



Report of: James Smith – Acting Traffic Manager

Report to: Chief Officer, Highways & Transportation

Date: 17 December 2019

Subject: Approval to implement a modified Leeds Permit Scheme for Road Works

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Has consultation been carried out?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will the decision be open for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary

1. Main issues

- Leeds City Council currently have a permit scheme which covers the busier roads within our network. Due to current Department for Transport (DfT) advice, and the DfT mandated introduction of the Street Manager system, amendment of the scheme is required to apply a permit scheme on all streets maintained by Leeds City Council.
- Leeds City Council have worked collaboratively with a number of other Yorkshire Highway Authorities to make amendments to their permit schemes. This reports seeks permission for Leeds City Council to implement a modified permit scheme which includes all streets on 1st March 2020.
- Leeds City Council have been working with a consultant to prepare for the modified scheme. A cost benefit analysis has been undertaken which has produced a benefit to cost ratio of 70:1 over a 25 year period.
- The scheme will be cost neutral, with expected revenue levels of approximately £1.6m. A restructure of Network Management is required to accommodate the assessment of an increased number of permit applications across the expanded permit area. Separate approval is being sought to agree staffing proposals.

2. Best Council Plan Implications (click [here](#) for the latest version of the Best Council Plan)

- In support of the 'Best Council Plan' objective of Sustainable Infrastructure by improving transport connections, safety, reliability and affordability, a modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme will allow greater control of road works taking place throughout the whole City Council area, to minimise delay and disruption to road users.
- The permit scheme will also support this objective by promoting a more competitive, less wasteful, more resource efficient, low carbon economy, as the permit scheme will reduce carbon emissions by minimising delay and disruption and facilitating collaborative working opportunities.

3. Resource Implications

- A restructure is required in Network Management to cope with the additional permit assessments which will balance the income, meaning that the scheme will be cost neutral. Separate approval is being sought for a restructure of the Network Management team.

Recommendations

- a) The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to authorise the implementation of the modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme for Road Works on 1st March 2020.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek authorisation to implement a modified Leeds City Council Permit scheme to include all streets from 1st March 2020.

2. Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council implemented the Yorkshire Common Permit on 12th June 2012 at the same time as five other Yorkshire Authorities. This was one of the first permit schemes in the Country, and in line with DfT advice at the time, the scheme focussed on the strategically sensitive highway network, those being Reinstatement Category 0, 1 and 2 streets and all Traffic Sensitive streets. This is approximately 30% of the total length of the Leeds highway network.
- 2.2 Leeds City Council has continued to successfully operate the Yorkshire Common Permit Scheme since 2012, as demonstrated in the Permit Evaluation report produced in September 2018.
- 2.3 Current DfT advice is that permit schemes should now include all streets maintained by the Highway Authority.
- 2.4 The DfT is currently designing a new electronic system, Street Manager, to record all information regarding current and planned road works. The Street Manager system which is due to be implemented by March 2020 will predominantly be set up to process permit applications.

- 2.5 As a result of current DfT advice and the planned implementation of Street Manager, a sub-group of Yorkshire and Humberside Traffic Mangers' Group has been established to consider amendments to permit schemes utilising the services of a specialist consultant.
- 2.6 Extending the Leeds City Council Permit Scheme will enable the benefits realised on the strategic network to be extended to all streets maintained by Leeds City Council as Highway Authority.
- 2.7 A comprehensive cost benefit analysis has been undertaken which has produced a benefit cost ratio of 70:1 over a 25 year period (the CBA Summary is attached as Appendix A). This analysis has made a number of assumptions in line with the DfT mandated process for assessing new or modified permit schemes, and as a result is considered to be a risk-averse assessment.
- 2.8 Leeds City Council has an unprecedented amount of large schemes planned for the next few years as a result of programmes including the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme and whilst the majority of these will be on the current permit network, some elements will not be, and there may be interactions with utility and other works that are not on the current permit network. Having permit applications on all streets would allow greater control over the whole network and movement of traffic throughout the city.

3. Main issues

- 3.1 Street Manager will be implemented by 31st March 2020. This system is predominantly set up to process permit applications. Leeds City Council currently operate a successful permit scheme which covers the busier road network, however current DfT advice is to have a permit scheme on all streets. Therefore, it would be beneficial to have a modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme including all streets implemented by 31st March 2020.
- 3.2 An all streets permit scheme will increase revenue, however, the scheme will need to be cost neutral. The increased number of permit applications to be processed by the Network Management team will increase substantially, which will require additional staff resources. The restructure and increased team size associated with this will ensure that the scheme operates on a cost neutral basis. Separate approval will be sought for the new staffing structure.
- 3.3 A specialist consultant has worked closely with Leeds City Council to produce a cost benefit analysis and forecast anticipated revenue and operating costs. The cost benefit analysis has produced a benefit cost ratio of 70:1 over 25 years which is extremely positive.
- 3.4 For utility companies there is a charge for each permit (the permit fee). The permit regulations specify that the income received from permit fees must not exceed the proportion of costs for operating the permit scheme incurred in relation to statutory undertakers. There is no permit fee for an authority's own works but the officer time in assessing the permit applications must be funded by the authority.
- 3.5 Since implementation in 2012, the Permit Scheme has continued to help the council minimise delay and disruption from works, highlights from the last Permit Scheme Evaluation Report covering the period 1st April 2015 to 30th June 2018 include:

- The average duration of all works (excluding works over 50 days) during the full reporting period was 4.56 days; this has remained significantly lower than pre-permit scheme implementation figure of 7.10 showing a reduction of 2.54 days;
- 13,243 calendar days of disruption have been saved through initial interventions on permit applications, and;
- The accuracy of information has been improved, with 90% of works starting on their proposed dates compared with 75% prior to permit scheme implementation.

3.6 Leeds City Council has an unprecedented amount of large schemes planned over the next few years. Whilst the majority of these will be on the current permit street network, an all streets permit scheme would allow greater control over the whole network and movement of traffic throughout the city.

3.7 Greater control of works on all streets maintained by Leeds City Council by amending the permit scheme supports the 'Best Council Plan' objective of 21st Century Infrastructure by improving transport connections, safety, reliability and affordability.

4. Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 A full stakeholder consultation has been undertaken and a consultation report has been produced by the specialist consultant (Appendix B).

4.1.2 Internal consultation has been undertaken at Senior Management Team meetings and briefing sessions with internal work promoters are scheduled to assist with a smooth transition.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening has been undertaken (Appendix C). The proposals impact on all citizens equally in a positive way as the scheme is designed to improve the efficiency of and access to the highway network and essential utility supplies.

4.3 Council policies and the Best Council Plan

4.3.1 The modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme supports the 'Best Council Plan' objective of Sustainable Infrastructure by improving transport connections, safety, reliability and affordability. As the modified scheme will allow greater control of road works taking place throughout the whole City Council area, to minimise delay and disruption to road users.

4.3.2 The permit scheme will also support this objective by promoting a more competitive less wasteful, more resource efficient, low carbon economy, as the permit scheme will reduce carbon emissions by minimising delay and disruption and facilitating collaborative working opportunities

Climate Emergency

4.3.3 The current Leeds City Council Permit Scheme helps the council minimise delay and disruption from works, including: a reduction in the average duration of works on permit streets and days of disruption saved through permit application

assessments. The reduction in average works days and days of disruption contribute to the Council's response to the climate emergency as it provides a reduction in carbon through reduced numbers of works vehicle movements and less congestion and disruption during works. This will clearly provide a benefit to public transport and active travel journeys.

- 4.3.4 The modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme will build on the above, and also allow conditions to be agreed regarding times and methods of working, for all works on all roads maintained by the Council, which will assist with smooth flow of traffic throughout the City and improved transport connections, promoting sustainable travel.

4.4 Resources, procurement and value for money

- 4.4.1 The modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme has an anticipated income of £1.6 million however the permit regulations specify that the income received from permit fees must not exceed the proportion of costs for operating the permit scheme incurred in relation to statutory undertakers. A restructure is required in Network Management to cope with the additional permit assessments which will balance the income and the scheme will be cost neutral. The financial aspects of the proposed scheme have been discussed in detail with the Council Finance Team, who are content that the financial appraisal of the proposed scheme has been undertaken in a robust and sufficiently risk averse manner. The Scheme Cost Benefit Analysis summary document is attached as Appendix A.

4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in

- 4.5.1 The report is eligible for call-in as it is a key decision affecting the whole City, this was added to the list of forthcoming key decisions on 14th May 2019.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 Not implementing a modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme which covers all streets maintained by Leeds City Council would be against current DfT advice. The new Street Manager system has been developed for permit schemes and limited functionality for Noticing regimes which would compromise Network Management's Duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004, to co-ordinate works being undertaken on the highway.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Current DfT advice is for all highway authorities to operate a permit scheme on all streets maintained by the highway authority. The proposed modification to the Leeds City Council Permit Scheme meets this criteria.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Chief Officer (Highways and Transportation) is requested to authorise the implementation of the modified Leeds City Council Permit Scheme for Road Works on 1st March 2020.

7. Background documents¹

7.1 Appendix A – Cost Benefit Analysis Summary Report

7.2 Appendix B – Scheme Consultation Report

7.3 Appendix C – Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration Screening document.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.