



Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation (CIHT) response to the Department for Transport consultation: 'Road works: The future of lane rental'

October 2017

CIHT welcomes the recognition in the consultation of the importance for society of the local highway network both in terms of its transport function but also as a conduit for vital utility infrastructure. Local highways should be seen as part of the wider public realm, important in their own right to our towns and cities, and therefore worthy of minimizing disruption of roadworks and streetworks upon them.

Current evidence

Delays from roadworks have been estimated to cost the UK economy as much as £4.3 billion per year.¹

Based on the evaluation of permit and lane rental schemes within England the evidence suggests that both options are beneficial. It is worth highlighting that Northern Ireland concluded they considered permitting not to be value for money and for Scotland permitting is not worth implementing at this point in time (but should keep an eye on it) (Barton, 2016).

As cited in the consultation, TfL has seen benefits in applying lane rental. The LGA has reported favourably on the permitting of schemes². Research by Transport Research Institute (TRI) at Edinburgh Napier University³ looked at the results of lane rental and permit schemes in London and found:

- "Average number of days' duration of a typical roadworks scheme reduced by 20-30%
- Total number of days on which utilities worked in the road reduced by up to 17%
- Congestion reduced and perceptions of levels of congestion improved.
- More works were completed first time (e.g. a "final reinstatement" of the road was made").

The TRI research also noted: "costs increased for some utilities, but the financial costs to them was less than the monetized value of the time saved by travelers who suffered fewer delays. In addition, the utility regulator permitted some of the increased costs to be returned to the companies in the form of regulated price rises".

The new powers (on permitting and lane rental) have therefore cut the numbers of days that utilities occupied the roads, and reduced delays whilst the roadworks were in place. Utilities also carried out more work out within normal working hours. The savings in travel time for highway users far outweighed the additional costs to the utility companies.

On page 20 the consultation refers to an independent evaluation project commissioned by the Department for Transport which is still ongoing and reports in November 2017. We believe that the results from this research could have been helpful in responding to this consultation.

¹ Tom Rye (2017) 'Is it time to get tough on disruptive roadworks' <http://www.napier.ac.uk/about-us/news/roadworksfriendsofscotsman>

² Local Government Association (2017) 'A country in a jam: tackling congestion in our towns and cities'

³ www.tri.napier.ac.uk/c/downloads/downloadid/12737

Baseline Option (do nothing). CIHT does not believe that this is an acceptable option.

Option 1: CIHT would not support this option. Evidence shows that, lane rental has been beneficial where it has been introduced and should be expanded across a wider network.

Give the apparent clear benefits of both permit and lane rental schemes, the options presented in the consultation do appear limited to those that require minimal change to legislation. **Option 2** is the nearest to achieving the full benefits of lane rental but carries the imposition of each authority having to make the case to government. This process would add an additional burden to local authorities and government at a time when resource availability is limited. CIHT believe that it would be more effective to focus on collaboration between authorities and utility providers to reduce congestion.

CIHT believes that Government should look at the options again and consider what is required in terms of legislation/regulation to enable local authorities to implement lane rental schemes as part of their wider responsibilities to manage traffic on their networks.

A system that encourages safety, collaboration, innovation and long term quality.

Any scheme that seeks to manage roadworks must:

- ensure a safe network for road users and road workers;
- incentivise good planning between local authorities and providers;
- encourage innovation by incentivizing new techniques and more efficient ways of working;
- ensure the long term quality of reinstatements.

The charge levels should reward innovation i.e. charges should be lower if they encourage works promoters use of mitigation measures such as plating of excavations, bailey bridges and core and vac technology⁴.

The Barton Review⁵ sought views on a range of issues, one of which was reinstatements and guarantees of quality of work. CIHT provided comments on Improving Quality of Road Works (Scotland)⁶. This consultation asked: Should there be a single guarantee period offered on utility reinstatements of 6 years regardless of the depth of excavation? CIHT's reply noted: "Yes. Keeping it simple and consistent will remove scope for doubt and uncertainty."

Therefore, for consistency for road users across the UK, CIHT would recommend that when Government is considering any revision to legislation to have a 6 year guarantee period on utility reinstatements.

⁴ See UK Network Management Board: <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/UKRLG-and-boards/uk-network-management-board/network-management-board-presentations/developing-innovative-technology-for-road-works.cfm>

⁵ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/10269/srwc-review-consultants-report.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.ciht.org.uk/en/document-summary/index.cfm/docid/5E29267B-EDCF-4BE2-A795DEAB0DDCFE5A>



About CIHT

Chartered Institution of Highways & Transportation

CIHT is a charity, learned society and membership body with over 14,000 members spread across 12 UK regions and a number of international groups. We represent and qualify professionals who plan, design, build, manage and operate transport and infrastructure networks. Our vision is to see world-class transportation infrastructure and services. Our values are to be Professional, Inclusive, Collaborative and Progressive.

CIHT supports its member's professional endeavours by:

- offering training, information, professional development and support
- promoting the value added to society by the profession
- being the focused voice to Governments and other decision makers on transportation expertise and knowledge.

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