

Committee(s): Streets & Walkways Sub Committee Planning & Transportation Committee	Date(s): 3 December 2019 7 January 2020
Subject: Major Highway Activities 2020	Public
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Information
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Summary

The City's statutory Network Management Duty requires the City Corporation to minimise disruption to its road network and the networks of its neighbouring authorities.

As a result, the City takes a proactive role in planning, prioritising and programming a whole range of on-street activities, from building developments and utility operations to major transport infrastructure projects and the City's own highway maintenance works.

An assessment of the last 12 months would suggest the volume of planned utility works continued to grow as the utility industry upgraded their networks and responded to the needs of a strong development community. In addition, emergency works and filming activities also continued their steady trend upwards from previous years.

Through proactive negotiation & discussion, 676 days of disruption were saved in 2019 (so far) through collaborative working, and the ability of the network to absorb activities like Cadent's closure of Cannon St would suggest such activities, appropriately managed and communicated, represent an opportunity to test the resilience of the City's long-term road network.

This report also provides an early indication of the works likely to affect the City's streets in 2020, with Cadent's continuing investment in their aging network of deep level gas mains leading the way.

In the context of the evolving Transport Strategy, the continuing focus for 2020 will remain minimising the impact of construction sites & utility works, particularly in terms of road danger, freight transport, noise impact, air quality and the extent to which they occupy space on the highway.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to receive this report.

Main Report

Background

1. The Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a Network Management Duty on the City Corporation to ensure the 'expeditious movement of traffic' on both its road network and the road networks of its neighbouring authorities.
2. To help deliver that statutory function, the Highways team within the Transportation and Public Realm Division of the Department of the Built Environment (DBE) permits and co-ordinates all major activities on the City's highway, including:
 - Road closures and diversions;
 - Major building site operations, including Construction Logistics Plans, vehicle loading bays and mobile crane works;
 - Street works by utilities;
 - Highway works by the City's term contractor, JB Riney, and highway structural repair works by DBE's Structures Team;
 - Works by major transport infrastructure providers, such as Transport for London, Crossrail and Thames Tideway;
 - Special events;
 - Parking permissions & suspensions for major deliveries, removals and filming operations.
3. Whilst enabling applicants to safely deliver works that are the lifeblood of the Square Mile, it is equally important to minimise the individual and cumulative impact on City businesses, residents and the public at large. (See Appendix 1 for further background, including the limitations to the consent process & political oversight on DBE's delegated authority.)

Current Position

4. The table below shows the breakdown of road closure applications by source over the last six years.

Road Closure Application Volumes

Type / Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Developments	101	155	231	175	214	190
Utilities	62	67	89	95	91	125
Emergencies	26	57	68	38	35	76
CoL	40	85	89	78	93	98
Other	3	18	17	51	88	119
Total	232	382	494	437	521	608

5. From these figures, the key trends are:
- Building and development activity remains the largest single reason for roads to be closed. Most of these applications are for side streets and / or take place at weekends for activities like crane operations.
 - Planned utility works are now at their highest level since the Olympic moratorium, as various network repairs and upgrades have been delivered whilst the needs of the Square Mile's development sector continue to be met.
 - Emergency road closures significantly increased, with utilities requesting 75% of emergency traffic orders.
 - Filming remains the largest component of 'Other' road closure group reflecting the continuing desire from this sector to use the City as a backdrop.
6. This increasing demand for road space by utilities in particular is also reflected in the number of permit applications to excavate the City's highway.

Utility Street Works Permit Applications

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total Permit Applications	3319	3099	3074	3448	4400	4896	4428*

* Projection based on permit application volumes from Jan-Sept 2019.

7. However, officers continue to proactively identify opportunities to combine works from different contractors, with 676 days of disruption saved on the network between January and October this year - an exceptionally high number for any highway authority. This reflects the level of co-operation from utilities in using round table discussions to draw out medium and long-term plans.

Major Works & Schemes for 2020

8. This section of the report looks ahead to the major works expected to take place in the next 12 months, with an outline calendar and map of locations contained in Appendices 2 & 3. Activities are categorised under four main sources, namely:
- Development activities
 - Major infrastructure projects
 - Utility works
 - City of London projects

Development Activities

9. Over 50 development sites are currently members of the City's Considerate Contractor Scheme and just over half of the 31 streets listed as long-term closures on DBE's weekly Traffic Management Bulletin are building sites.

10. Such high volumes have historically indicated a thriving Square Mile but their impacts are minimised through the approval of Construction Logistics Plans conditioned at the planning stage, as well as from close day-to-day contact and cooperation with developers and their contractors. Any impact on major roads in particular is actively discouraged, but safety from what can often be challenging construction operations in close proximity to the public remains the key priority.

Major Infrastructure Projects

11. Three major infrastructure projects remain on-going in the City, namely:

- Crossrail's construction & fit out at Farringdon East, Moorfields and Liverpool St is expected to conclude towards the end of 2020. The City's public realm works immediately adjacent to the station entrances will finish early next year, with wider area improvements integrated with the various oversite developments from the end of 2020 onwards;
- Thames Tideway's works on Victoria Embankment are expected to remain relatively static during 2020, with the riverside walkway and down slip from Blackfriars Bridge closed for the duration of the project. The Blackfriars site will also reach a major milestone next year when the tunnel boring machine will connect into & through the construction site;
- TfL's Bank Station Capacity Upgrade project remains highly active and on course to deliver a new Northern Line tunnel and station entrance in Cannon St by 2022. The next major milestone will be a closure of the Bank branch of the Northern Line for several weeks in summer 2021 to allow the team to connect the new running tunnel with the existing one.

Utility Works

12. As noted above, the need to facilitate the current boom in development activity has helped drive a high volume of general utility activity. However, as Members are only too aware, the most noticeable impact from utility works in the last year has come from just one company, namely Cadent Gas.

Cadent

13. The last four years has seen Cadent progressively replace their medium & low pressure gas mains across the City with one of the largest capital investment programmes the City has seen for many years. This year saw them complete works in Cornhill, Leadenhall St and Cannon St, but they acknowledge their remaining network is highly vulnerable to emergency leaks, health & safety risks to premises and ad hoc disruption to the road network.

14. In terms of Cadent's programme for 2020, their three main priorities are:

- Fenchurch St – This will complete the upgrade works originally started in 2018 but were put on hold as other more urgent locations were prioritised.
- Newgate St, Cheapside and Poultry – This requires full replacement during 2020 with road closures in sections from Bank to the Old Bailey.

Local communications & drop in events have already started on the basis of works beginning in January.

- Tudor St – This location has become an increasing concern due to the frequency of leaks and has recently been prioritised for inclusion in Cadent's replacement programme.

15. Cadent's works are particularly challenging given the depth below the surface, and they have the potential to be disruptive & slow as other utility chambers have to be demolished and cables diverted in order to reach them. However, extended working hours, 'sleeving' (where plastic pipes are fed inside the old ones) and spray lining repairs from the inside the pipe will all be encouraged where possible.
16. The extent & impact of the works at Newgate St, Cheapside and Poultry have already led to some other activities originally planned for 2020 being deferred until the following year, but unlike this year's closure of Cannon St, it is not expected that the restrictions on through traffic at Bank Junction will need to be amended for these works.
17. Local liaison remains crucial to minimising the disruption these works might cause, and further information will be provided to all Members and other stakeholders as / when they become available. In the meantime, officers will continue to provide e-mail updates when emergency works are triggered.

Power Supplies to the Eastern City Cluster

18. The Reach Active works in early 2019 to connect new power supplies to developments in the Eastern Cluster allowed the opportunity to save 152 days of disruption as works by Cadent, Thames Water and JB Riney (amongst others) were drawn in.
19. Further power connections from either UK Power Networks or Reach Active are likely in Gresham St, Leadenhall St and Threadneedle St at some point in 2020, but we are waiting for further information before this can be planned in detail.

Thames Water Victorian Mains Replacements

20. Thames Water continue to revisit some of the work originally thought complete under the previous Victorian Mains Replacement programme and are currently working in Old Broad St to redo some of those works.

City of London Projects

21. The vast majority of the City's own planned public realm, road safety and highway maintenance programme is expected to have little impact on the road network, with activities sensitively programmed to avoid clashes with other works and minimising local impacts.
22. The one exception to this will be the delivery of the interim scheme at Bank Junction, where Members have already agreed for kerb lines to be built out into the junction so that more space is made available for pedestrians. These works

are intended to take place in phases during the first half of 2020, although closures of the various arms (where necessary) are expected to be confined to weekends.

23. In terms of major projects with the potential to affect traffic, DBE's Structures team have a series of works to replace and / or repair various structures within their remit, with timing dependent on the Gateway approval process.
24. The most significant project will involve the replacement of the waterproofing and bearings on London Bridge, requiring traffic across the bridge to be potentially restricted to buses, taxis and cycles only, as well as pedestrians being diverted to use one footway or the other.
25. Significant discussions have already taken place with TfL and LB Southwark about how these works can be managed & programmed, with works currently planned to start in March 2020 and lasting for around six months.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

26. The activity outlined above helps create a safe, effective and fit-for-purpose environment for the City community to flourish in the long term. Development activity in particular is traditionally a sign of a thriving Square Mile, but it brings with it a need for road and footway space for construction, essential utility connections and additional heavy vehicle traffic.
27. The City has a series of statutory duties to maintain safe highways for the public to enjoy, to regulate activity that takes place on its streets and to co-ordinate that activity to ensure its impact is minimised. As a result, the focus must continue to be meeting these statutory requirements and to deliver safer streets, but at the same time to ensure the City retains its competitive edge & remains an attractive place to live, work and visit.
28. These duties, objectives and outcomes will also be re-examined as part of the Transport Strategy, which will focus on the pace, safety aspect and space needed for works, as well as the wider aspects of freight management, air quality, noise impact and maintaining access for walking & cycling.

Conclusion

29. The City's approach to network management continues to focus on identifying the needs of these major projects early, to combine them where possible, and to keep them apart when necessary. With the support & guidance from appropriate political oversight, this requires officers to:
 - establish the dependency between separate projects;
 - understand their potential conflicts and impacts, and;
 - engage with project managers early and often to ensure that disruption can be minimised through a combination of regulation, negotiation and influence.

30. With the development boom continuing, significant utility works underway and projects such as Thames Tideway and Bank Station Capacity Upgrade well on track, co-ordinating works on the City's road network will remain a challenge into the longer term.
31. However, the City must continue to ensure the co-operation of major project sponsors, utility companies and developers in co-ordinating their works programmes and reducing their durations in order to limit both the direct and cumulative impact on the public at large.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Network Management Duty; Limitations & Oversight
- Appendix 2 – Major Works Timeline
- Appendix 3 – Major Works Map

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