



The future of lane rental

To choose a check box select the box and type an X to replace the box.

Personal details

1. Your:

name?
email address?

2. Are you responding: *

- as a local highway authority? (Go to Local highway viewpoint)
- as a utility company? (Go to Organisational details)
- as a contractor? (Go to Organisational details)
- as a member of the public? (Go to Future of lane rental)
- as a public sector organisation? (Go to Organisational details)
- X on behalf of another organisation or stakeholder group? (Go to Organisational details)

Local highway viewpoint

3. Your authority's name?

4. Would your authority want to introduce a lane rental scheme as outlined in Option 2 (roll-out lane rental to other local authority areas)?

- Yes, as soon as possible
- Yes, within five years
- Yes, within 10 years but longer than 5 years

Yes, but only on a limited basis

No

Why?

5. If 'super permits' were available as outlined in Option 3 (use permitting to deliver aims of lane rental), would your local highway authority use them as part of your permit scheme?

Yes, as soon as possible

Yes, within five years

Yes, within 10 years but longer than 5 years

No

Why?

(Having completed the Local highway viewpoint go to the Future of lane rental)

Organisational details

6. Your organisation's name?

Internet Services Providers' Association (ISPA UK)

Future of lane rental

7. Which is your preferred option for the future of lane rental?

X Baseline: lane rental schemes end

Option 1: lane rental schemes remain in London and Kent

Option 2: roll-out lane rental to other local authority areas

Option 3: use permitting to deliver aims of lane rental

Why?

As we outline in our response to questions 10 and 18, we do not believe that lane rental has proven itself to be an effective regulatory intervention and an extension or expansion of lane rental schemes would run the risk of undermining the Government's objective to encourage and speed-up the rollout of digital infrastructure.

Our members do see some potential in a super permit option but we would only feel able to endorse such an option if it was complemented by a clear commitment to a more coherent and streamlined implementation of permitting across local authorities, as well as an investment in the administrative capabilities for handling permit applications from communications providers.

8. Do you agree that Transport for London and Kent County Council should continue operating lane rental on parts of the road network in London and in Kent?

- Yes
 No

Why?

As we outline in our response to questions 10 and 18, we do not believe that lane rental has proven itself to be an effective regulatory intervention and an extension or expansion of lane rental schemes would run the risk of undermining the Government's objective to encourage and speed-up the rollout of digital infrastructure. Therefore, we do not believe that the Transport for London and Kent County Council's lane rental schemes should not continue to operate.

9. Do you support lane rental, on the busiest roads at the busiest times, as a way of:

	Strongly support	Support	Neutral	Oppose	Oppose strongly
planning road works?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X
managing road works?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	X

Why?

As we outline in our response to questions 10 and 18, we do not believe that lane rental has proven itself to be an effective regulatory intervention and an extension or expansion of lane rental schemes would run the risk of undermining the Government's objective to encourage and speed-up the rollout of digital infrastructure.

10. What do you believe are the main:

advantages of lane rental? While lane rental has the perceived benefit of better street works coordination, there is no clear proof or counterfactual that links these changes to the implementation of lane rental. Indeed, the Government-commissioned Ecorys report has demonstrated that "lane rental leads to an increase in costs to

disadvantages of lane rental? promoters and ultimately to utility customers and taxpayers" and "that most of the observed changes would have taken place anyway, without lane rental".

While providers can avoid lane rental charges by opting to work outside of traffic sensitive times, they incur additional costs for doing so. Evening and night-time work, i.e. work during unsociable hours, is not only associated with a higher cost but can also lead to lower productivity, thereby extending period of road occupation. Increased noise at night is also unpopular with residents.

In addition to lane rental not delivering the expected results (see previous answer), evidence from an independent report undertaken by PA Consulting submitted to the London Assembly Transport committee by the National Joint Utilities Group indicates that lane rental, if implemented across England and Wales, would lead to an approximately £327 million increase in annual costs of undertaking street works which could lead to an additional £12 per customer per year added to customer bills.

While these costs are spread across telecoms and other utility operators, it is evident that the rollout of lane rental across England and Wales would run counter to the Government's policy objectives of encouraging communications providers to extend broadband networks across the nation and increase the availability of full fibre networks.

11. What would be, quantifying where possible, the main costs of lane rental for:

you? /

your company
or
organisation? /

the general
public? Evidence from an independent report undertaken by PA Consulting submitted to the London Assembly Transport committee by the National Joint Utilities Group indicates that lane rental, if implemented across England and Wales, would lead to an approximately £327 million increase in annual costs of undertaking street works which could lead to an additional £12 per customer per year added to customer bills.

your local
area? /

12. What would be, quantifying where possible, the main benefits of lane rental for:

you? /

your company
or
organisation? /

the general
public? The Government commissioned Ecorys report suggests that "lane rental leads to an increase in costs to promoters and ultimately to utility customers and taxpayers" and "that most of the observed changes would have taken place anyway, without lane rental". Some of our members will submit more a detailed response to this question.

your local
area? /

13.;

- daily?
X hourly?

14. Should the maximum daily charge remain at up to £2,500?

- Yes
X No, it should be lower
 No, it should be higher

Why?

Our members would support a move towards an hourly charging system if:

1. A daily cap would remain in place.
2. Administrative burdens are kept at a minimum.

15. Do you think that 'super permits' as part of a permit scheme (Option 3: use permitting to deliver aims of lane rental) would deliver the same benefits as lane rental?

- X Yes
 No

Why?

See answer to question 7 - If implemented properly, permitting can offer the same benefits with fewer unintended consequences.

16. Should surplus lane rental funds only be available for ways 'to reduce disruption and other adverse effects caused by street works'? *

- Yes (Go to Final comments)
X No (Go to Lane rental fund eligibility)

Lane rental fund eligibility

17. What type of work or projects do you think should be eligible for lane rental funds?

- Traffic management measures to manage congestion from other sources?
 Traffic management equipment, such as variable message signs?
 Data gathering and information provision
X Other:

In principle we agree with question 16, however, we believe that communications providers are best placed to explore and implement innovative solutions.

We further believe that any funds generated through street works regulation should be reinvested into the more efficient and effective administration of the street works regime.

Final comments

We want to make sure that any future lane rental schemes work for businesses, for other road users, and for those carrying out necessary works.

18. Are there any further comments you would like to make on lane rental?

ISPA Members strongly believe that the extension of lane rental across England and Wales would run counter to the Government's overall objective of encouraging the rollout of fast, superfast and ultrafast connectivity across the UK. It would effectively redirect Government support that is aimed at supporting this rollout, e.g. the Local Full Fibre Network initiative, and has the potential to change the business case for rollout programmes, i.e. fewer projects would go ahead or fewer premises would be connected as lane rental would fundamentally change the business case for broadband rollout.

There are already a number of drivers that improve coordination and efficiency around street works and in turn reduce disruption and there is no clear evidence that Lane Rental has a meaningful impact, as noted by the Government-commissioned evaluation on lane rental schemes undertaken by Ecorys. Instead of a major disruption to street works regulation, ISPA members believe that a strong focus should be put on enabling our members to use advanced/innovative approaches to street works and improving the coordination and cooperation between our members and local authorities.

A more coherent approach to street works regulation across local authorities would also be favoured by our members who, unlike some utility operators that are focused on a particular region of the UK, rollout infrastructure across the nation. Therefore, the introduction of nationally integrated super permit system could be beneficial in reducing this inconsistency between local authorities, if implemented correctly.

A supportive street works regime has the potential to maximise the business case and add benefits of public and private sector investment in broadband infrastructure.

While we recognise that this consultation is looking at a very specific aspect of the regime, we believe there needs to be a concerted cross-government effort to minimise disruption to traffic flows and broadband infrastructure deployment.