

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Planning & Transportation Streets and Walkways Sub Committee Policy & Resources	11 November 2014 17 November 2014 11 December 2014
Subject: Street Works Update	Public
Report of: Director of the Built Environment	For Information
Summary	
<p>The volume of utility works in the City has reduced since the Olympics, but continuing development activity and the prospect of several major transportation schemes starting next year means that streetworks remain a significant point of focus for officers within the Department of the Built Environment (DBE).</p> <p>A combination of new initiatives and established processes are intended to ensure that the disruption caused by streetworks is minimised, and that the principles of the City's Five Point Plan for streetworks (introduced in 2011) are understood by utilities and embedded in their approach to working in the Square Mile.</p> <p>This report updates Members on the volume of activity by utilities in the City, how their performance is regularly monitored, and where the City is taking action to help them improve. This report also outlines DBE's current focus based around combining works to save disruption, helping utilities with their reinstatements, and developing enhanced communications through the use of social media.</p>	
Recommendation(s)	
Members are recommended to receive this report.	

Main Report

Background

1. Development activity in the City remains at a high level, bringing a continuing need for new and upgraded utility infrastructure, and works in the street to install, connect and repair it. In turn, officers continue to balance the need to accommodate these works with the importance of keeping the City moving, and minimising the disruption to local residents, businesses and visitors.
2. Members may recall that in 2011, the Department of the Built Environment introduced a Five Point Plan to better coordinate and communicate street

works and related activity within the Square Mile. This report provides an update on that plan, including information on current and future initiatives.

Current Position – Controls, Trends & Needs

Controls and Powers

3. In general, the utilities remain focused by market forces and their industry regulator towards service delivery and the cost for the end customer. This naturally creates incentives that do not always align with the needs of the public or the highway authority, particularly around the speed of work (faster works can be more expensive), fees and charges (permit fees can increase costs for customers) and investing ahead of need (laying spare capacity to save future excavations is prevented by some regulators as it can distort competition).
4. The City's overall ability to control the work of utilities remains constrained by a prescriptive national legislative framework, and although the London Permit Scheme has created a better environment for highway authorities to co-ordinate the timing of utility works, there remains a fundamental assumption in favour of the utilities' statutory right to dig up the road to install and repair their equipment.
5. In effect, the City can influence when and (within reason) how long the street can be occupied, but it cannot prevent works taking place on an absolute level. Indeed, typically it would not want to do so, as the City still requires effective and fully functioning utility infrastructure to support its business, development and residential needs.

Trends & Needs

6. Prior to the London 2012 Olympic Games, a large number of utility works were brought forward so they could be delivered before an 'Olympic moratorium' kept them off London's streets. That led to a peak in utility applications in 2011, and may explain why the number of permits issued for works has been around 25% lower for each of the three years since.

Year	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Permit Applications	3755	4379	3331	3319	3120*

* Projection based on permit application volumes from Jan-Sept 2014.

7. In addition, the substantial completion of Thames Water's Victorian Mains Replacement (VMR) project in 2012 has also had an effect. This generated significant numbers of works permits throughout the City over several years, and at its peak in 2011, it was responsible for most of the 950 individual works permits requested by Thames Water. Since then, the number of permits requested by Thames Water (for new supplies and repairs) has reduced by two thirds.
8. This trend of falling numbers of utility works is also reflected in the number of road closure applications processed by the City's Traffic Management Team. This shows that the overall number of road closure applications has fallen by a third since its peak in 2010/11, and that utility road closure applications have fallen by around 40% in that same period. This is partly because of fewer

major schemes like the VMR, but also because of the City's efforts to combine works together within one closure.

Year	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
Total Road Closure Applications*	325	347	304	258	232
Utility Road Closure Applications	105	96	68	52	62

* This includes crane operations, building sites, special events, utilities and the City's own highway works.

9. As a result, there has been an overall reduction in highway activity in the Square Mile since 2011, with major works typically confined to:
 - the City's own prestige streetscene and transportation projects, such as Holborn Circus and Aldgate;
 - works directly attributable to development activity;
 - works to facilitate major transportation projects, such as Crossrail.
10. Moving forward, there is likely to be a considerable increase in major transport infrastructure work over the next two years, such as the Bank Northern Line upgrade and Cycle Super Highway, but otherwise the largest impact on the volume of major utility works remains the needs and expectations of developers. These requirements can be considerable, and as the City cannot easily dictate when a development is triggered, the individual or cumulative impact of these works can be difficult to mitigate.
11. A recent example of this can be seen with the Scalpel development in Leadenhall Street, where the development required a power supply disconnection, a separate temporary power supply, and a number of new permanent power supplies to form a 'diverse' network connection. In addition, UKPN themselves required three new temporary substations to be installed to maintain the power network to the rest of the area, replacing the five previously housed within the original building.
12. In this example, City officers were still able to make a difference by:
 - requiring UKPN to increase the number of gangs used;
 - reducing the size of the road closure from UKPN's original request;
 - identifying, agreeing and publicising bus route changes with TfL;
 - monitoring traffic and promoting traffic signal changes with TfL;
 - bringing the work forward to avoid clashes with other significant works in 2015;
 - making introductions for UKPN to liaise with affected premises;
 - extending the working day with the City's Environmental Health team;

- bringing forward other City works into the same road closure to save future disruption.
13. Such unseen actions are now taken as a matter of course, but it is always difficult to completely eliminate disruption to local premises or through traffic. However, without such actions, the direct and cumulative impact of streetworks would be noticeably greater.

The Five Point Plan

Monitoring & Performance

14. In 2011, the City's Five Point Plan sought to focus attention on how well the utilities were performing beyond the existing regulatory framework. Building on the successes of the City's well-established Considerate Contractor Scheme for utilities and their contractors, it sought improvement in five key areas:
- Improved signage
 - Improved communications
 - Minimising duration
 - Minimising disruption
 - Improved productivity
15. The Five Point Plan still forms the basis for DBE's monitoring of utility performance, and allows DBE to focus the attention of utilities on key aspects of their work in the City. Specific performance elements are measured every month under each of these headings, with trends identified and problems addressed. Overall, the aim is to ensure that 90% of all street works are fully compliant with the Five Point Plan.
16. A copy of August's Streetworks Dashboard report is contained in Appendix 1, and it demonstrates that according to the majority of our measures, the utilities are performing well, particularly around setting out signage, minimising complaints, preventing illegal over-runs and ensuring compliance with the conditions that DBE apply to each work permit.
17. The areas where improvement is still needed tend to be around letter drops for major works, making full use of late night working (where agreed with the City's Environmental Health team) and minimising the number of emergency works on major streets (which by definition have the least opportunity for advance planning and co-ordination).

Permitting

18. One area where improvement is still needed relates to the quality of information provided by companies requesting a permit to dig up the street. Overall, the City rejects around 17% of all permit applications, or 1 in 6 requests to dig up the City's streets, typically because they are either badly planned, excessive or clash with something else.
19. This figure varies considerably between utilities, illustrated in the table below which details the number of permits rejected for different utilities so far this year.

Permits Granted / Rejected, Jan-Sept 2014

Company	Permits Granted	Permits Rejected	Rejection %
JB Riney (for CoL)	4304	65	1.5
COLT	250	13	4.9
UKPN	688	75	9.8
Verizon	112	13	10.4
Global Crossing	84	10	10.6
Thames Water	298	59	16.5
BT	362	112	23.6
Vodafone	174	55	24.0
National Grid Gas	158	60	27.5
Virgin Media	121	69	36.3

20. Some permits will always be rejected due to a clash of works that the applicant is unaware of, explaining why even the City's highway term contractor, JB Riney, may have up to 5% rejected in any one month. A well-performing utility typically has around 10% of its permits rejected for various reasons, but some companies suffer much higher rejection rates, typically for reasons of lack of information, insufficient notice or a need for better planning.
21. We work with these companies to understand why rejection percentages can be so high, but some difficulties are endemic to the way certain utilities are structured, making them highly reactive and ineffective at planning ahead. Again, they can be totally focused on their contractual and customer needs to the detriment of City and the public at large, which means DBE sometimes has to withhold permission to dig up the street until they have addressed these problems.

City Initiatives: 'Saved Days'

22. Accepting that some major works cannot be avoided, DBE continues to place considerable emphasis on co-ordinating works into the same area when they do happen. Health & Safety constraints place limits on such opportunities, but the total number of days of disruption saved on the network amounted to 646 in the first eight months of 2014, which still exceeds the number for any other authority in London outside TfL.
23. For example, during the recent two week closure of Poultry, primarily to allow UKPN to provide a temporary power supply to the new development at 27 Poultry, officers levered in works by four other companies at the same time, saving what would otherwise have been at least a dozen other road closure days.

City Initiatives: Specialist Materials

24. The City uses a fixed palette of materials on its highway, including some items that are difficult for utilities to obtain, particularly when they only need small volumes to undertake reinstatements. Granite setts in particular can take up to 16 weeks to deliver, so utilities often have to complete a temporary repair whilst they raise an order and wait for their delivery.
25. Apart from being unsightly, temporary reinstatements of setts can also create a wider weakness in the construction that will remain beyond the eventual permanent reinstatement, typically resulting in a much earlier failure of the road surface afterwards.
26. In order to address this, the City has taken the initiative to maintain and supply setts at cost to utilities, allowing them quick access to specialist materials so that they can undertake first time reinstatements. If the utility does not have the skills to do this type of specialist reinstatement work, the City also offers to undertake the work on their behalf. This initiative has been extremely well received by the utilities, resulting in the City (supported by TfL) looking to draw other Central London authorities into similar agreements.

City Initiatives: Communications

27. Communications with City stakeholders on street works, road closures and special events continues to be a focus for DBE. A dedicated communications post was put in place in 2011 to deliver a fundamental change in approach, and their success can be seen in the following figures:
 - We now have over 1700 followers to the DBE Highways Twitter feed (@squarehighways), providing up-to-date information on road closures, special events and road safety initiatives. It also provides an avenue to answer questions from the public, and to receive reports of problems in real time. In August, DBE sent 138 tweets, reaching up to 750,000 people through retweets and secondary 'followers'.
 - Around 900 people directly receive the weekly e-mailed Traffic Management Bulletin, covering major highway works and events for the week ahead. A major revamp of the Bulletin was recently completed, making it simpler, easier to understand and more suitable for use on social media platforms. Feedback on the changes has been extremely positive, and the technology even allows us to monitor which links are used most often and by whom.
 - The City's web site continues to carry more in-depth information, including details behind each individual set of works, their likely impact on traffic, and which routes through the City are clear of disruption. Again, the technology allows us to track the number of individual visits to these pages, which totalled some 17,320 in August.
 - Finally, the Highways group have just launched a facebook page (www.facebook.com/squarehighways) to carry more general interest stories on activities taking place on the City's highway network. This will be developed over the next few months to identify the right content for this potential new audience.

Developments in Legislation

28. In terms of the key recent legislative changes, the Department for Transport (DfT) have authorised a small number of lane rental schemes (including one for Transport for London) where charges are made against both utilities and the highway authority itself for every day that the street is occupied.
29. Their effectiveness (or otherwise) is still being monitored, and it is likely to be sometime before the DfT open up this option for other authorities to use, if at all. It is still unclear whether lane rental will drive a real and effective change in behaviour, particularly if the utilities are already working to accommodate best practice principles, such as those contained within the City's Five Point Plan. The DfT have also made it clear that the focus of lane rental would be on major connecting roads and it would not be suitable for every street. This leaves it unclear as to how the City might make best use of such a scheme were it to be opened up.
30. HM Government also continue to drive competition further into these once-monopolistic utility markets, the latest change being to remove the requirement for power and gas supply companies such as UK Power Networks and National Grid Gas to undertake new connections between their own main supply network and the customer.
31. Now, Independent Distribution Network Operators (IDNOs) can compete with the utility to install and maintain these cables or pipes, creating new challenges for the control of works as they sit outside the permitting scheme. The result is a network of utility-like plant that the utility itself is not responsible for maintaining, leaving open to question how faults and repairs will be managed in the future.

Summary

32. In terms of works management, we continue to press the utilities to ensure they bring their best efforts when working in the Square Mile. To that end, we require as a matter of course:
 - early involvement of the City in major scheme work;
 - urgent notification to the City of emergency works;
 - high quality gangs, supervisors and managers delivering safe and efficient work sites;
 - effective communications;
 - timely reinstatements to the correct specification;
 - extended working hours into the evening on a defined network of streets, agreed by the City's Environmental Health team;
 - clarity of their long-term works programme.
33. In turn, these commitments are tested by:
 - sample coring of utility reinstatements, targeted at poorly performing contractors;
 - a full and frequent inspection regime (including weekends), where major works are typically visited on a daily basis;

- a suite of bespoke Key Performance Indicators to track compliance with the key elements of the Five Point Plan;
 - The use of mobile tablet computers to record the performance of utilities and their contractors, and to provide benchmarking feedback for the City's Considerate Contractor Scheme.
34. On the wider front, the City continues to be seen to be a leading player in the effective management of street works. As an indication of this, the following acknowledgements demonstrate the City's expertise being recognised.
- The City is the only authority to have a 'light touch' agreement in relation to TfL's works approval powers, largely because the City has been able to demonstrate it understands, anticipates and mitigates the impact of major works without the need for detailed TfL oversight.
 - DBE's Senior Assistant Traffic Manager was the first external person to be recognised by Crossrail's own staff recognition scheme for making a major contribution to the project's delivery through their work to co-ordinate Crossrail's programme with the rest of the network.
 - DBE's Street Works Manager is the secretary of HAUC England, the national joint committee representing both Highway Authorities and Utilities.
 - DBE's Assistant Director (Highways) represents the views of London's 'boroughs' on TfL's strategic Lane Rental and Works Management working group.
 - The City continues to be a key contributor to the National Underground Assets Group, which is working to deliver better sharing of utility records to make street works safer and faster.

Future Initiatives

35. Nevertheless, the public perception of street works continues to be challenging, and although great strides have been made, more work is required on a wider front.
36. The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee has already written to the utilities to advise them that the City's streets are now full to capacity with activity, and that if we are to continue to accommodate their needs, they need to work smarter. That means more planning in advance with our officers, and in relation to their programmes for the next 18 months, an Olympic-style 'moratorium' may be necessary if they cannot share their plans with us now.
37. That may cause some delay to projects and to connections for developments, but we cannot simply continue to load disruption onto the network at short notice when planning for the needs of Crossrail, Cycle Super Highway, Aldgate, Bank Northern Line Upgrade and Thames Tideway has already been taking place for almost a year.
38. In addition, the following initiatives will also be taken forward by officers over the next few months:
- Utilities typically cannot work 24/7 because of the noise impact on residents, and they have understandable safety concerns of working on

sensitive and sometimes live equipment below ground late at night. However, we do intend to discuss with the utilities the possibility of 24/7 working in certain locations where safety and noise restrictions allow.

- We will explore the opportunity to gather more information from the planning process around a developer's need for new utilities, establish what controls are available to manage a development's timetable, and press developers for better advance planning of the construction phase of their works so that they are clearer about their impact on the City's streets.
- We will work with the City Police to consider locations where closed streets can be reopened with the help of ANPR to help alleviate congestion, and the opportunities for more active roads policing around pinch points, matters of obstruction and incident management.
- Additional resources will be brought to bear on managing the utilities, particularly around the daily inspection of works, the strategic forward planning needed to co-ordinate the major projects starting next year, and closer working with City businesses, our external partners and neighbouring authorities.
- The City's own streetscene works will be planned so that their construction impacts are considered much earlier in the process, and only when they are fitted into the wider programme of works in the City will they move forward.

Implications

39. The demand for room on the City's streets remains high, and officers try to accommodate the needs of applicants and works promoters whenever they can. There will always be consequences of delaying or refusing permission for an activity, whether on a developer, a utility, a customer or a contractor, but officers try to ensure that the needs of the public are not forgotten, and that a balance is struck between their needs and those of the works promoters.

Conclusion

40. The volume of utility works in the City has reduced since the Olympics, but continuing development activity and the prospect of several major transportation schemes due to start next year means that streetworks remain a significant point of focus for officers. A combination of new initiatives and established processes look to ensure that the disruption caused by streetworks is minimised, and that the principles of the City's Five Point Plan are understood by utilities and embedded in their approach to working in the Square Mile.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Street Works Dashboard (August 2014)

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Streetworks dashboard

General information

August commentary

RideLondon event affected the City streets in August. Inspection of its route was carried out and all defects were reported for immediate action.

Collaborative working in Minorities (J B Riney & NGG) saved 31 days this month.

A Pothole Fund was awarded to the City of London by DfT at the beginning of the month. We identify 30 locations, completing the first set of repairs on 26 August.

Major works completed in August include:

- Reconstruction works in Beech Street by J B Riney, related to the Silk St improvement scheme.
- Thames Water carried out works in Fore Street to provide domestic and fire supply to Moorgate Exchange.
- Carriageway resurfacing of Queen St b/w Great St Thomas Apostle & Skinners La by J B Riney

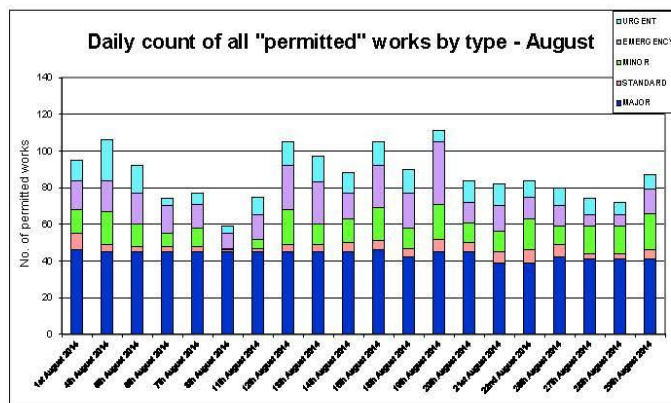
Major works that started in August:

- The City's contractor started their works on enhancement of the public realm in Sun Street and Appold Street.
- UKPN works in Lime Street.

Average KPI compliance	
Signage	100%
Communications	89.5%
Duration	99.7%
Disruption	89%
Productivity	N/A
Average	94.6%



Permit volumes



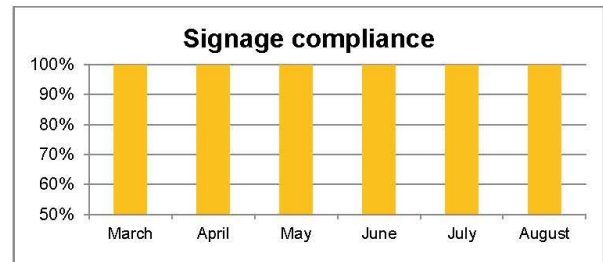
August Summary

- Twitter followers 1743
- Website hits 17320 (30 July – 2 September)
- Road closures 24
Total in 2014/15 136
- Days saved 100
Total in 2014 646

1. Signage

TMA compliance (signage)

The signing and guarding on all sites inspected in June was compliant with Traffic Management Act requirements.



Three sign strategy

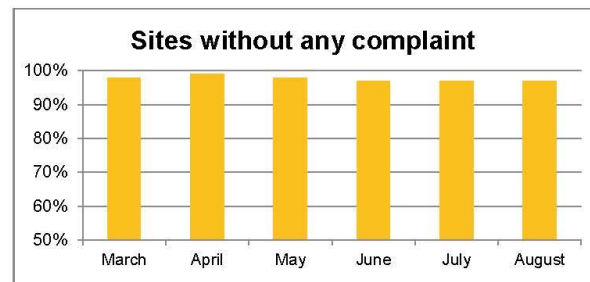
Additional site-specific signs, which form the three sign strategy, developed as part of improving communication with public were observed on all inspected major and high impact works sites of the current participants: National Grid, J B Riney and Thames Water.



2. Communications

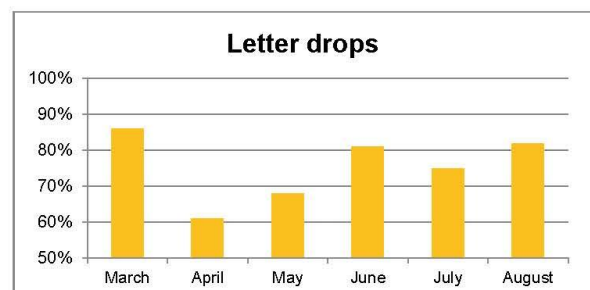
Complaints

A number of complaints received via Contact Centre in August continues to be low taking into account the number of permits we grant each month.



Letter drops

Letter drops were confirmed for 9 out of 11 major works which were set to progress this month by statutory undertakers that operate in the City. 4 sets of works were undertaken on traffic sensitive streets*. In addition letter drops for standard works were carried out by UKPN in Lower Thames St, Pudding La, Duke's Place, Mitre Street and Mitre Square. (Works, which were not letter dropped listed on p 6)



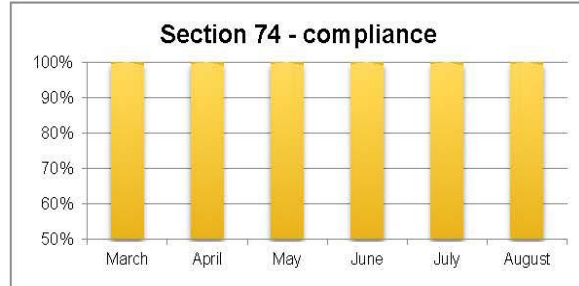
* Traffic sensitive streets are identified in Street Gazetteer dependent on a bases of traffic movement.

*** The major works carried out within the hoarding are not included in statistical data for letter drop purposes

3. Duration

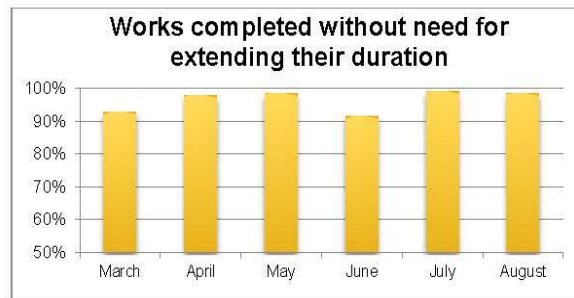
Section 74 (Over-runs)

There were no notices under section 74 issued to utilities and/or their contractors this month. Most of the works were completed on time and all extensions to the duration of the works were applied for in accordance with the London Permit Scheme.



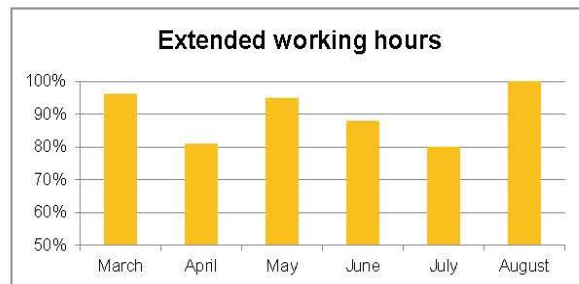
Section 74 (Extension)

Majority of the works that took place this month were completed as scheduled. 1.4% of works required extension. 50% of all works needing extensions took place on traffic sensitive streets.



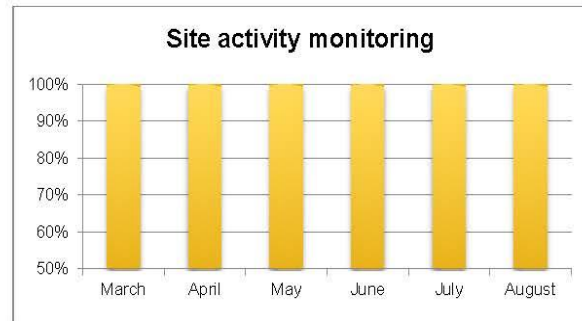
EHO RAG map**

Percentage of works compliant with extended hour instructions as per RAG map. 4 new major works were undertaken on streets where longer working hours can be utilized. All of these sites opted to work during extended and/or weekend hours. In addition to these standard works by UKPN in Duke's Place, Mitre Square, Mitre Street and Pudding Lane as well as works by Telecom company in Aldersgate Street utilized longer hours or weekend working.



Inactivity (Major works only)

On average 38 major works were registered to take place on City streets each day of August. These included works by J B Riney related to the Aldgate project. All were carried out as per agreements and we did not observe any unauthorized inactivity on these sites.



** EHO RAG map – defines streets where double shift working: Green – is considered a standard, Amber – can be considered or Red – cannot take place; dependent on the proximity to noise sensitive, mostly residential, areas.

4. Disruption

Percentage of works compliant with pre-works site checklist
(to be added)

LoPS compliance (conditions)

This month we granted 573 permit applications. One Fixed Penalty Notice was issued to Thames Water for breach of permit conditions.
99.8% of works were compliant with the LoPS conditions.



LopS compliance (displaying permit number)

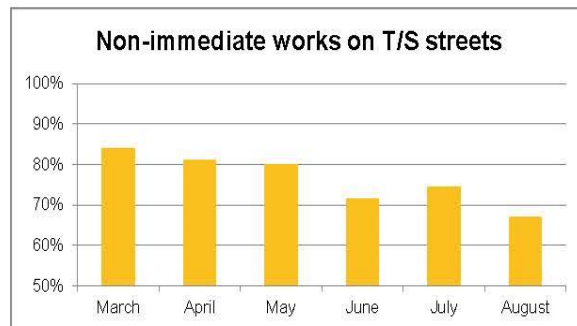
All works permitted to take place were displaying correct works reference number on site.



Immediate works on traffic sensitive streets

Immediate works carried out on traffic sensitive streets this month represent approximately 21% of all activities permitted to be carried out on City streets and 33% of all activities undertaken on traffic sensitive streets.

63% of these works were carried out by our maintenance contractor J B Riney.



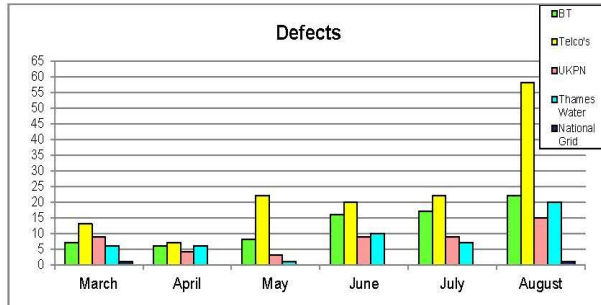
* Traffic sensitive streets are identified in Street Gazetteer dependent on a bases of traffic movement.

*** The major works carried out within the hoarding are not included in statistical data for letter drop purposes

5. Productivity & performance

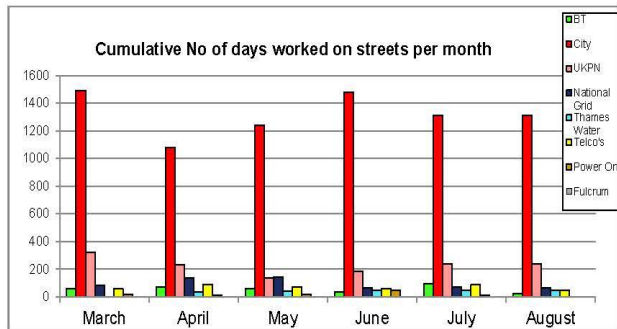
Defects

This month 116 defective manhole covers and failed reinstatements were reported to appropriate utilities and shall be rectified shortly. This month we recorded and reported a high number of defects in comparison to previous month. This relates to increased personnel resources within the Street Works team as well as ensuring the road surface is suitable for August's special events we helped to facilitate on our streets.



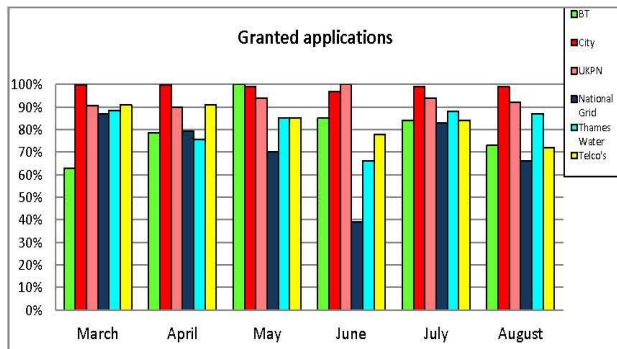
Works duration

Streetworks carried out by City's contractor continue to represent the majority of all works taking place on the highway (75% this month). Our maintenance contractor continues with works related to the Aldgate Project as well as necessary minor repairs. UKPN works amount to 14% and BT, NGG, Thames Water, Telco's & Fulcrum combined to 11% of all activities. Fulcrum carried out major works in Took's Court at the end of August.



Permit rejections

We granted approximately 90% and refused 10% of all permit applications received this month. The applications were mostly refused due to works being proposed to take place on dates that would affect road events such as Ride London or because a site meeting was required prior to works starting. A number of permit applications were submitted to City of London incorrectly.



** EHO RAG map – defines streets where double shift working: Green – is considered a standard, Amber - can be considered or Red - cannot take place; dependent on the proximity to noise sensitive, mostly residential, areas.

Additional information

Immediate works

The high number of immediate works relates to the number of defects that were reported to utilities this month.

Letter drops

Letter drops were not carried out by COLT in Cheapside and Charterhouse St as their repairs to the damaged cover and blocked ducts were undertaken under emergency closures, which were coordinated with other activities in the area.

On Twitter

In August we sent 138, retweeted 57 and replied to 36 Tweets, which potentially reached as many as 748 500 people.

Some of the most popular this month:

- 1,956 views
1 reply
19 link visits
4 Retweets
 - Our latest Traffic management bulletin: eepurl.com/0EJHL. You could receive it straight into your mailbox
- Did you know you can park your bicycle in any of the five City of London car parks? 364 parking spaces free of...
fb.me/3ulnUmUgp2,716 views
3 favorites
33 link visits
13 Retweets
- [#Lombard St](#) southbound b/w Bank junction and King William St now open9,318 views
1 favorite
3 Retweets

[†] Traffic sensitive streets are identified in Street Gazetteer dependent on a bases of traffic movement.

^{***} The major works carried out within the hoarding are not included in statistical data for letter drop purposes