

News story: Congestion-busting scheme to benefit millions of drivers

A scheme which has halved disruption to drivers caused by roadworks in Kent and London will continue to deliver better journeys in the future, Transport Secretary Chris Grayling announced today (26 December 2017).

The 2 pioneer Lane Rental schemes, where utility companies are charged up to £2,500 a day for carrying out roadworks on busy roads at the busiest times, were due to end in March 2019 but, due to their success, both Kent and Transport for London will carry on implementing their schemes.

The Department for Transport is considering rolling out the Lane Rental scheme to other areas in England following a [consultation](#) earlier this year.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Roadworks cause no-end of problems for drivers when they're done on busy roads and at peak times.

We've seen disruption to road users severely drop when works are carried out on quieter stretches away from heavy traffic.

Allowing Kent and London to continue with their Lane Rental schemes will mean millions of drivers will have better journeys.

In England, 2.5 million roadworks are carried out each year costing the economy £4 billion as business expenses are increased due to employees turning up late and delayed deliveries.

The Lane Rental scheme allows local authorities to charge utility companies at peak times or by the hour or day to carry out works on busy routes, encouraging firms to switch to quieter roads and to avoid peak times.

Businesses are also incentivised to collaborate on works to avoid the same stretch of road to be dug up twice. In London utility companies have worked together more than 600 times since the scheme began in 2015, up from just 100 beforehand.

Glynn Barton, Director of Network Management at TfL said:

Our Lane Rental scheme helps us improve how London's roads operate for everyone. By encouraging roadworks to take place away from the busiest roads at busiest times the scheme has been a resounding success in reducing the amount of congestion in London caused by roadworks – helping to improve journey times for bus passengers, cyclists and drivers, while tackling emissions.

Lane Rental is one of a number of tools we're using to tackle congestion in London such as reducing the time taken to clear up unplanned incidents, reviewing traffic signal timings, re-routing bus routes to avoid the busiest central London streets, and ensuring utilities and roadworks are better coordinated.

Matthew Balfour, Kent County Council's cabinet member for Highways, said:

Kent County Council is pleased that with the removal of the sunset clause it is able to continue its successful Lane Rental scheme.

The scheme has incentivised a change in how work is carried out on the busiest parts of Kent's road network so that disruption is minimised by: working differently with new technology; thinking differently about how work is carried out; working at different times of day; and better planning of work.

The scheme is an important tool helping Kent to fulfil its network management duties and to keep Kent moving.

Currently, most highways authorities use a permit scheme to oversee road works. If the Lane Rental scheme is rolled out across the country, it would give councils extra powers to manage works on the busiest routes and at peak times. Changes could be introduced in 2019.