6.1 AM 1 – Inspections

Number of failed permit compliance inspections (where one or more permit conditions have been breached) shown as a percentage of the total undertaken within a period.

Passed	Non-Compliant	Total	% Failed
133	18	151	12

HA and SU Split

	Passed	Non-Compliant	Total	% Failed
Statutory Undertaker	125	16	141	21.79 %
Highway Authority	8	2	10	9.62 %

6.2 AM 2 - Number of collaborative works

The authority data of the number of collaborative works and the number of days saved as a result of collaborative works on the authority road network.

	Highway Authority	Statutory Undertaker	Total
Collaborative Works Phases	10	26	36 +125%
Working Days Saved	30	110	140
Calendar Days Saved	38	140	178

The number of opportunities to work in collaboration has increased although the number of days saved is lower than year 2 due to a prolonged major project in year 2 which caused a spike. The need to duration challenge permits is almost ceased as previous challenges have meant most permits are applied for with reasonable durations hence only 3 duration challenges were necessary.

6.3 AM 3 Response Code

This measure is the number of refusals broken down by response code where this has been used by the authority.

Code	Code Description	HA Works	SU Works	Total
RC10	Missing Information	158	493	651
RC11	Condition Not Provided/Not Necessary	5	49	54
RC12	TM Not Received	0	18	18
RC20	Incorrect Details on Permit	11	15	26
RC22	Location Issues	39	56	95
RC23	Conflicting Information	43	166	209
RC30	Co-ordination Issues	2	12	14
RC31	Clash of works	69	278	347
RC32	Timing of works	16	66	82
RC33	Collaboration/Co-ordination	0	6	6
RC40	Lack of Approval	6	20	26
RC41	Incorrect TM	11	22	33
RC43	S.58 Restriction	2	7	9
RC44	Duration	2	9	11
RC50	Other	81	299	380
		445	1516	1961

6.4 AM 4 FPNs

Breakdown of FPNs given, by promoter and FPN type.

	70(6)	74(7B)	FPN's Given 19(1)	20(1)	Total
Cadent Gas Limited	4	18	4	4	30
BT Openreach	4	8	6	3	21
Bracknell Forest Council	1	21	5	7	34
SOUTHERN ELECTRIC	4	28	15	9	56
VIRGIN MEDIA	6	8	2	0	16
T-Mobile (UK) Limited	1	0	0	0	1
ES Pipelines Ltd	1	0	0	0	1
SOUTHERN GAS NETWORKS	2	8	1	1	12
Fulcrum Pipelines Limited	2	2	0	0	4
CityFibre	0	3	4	0	7
Thames Water Utilities Ltd	1	6	1	0	8
South East Water	8	13	4	6	31
AFFINITY WATER - C	0	1	0	2	3
	34	116	42	32	224

FPN Types;

- 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 s.74 (charge for occupation of the highway where works unreasonably delayed).
- 19(1) Offence to undertake works without a required permit.
- 20(1) Offence to breach a permit condition.

Conclusion

The Bracknell Forest Local Transport Plan 3 (2011-2026) recognises that maintaining and improving roads, coordinating & controlling street works and managing parking, support, drive and deliver economic growth.

The Vision:


“To develop a sustainable transport system that supports local economy, provides choice and improves quality of life in a safe and healthy environment”

The plan specifically states the following:

Policy TP18 – Network Management

The Council will:

- Co-ordinate street and road works.
 - ✓ All Permits processed within statutory timeframe.
 - ✓ Collaborative works increased with resulting efficiencies
 - ✓ First time permanent reinstatements increased
 - ✓ The overall duration of works has decreased by 41%

- Pro-actively communicate highway network issues.
 - ✓ All permits visible on <http://roadworks.org> as well as <http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/>
 - ✓ Disruptive works and incidents communicated via  twitter @bracknelltravel and the Bracknell.foresttravel  Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/bracknell.foresttravel.16>

Next Steps

BFC will continue to monitor procedures involved with the processing of permits and bring forward any further improvements. The financial viability of the scheme will also be monitored to ensure cost recovery and annual accounts will be shared with stakeholders.

BFC will develop public communication strategies using modern technology and assess the effectiveness on travel planning and public satisfaction. The proposed DfT changes to the Electronic Transfer of Notices (EToN) protocol will be followed closely and will likely influence future strategies.