

Stuck in traffic?

A stylized graphic of a road with a green lane on the left, a yellow lane in the middle, and a blue lane on the right. A black road with white dashed lines curves from the bottom left towards the right, passing through the yellow lane.

# get h&f moving

## A Lane Rental Scheme

*A Scrutiny Inquiry on the  
Proposed Lane Rental  
Scheme*

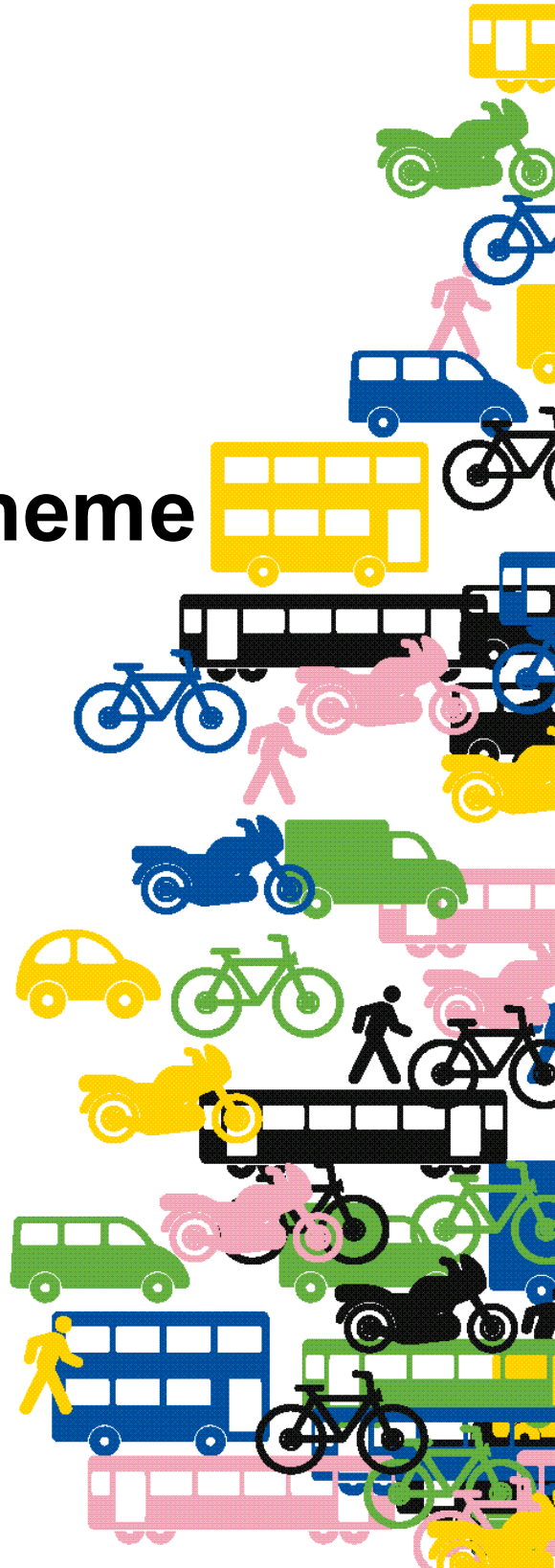
November 2011



[www.lbhf.gov.uk/getmoving](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/getmoving)



Hammersmith & Fulham Council



# **Get H&F Moving – A Lane Rental Scheme**

## ***A Scrutiny Inquiry on the Proposed Lane Rental Scheme***

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# Foreword

There is no doubt that some of the busiest roads in London fall within our borough.

Any disruption to our roads can cause critical problems to both small businesses that can find themselves cut off from their customers, as well as their suppliers; but equally larger businesses that use our roads to transport their goods and services across London. Add in the effect on residents, road users and commuters and the impact is magnified. When additional costs both to the local economy and the local community are taken into account, then it becomes evident that avoiding disruption is vital.

The introduction of the London Permit Scheme has led to much greater control of works on the network, but what it can't do is change the culture and processes of how works are carried out by contractors.

Lane rental will provide an incentive and a driver for change for utility companies in how they deliver their works on the network and just as important encourage them to consider alternative ways of working. We believe that the introduction of a Lane Rental Scheme will provide the catalyst to encourage investment in new working methods and techniques, to free up the road network from disruptive road works during the busiest traffic periods. It is essential that at the busiest times for our network, we make sure that, as far as possible, road works are confined to off peak times.

Hammersmith and Fulham is already lobbying the Department for Transport to consider our local highways authority to run one of the proposed pilots prior to the introduction of the Lane Rental Scheme in England . Transport for London is supportive of London local authorities which support the Scheme's introduction, to help regulate local roads and the Strategic Road Network. This Scrutiny inquiry has considered the context, feasibility and options for the regulation of road works and has supported the proposed Lane Rental Scheme as part of the Council's drive to *Get H&F Moving*.



**Councillor Rachael Ford**  
***Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group***

# Executive Summary

This Scrutiny Inquiry was established by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at Hammersmith and Fulham Council on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2011 following a proposal from the Council's Environment and Residents Services Select Committee. The Task Group was requested to consider and assess the proposed lane rental scheme for public utility road works, which was the subject of a Government consultation. Specifically, the inquiry considered to what extent the proposed scheme could be helpful as a regulatory tool to reduce traffic congestion in Hammersmith and Fulham, any issues that should be considered in the introduction of such a scheme locally and the possibility of Hammersmith and Fulham highways authority applying to run one of the pilot schemes envisaged before full introduction of the regulations nationally. The aims and objectives of the inquiry are set out on page 5.

The Introduction of this report sets out the context for lane rental nationally and locally, the statutory provisions and scope of the anticipated regulations. This includes a strong commitment by the Council to tackle road congestion locally and the existing legislative and regulatory provisions available to tackle this, specifically the London Permit Scheme.

Chapter One considers and evaluates the permit scheme and its effectiveness in helping to encourage the efficient use of road space by companies undertaking road works, its achievements as a regulatory tool and its limitations. Chapter Two discusses the proposed Lane Rental Scheme, how this might be used to augment existing regulatory and road charging schemes and recommendations for how such a scheme should be rolled out. Chapter Three considers the issue of co-ordination and planning as a key factor in carrying out road works more time efficiently, how both the permit scheme and the proposed lane rental scheme might be used to encourage more collaboration and with recommendations for taking forward more co-ordinated planning of works in the future to reduce obstructions on the highway.

The Scrutiny inquiry has concluded by commending the introduction of a lane rental scheme and setting out the key principals which we believe should guide the structure and administration of the local highways regulatory framework, namely:

- ▶ **Predictability**
- ▶ **Simplicity**
- ▶ **Efficiency**
- ▶ **Strategic**
- ▶ **Avoidable.**

This is detailed further in Chapter 2 *Lane Rental Schemes*.

At the end of the inquiry the Scrutiny Task Group put forward eight recommendations to the Hammersmith and Fulham Cabinet. Once agreed by

the Overview and Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet will be requested to consider this report and recommendations and to provide an Executive Response with executive decisions for each scrutiny recommendation. It is hoped that the Cabinet will find this a useful report with constructive recommendations to help towards the council's aims to ease the blight of unnecessary congestion on Hammersmith and Fulham's roads.

## Summary of Recommendations

### **Draft Recommendation One: Permit Penalty Charges**

It is recommended that permit penalty charges be structured so that they work in conjunction with the Lane Rental Scheme, to provide an escalating charge when lane road works take longer than the agreed time (or a certain designated fixed amount of time), whilst ensuring that the whole regulatory framework is in keeping with the principles of simplicity and efficiency of regulation.

### **Draft Recommendation Two: A Lane Rental Scheme Pilot**

It is recommended that Hammersmith and Fulham apply to run a pilot of the proposed Lane Rental Scheme, either unilaterally or as part of a wider pilot involving some boroughs and Transport for London (TfL).

### **Draft Recommendation Three: Lane Rental Scheme Performance Measures**

It is recommended that clear performance measures be devised at the beginning of the pilot to ascertain the success of the scheme and highlight any possible problems that may arise to allow for the full scheme to be modified accordingly.

### **Draft Recommendation Four: Key Strategic Routes**

It is recommended that the following key strategic routes be included in the Hammersmith and Fulham Lane Rental Scheme and any pilot carried out:

- ▶ Askew Road
- ▶ Beadon Road
- ▶ Butterwick
- ▶ Fulham Broadway
- ▶ Fulham High Street
- ▶ Fulham Palace Road
- ▶ Fulham Road
- ▶ Glenthorne Road
- ▶ Goldhawk Road
- ▶ Hammersmith Bridge Road
- ▶ Hammersmith Broadway
- ▶ Hammersmith Road
- ▶ King Street
- ▶ Kings Road
- ▶ Lillie Road
- ▶ New King's Road
- ▶ North End Road
- ▶ Putney Bridge Approach
- ▶ Queen Caroline Street
- ▶ Scrubs Lane
- ▶ Shepherd's Bush Green
- ▶ Shepherd's Bush Road
- ▶ Studland Street
- ▶ Uxbridge Road
- ▶ Wandsworth Bridge Road
- ▶ Wood Lane.

### **Draft Recommendation Five: Lane Rental Scheme Hours of Operation**

It is recommended that the Lane Rental Scheme charge be made avoidable by scheduling its times of operation at the peak hours of traffic flow, to incentivise

works outside these hours and to encourage companies to commission work for reactive works during off peak traffic hours and to use road plating to cover works that need to be resumed later on.

**Draft Recommendation Six: Local Authority Road Works**

It is recommended that charges should be equally applied to local authority road works as well as utility company road works and that any revenue derived from these charges be hypothecated towards highroads and traffic enhancement measures.

**Draft Recommendation Seven: Co-ordination and Planning of Road Works**

It is recommended that measures be introduced to encourage and facilitate the better co-ordination and long term planning of non-reactive road works between utility companies and with highway authorities.

**Draft Recommendation Eight: Road Works Notices**

It is recommended that road works should be clearly signposted to allow local residents and site engineers to be clear about the expected and agreed timescale of the road works.

# Membership of the Task Group



**Councillor Rachel Ford - Chairman**



**Councillor Wesley Harcourt  
– Vice Chairman**



**Councillor Robert Iggulden**

## Aims and Objectives

*The Aims and Objectives of the inquiry were:*

- i. To assess the merits of a lane rental scheme for public utility road works in the context of environmental, economic and quality of life considerations
- ii. to consider DfT consultation proposals for such a scheme
- iii. to consider the desirability, feasibility and timing of a pilot scheme in H&F, and
- iv. subject to the findings in respect of i), ii) and iii), review any initial implementation plans for a local pilot.

# Introduction

Hammersmith & Fulham has the most congested roads in London<sup>1</sup> ; although we have noted that there has been rapid improvement over the last year. To tackle this problem, Hammersmith & Fulham Council has launched the “Get H&F Moving” campaign to improve the borough’s transport network to make it easier for residents and commuters to get around - whether by tube, bus, bike, motorbike, car or on foot.

The Council has drawn up a ten point plan, called the Driver’s Charter, to help get the borough moving. Point 3 of the charter promises “an hourly charge for utilities who dig up roads”. This scrutiny inquiry was established to investigate the options and feasibility for such a scheme and to put forward proposals on how this might best be rolled out.

For many years, street works, including works by utility companies accessing their apparatus in the street, have been identified as causing significant delay and disruption. In 2010/2011 there were 6631 utilities works within the borough of varying sizes<sup>2</sup>. According to the Department for Transport’s (DfT) own impact assessment paper the estimated costs of congestion due to street works is in the region of £4.3 billion a year in England. Although these costs are due to works carried out by the companies commissioning road works, they are borne by society rather than by those carrying out the works.

## The Cost of Congestion

Utility companies, being private enterprises accountable to their shareholders, necessarily have to reduce their own costs as far as possible. These negative externality costs, the disruption caused by road works, which are costs to society, are invisible to them and are not reflected in the operating costs to the companies

*The Driver's Charter*

**Ten point plan to deliver a fair deal for motorists**

As part of its Get H&F Moving transport plan, the council is proposing to deliver ten practical measures to improve the experience of drivers in our borough.

1. **Traffic light review** - to ensure unnecessary ones are removed
2. **Bus lanes review** - to improve traffic flow
3. **Road works** - hourly charge for utilities who dig up roads
4. **Speed bumps** - consult local people on removing unnecessary bumps
5. **Pot holes** - fixed within 24 hours
6. **Parking permits** - remain competitive with neighbouring boroughs
7. **Parking spaces** - create additional bays where possible
8. **Less signage** - remove 400 more in the next two years
9. **Parking enforcement** - the primary aim is to preserve parking for residents
10. **C-Charge** - continue to oppose any measure that harms drivers

To read the detailed pledges visit [www.lbhf.gov.uk/getmoving](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/getmoving)

**get h&f moving**

<sup>1</sup> The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham website: [www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/News/Get\\_hf\\_moving.asp](http://www.lbhf.gov.uk/Directory/News/Get_hf_moving.asp)

<sup>2</sup> Highways and Engineering Division, Environment Department, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

commissioning road works. In fact, it would appear that the companies own procedures, often driven by costs, can encourage them work in such a way as causes disruption. For example, if it saves money to leave trenches open rather than get specialist operatives on site; there is no cost to them to have a site open rather than to employ more expensive specialists. Utility companies rarely have one group of workers who are able to complete the whole job from start to finish, as each phase of works has different groups of operatives and often different contractors as well.

**“We shouldn’t be pushing people from shopping in our borough to shopping in another borough ”**

Local resident

Congestion on our roads, often caused by road works, imposes a significant cost to the local community; economically, environmentally and socially. The direct economic costs to local businesses and shops can be in delaying or preventing customers and suppliers access, driving customers to shop elsewhere. The social and environmental costs include pollution, more dangerous roads for cyclists and pedestrians and local communities blighted by congestion not only on the main routes but consequential traffic congestion diverted onto local residential roads as drivers try to escape log jams by driving off the main highway.

**“Congestion along our roads and major highways can be a critical problem for small businesses who can find themselves cut off from their customers as well as their suppliers.**

**Traffic congestion resulting from road and related pavement works have real costs to local businesses.**

**We need to make sure we diligently use whatever powers are at our disposal to regulate road and pavement works to keep disruption to shops, businesses and other local services during peak times to the absolute minimum possible as well as minimising the impact for residents ”**

Cllr Joe Carlebach - Councillor for Avonmore and Brook Green

#### Incentivising Efficiency

In Hammersmith and Fulham, there continues to be an increase in the number major works on a number of key roads with Thames Water and National Grid Gas undertaking major mains renewal programmes<sup>3</sup>. There is no reason to believe that trend will be reduced for years to come as the borough has a continuous

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<sup>3</sup> Highways and Engineering Division, Environment Department, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

regeneration programme to deal with, as well as new developments coming up, requiring new or enhanced services once they are established.

One solution is to incentivise utility companies to schedule their works to cause least disruption, by making the financial costs of leaving an open excavation unattractive whilst creating a challenge to them to come up with new innovative ways of working.

New and existing Local Transport Authority regulatory powers can be used to provide such incentives, by employing strategic charges for road works. The permit scheme, recently introduced, provides one mechanism to charge for permits. New regulations expected to be issued by the Secretary of State for Transport in 2012 will also allow designated local transport authorities to implement a lane rental scheme on key routes.

This scrutiny inquiry investigated the options available under the new regulations for a lane rental scheme, considered how the scheme might best be rolled out in Hammersmith and Fulham and how the whole regulatory system, including the permit scheme and lane rental scheme should work together to improve the regulatory management of our major highways and to help *Get H&F Moving*.

## 1 The London Permit Scheme

- 1.1. The Traffic Management Act 2004 , and the Traffic Management Permit Schemes (England) Regulations 2007<sup>4</sup>, make provision for Permit Schemes to be introduced by Local Transport Authorities in England. The objective of a permit scheme is to enable highway authorities to better manage activities on their road network, in order to minimise inconvenience and disruption to road users.
- 1.2. The London Permit Scheme was adopted on 11 January 2010 by 15 London boroughs, the City of London and Transport for London. Two further boroughs adopted the scheme on 1 April 2010.



- 1.3. The new permitting rules allow for greater control over works taking place on London's streets, with the participating London Permit Scheme Authorities now able to agree conditions for works undertaken to encourage them to be carried out quickly and efficiently, or to refuse consent for works considered to have the potential to cause unnecessary disruption. Because highway authorities have more control over works in their area under a permit scheme, they are

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<sup>4</sup> The Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 3 Sections 32 to 39



able to promote work outside peak traffic times and better co-ordination of works between utility companies.

### Permit Scheme Evaluation

- 1.3. The Draft London Permit Scheme for Road Works and Street Works First Year Evaluation Report<sup>5</sup> provides an overview of the permit scheme performance in its first year. The report provides detailed scrutiny of the available data as a whole and, where possible, on an individual authority basis
- 1.4. It was reported to the Task Group that, in Hammersmith and Fulham over the last 6 months, the number of recorded days of disruption saved through joint working and collaboration has increased from 726 in 2009 to 1793 in 2010; an increase of 147%. This corresponds to a benefit of approx £2.7 million in congestion saved in 2010 and has led to a 237% increase in the proportion of works that are formally recorded by highway authorities. There has also been a reduction of 17% in the total number of works undertaken by utilities within permitting boroughs<sup>6</sup>.
- 1.5. According to the Head of Network Management at Hammersmith and Fulham, the permit scheme has also helped to achieve better quality information exchanges, which has helped to make more considered coordination decisions and has coincided with a reduction of between 28% - 37% in the level of severe and serious disruption recorded on London roads.
- 1.6. It would appear that, during the initial period of operation, the effect of these powers has been to contribute to improved coordination and reduced disruption. Permit authorities have made effective use of the new powers and have worked increasingly closely with the utility companies and their own highway authority promoters to ensure that those powers have been applied in a reasonable and competent manner.

### A Comprehensive Regulatory Framework

- 1.7. We believe that the permit scheme has offered the Council an effective regulatory tool to encourage better co-ordination and more timely, more efficient use of road space by utility road works. However, on its own it still falls short of being able to offer a proper incentive to reduce the amount of time road works take, as it charges longer jobs at the same rate as shorter ones.
- 1.8. Ultimately, utility companies and their contractors are the experts in how works need to be carried out and how long they will take and the highways regulator cannot perfectly determine where it is possible to drive down times. The introduction of a complementary Lane Rental Scheme would offer utility companies a direct incentive to find ways to minimise the time taken during peak times by charging them accordingly.

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<sup>5</sup> *London Permit Scheme for Road Works and Street Works – First Year Evaluation Report*, The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham 2011

<sup>6</sup> *Highways and Engineering Division, Environment Department, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham*

- 1.9. We believe that it is important, however, that whole regulatory system is kept as straight forward as possible, to send clear price signals for effective regulatory outcomes and that its administration is un-bureaucratic and efficient. In evidence we have heard that any additional scheme will be administered at zero additional cost and within the existing staff administration.
- 1.10. The introduction of a lane Rental Scheme in addition to the permit scheme should continue to provide an non-bureaucratic regulatory structure. It is important therefore that the permit scheme and the proposed Lane Rental Scheme work together to provide a coherent and efficient regulatory framework.

“Can we fine them if they do not get it right first time?”

Local resident.

- 1.11. We believe that the permit scheme can fully complement the proposed Lane Rental Scheme by providing a further incentive against overrunning works, working in tandem with charging per unit time, as it allows the authority to charge penalty charges where road works take longer than the amount of time agreed. We are therefore recommending that the Lane Rental Scheme and the permit scheme work together to provide an escalating pricing structure when road works over run.

**Draft Recommendation One: Permit Penalty Charges**

It is recommended that permit penalty charges be structured so that they work in conjunction with the Lane Rental Scheme, to provide an escalating charge when lane road works take longer than the agreed time (or a certain designated fixed amount of time), whilst ensuring that the whole regulatory framework is in keeping with the principles of simplicity and efficiency of regulation.

## 2 Lane Rental Schemes

- 2.1. The introduction of lane rental schemes allow local transport authorities like Hammersmith and Fulham to introduce a charge to utility companies for occupying road space on selected key borough roads at certain times.
- 2.2. Lane rental seeks to provide a clear financial incentive for utility companies to manage their works more effectively, encouraging them not to work on key routes during busy times, and if they do work in busy times, to only be on site for the shortest possible time to avoid large costs. This aims to help to reduce the externality costs assumed by road users, including local residents and businesses, whilst at the same time encouraging these companies to think differently about how they work and manage their resources to carry out works.

“If... it encouraged more efficient working, this would be excellent – most road works appear to be inactive for more hours than they are active”

Local resident

- 2.3. The introduction of new regulations, expected shortly, are necessary to enable lane rental schemes to go ahead and the Council will have to submit a scheme for approval by the Secretary of State for Transport in order to be able to introduce a scheme locally.

#### The Key Principals of Regulation

- 2.4. We believe that the key principles of the proposed public utilities lane rental scheme should be:
- ▶ **Predictability** – the charges should be clearly published and agreed with utility companies
  - ▶ **Simplicity** – the scheme should be as simple as possible in order to send clear economic signals and avoid bureaucracy in implementation
  - ▶ **Efficiency** – the scheme should not cost any further resources to implement and should be entirely self financing
  - ▶ **Strategic** - apply to key strategic roads and main travel times
  - ▶ **Avoidable** – charges should be, as far as possible, avoidable, so that companies commissioning road works can avoid the charges by scheduling their works during non chargeable periods such as evenings, night-time, weekends and bank holidays, summer “free” periods.
- 2.5. The times of operation of the scheme should be aimed at the peak hours of traffic flow to incentivise works outside these hours. This should allow companies to commission work for most reactive works outside of peak times and use road plating to cover works that need to be resumed later on, thus making the charge fully avoidable. The scheme should also allow for “free” periods during non-busy times of the year, for example, during the summer period when schools are on holiday.
- 2.6. The scheme charges should apply commensurately to the proportion of the road, or number of lanes, being occupied by the works.
- 2.7. The charges should be applied to local authority road works as well as utility company road works. Charges to the council highway authority works should be hypothecated towards highroads and investment spending in traffic improvement measures. The charges should be equally applied and should not be merely a paper exercise.

#### A Pilot Lane Rental Scheme

- 2.8. It is envisaged that the Government will give permission for pilot lane rental schemes in just one or two jurisdictions;– probably one major urban area and one non-metropolitan area. Early evidence from such schemes will inform decisions on whether lane rental can usefully be applied more widely. We believe that

Hammersmith and Fulham, given its particular transport stresses, the number of key roads within its area, its commitment to tackling road congestion and its achievements to date in regulation through the new road permits scheme, is well placed to run a pilot for the scheme, either on its own or as part of a wider collaboration of transport authorities.

**Draft Recommendation Two: A Lane Rental Scheme Pilot**

It is recommended that Hammersmith and Fulham apply to run a pilot of the proposed Lane Rental Scheme, either unilaterally or as part of a wider pilot involving some boroughs and Transport for London (TfL).

- 2.9. In order to evaluate the success of any pilot scheme, and indeed the scheme itself once fully operational, as well as identify any potential improvements to the operation of the scheme, it is important to include well honed performance measures against which the scheme should be evaluated at the end of the pilot period and at intervals after its full introduction. We are therefore recommending that clear performance measures be devised to evaluate the success of the scheme and highlight any possible issues that may arise prior to the pilot.

**Draft Recommendation Three: Lane Rental Scheme Performance Measures**

It is recommended that clear performance measures be devised at the beginning of the pilot to ascertain the success of the scheme and highlight any possible problems that may arise to allow for the full scheme to be modified accordingly.

**“This scheme will have to demonstrate that it doesn’t cost a lot of money, there are no new people employed and that the cost between the contractors, the utilities and the council, does not outweigh the benefits in terms of demonstrably speeding up road works over the period of the trial ”**

**Councillor Robert Iggulden  
Member of the Task Group**

Key Roads

- 2.10. During the inquiry we have considered which of the key routes on the local road network in the borough should be included in the Scheme. These should be routes which are particularly important to traffic flow during peak times and where it is most important to traffic flow during peak times.
- 2.11. We have considered the borough Lane Rental Roads and the possible routes to be included in the scheme and TfL’s Strategic Road Network,. A number of roads that Transport for London (TfL) classifies as the Strategic Road Network have been identified, which we recommend should be included in any locally run scheme.
- 2.12. We have also taken into account suggestions from local residents in response to our survey.

#### **Draft Recommendation Four: Key Strategic Routes**

It is recommended that the following key strategic routes be included in the Hammersmith and Fulham Lane Rental Scheme and any pilot carried out:



- |                           |                          |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| ▶ Askew Road              | ▶ Kings Road             |
| ▶ Beadon Road             | ▶ Lillie Road            |
| ▶ Butterwick              | ▶ New King's Road        |
| ▶ Fulham Broadway         | ▶ North End Road         |
| ▶ Fulham High Street      | ▶ Putney Bridge Approach |
| ▶ Fulham Palace Road      | ▶ Queen Caroline Street  |
| ▶ Fulham Road             | ▶ Scrubs Lane            |
| ▶ Glenthorne Road         | ▶ Shepherd's Bush Green  |
| ▶ Goldhawk Road           | ▶ Shepherd's Bush Road   |
| ▶ Hammersmith Bridge Road | ▶ Studland Street        |
| ▶ Hammersmith Broadway    | ▶ Uxbridge Road          |
| ▶ Hammersmith Road        | ▶ Wandsworth Bridge Road |
| ▶ King Street             | ▶ Wood Lane              |

# London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham











## LANE RENTAL ROADS



### KEY

-  Desirable Routes
-  Strategic Road Network

### LEGEND

-  Hospital
-  Town Hall
-  Police Station
-  Underground Station
-  Road Closure (C = cycle exception)
-  Fire Station
-  Library
-  School
-  National Rail Station
-  Borough Boundary



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 August 2011





## Passing the Buck

- 2.13. A concern expressed to us in evidence about charging utility companies for lane rental and permits is that they will seek to pass these costs back onto the consumer, which might lead to a rise in utility bills and undermine the incentives to schedule work at the most appropriate times. This is an important consideration and something which should be monitored in any pilot of the scheme and afterwards, but if the scheme is running effectively this should not occur.
- 2.14. Firstly, the scheme should result in less “peak time” works being carried out and therefore the number of charges through lane rental should be minimised. As the scheme is not a revenue raising venture, the objective of the scheme is to encourage utility companies to schedule their works outside of peak traffic hours and it is hoped that the utility companies will work with the local authority in achieving this aim.
- 2.15. Secondly, most of the utility companies are in a competitive market and market pressures mean that they will have limited scope to raise prices above the market price and charges will therefore impact upon profits. As they are accountable to shareholders, they will be under pressure to avoid unnecessary costs and schedule works accordingly, outside of the chargeable periods of lane rental.
- 2.16. Thirdly, Section 74 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, which enables highway authorities to charge street works undertakers (including utility companies) for street works, does not permit avoidable charges to be passed on to consumers, which must be borne by the operating companies. We are therefore recommending that the scheme is structured so that charges are avoidable.

### **Draft Recommendation Five: Lane Rental Scheme Hours of Operation**

It is recommended that the Lane Rental Scheme charge be made avoidable by scheduling its times of operation at the peak hours of traffic flow, to incentivise works outside these hours and to encourage companies to commission work for reactive works during off peak traffic hours and to use road plating to cover works that need to be resumed later on.

**“We are determined that any costs incurred by the utility companies should not be simply passed on to the consumer in the form of higher bills ”**

**Councillor Wesley Harcourt  
Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group**

## Local Authority Road Works

- 2.17. We have considered how lane rental charges might apply to local authority works. We have also considered the findings of the House of Commons Transport Select Committee report *Out of the jam: reducing congestion on our roads*<sup>7</sup>. The New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 does not require lane rental schemes to impose charges in relation to highway works. We believe, however, that for reasons of equity and since highway works can also cause substantial disruption, that the lane rental scheme should also be applied to the council's own road works on the same terms as to utilities and other street works undertakers.

### **Draft Recommendation Six: Local Authority Road Works**

It is recommended that charges should be equally applied to local authority road works as well as utility company road works and that any revenue derived from these charges be hypothecated towards highroads and traffic enhancement measures.

## **3 Planning and Co-ordination**

- 3.1. An important factor in avoiding disruptive road works is improving the planning and co-ordination of works by utility companies and the highways authority, between different utility companies and between utility companies and their works contractors and specialist operators. Planned road works on the public highways in London are entered on the London Works Public Register <http://public.londonworks.gov.uk>

**“Co-ordination needs to spread works out so that they are not all in the same area at the same time ”**

Local resident

### Highway Authorities Co-ordination

- 3.2. Given the topography of the borough, many of the key roads run through neighbouring boroughs, and many of the road works being carried out affect roads in adjoining boroughs simultaneously. It is important therefore, that as far as possible, there is co-ordination and agreement between neighbouring boroughs on their street works policies. For example, if the Hammersmith and Fulham policy aims to encourage street works during the evenings and night time instead of peak traffic hours, this could be frustrated if a neighbouring borough had a policy which prohibited or discouraged night time works. Similarly, foreknowledge about planned works in a neighbouring authority can provide an opportunity for improved co-ordination.

<sup>7</sup> *Out of the jam: reducing congestion on our roads* - Transport Committee - Ninth Report, House of Commons  
6 September 2011



- 3.3. In evidence, Thames Water representatives explained that one possible problem with the concept of availability of charges was that if a neighbouring borough refused permission for works to be carried out “out of hours” (e.g. a night) when the scheme would allow charge free works, this could make it infeasible to carry out the works during charge free periods. This could potentially make the charges unavoidable.
- 3.4. The Hammersmith and Fulham scheme should therefore not be developed in isolation but should be joined up with schemes operated by neighbouring boroughs and by Transport for London. Development of the scheme will therefore require further consultation and co-ordination between the transport authorities to provide greater harmony between the policies of different local highway authorities.

**“all too often utility companies have not planned their works completely”**

Ian Hawthorn - Head of Network Management, Hammersmith and Fulham Council

#### Co-ordination Between Partners

- 3.5. Co-ordination between companies carrying out works can also help to reduce disruption, as planned works by one company can dovetail with works needing to be carried out by another and be done adjoining to save digging the road up twice. In such a case it may be advantageous if the lane rental charge could be shared between the companies so that the charge is only applied once and shared between them.
- 3.6. In evidence, the Head of Network Management agreed that co-ordination needed to be improved between utilities, local authorities and Transport for London. He gave a recent example of where Putney Bridge had just been re-surfaced and Thames Water put in a late application to dig up the road. If this had been anticipated, the road re-surfacing could have been delayed until after the Thames Water works and thereby retain the resurfaced road. He said that there were often disjointed communications between the contractors assigned to carry out the road works and the utility companies, which impaired planning and communications.

**“It's a constant source of frustration for residents to see road works unattended for long periods or to see the various utility companies each digging up the same section of road in rapid succession.**

**Our plans to introduce a system of 'lane rental' should force the utilities to carry out their planned works in a much more co-ordinated fashion and reduce the inconvenience to residents”**

Councillor Wesley Harcourt  
Vice Chairman of the Scrutiny Task Group

### Improving Works Operations

- 3.7. A regularly reported reason for delays to street works is that companies carrying out works have to wait for specialist engineers and subcontractors to become available. More transparent forward planning of street works should also help to identify the availability of specialists against requirements.

**“I think there are different methodologies where we can change the way in which we work”**

A Thames Water representative

- 3.8. Street works jobs can vary in time and length and there are ways in which utility companies can better estimate the time required for jobs, for example by boring trial holes to find out how deep in infrastructure is, to help to plan works for efficiently.

### Building Better Partnerships

- 3.9. One of the stated intents of the permit scheme was to improve planning and co-ordination between partners and we believe that the lane rental scheme should be able to provide even more incentives to encourage closer collaboration between partners. Incentivisation on its own however, is not sufficient, and we recommend that measures be introduced to encourage and facilitate better co-ordination and long term planning of road works between utility companies and with highway authorities.
- 3.10. Local authorities have a lead role here and it is anticipated that the Council will continue to drive improved co-ordination and planning with its partners.

**Draft Recommendation Seven: Co-ordination and Planning of Road Works**  
It is recommended that measures be introduced to encourage and facilitate the better co-ordination and long term planning of non-reactive road works between utility companies and with highway authorities.

**“Is there any way that utility companies can improve liaison between each other? Lillie Road was not long re-surfaced before it was dug up again”**

Local resident

### Reactive Works

- 3.11. One of the problems in planning and co-ordinating road works is that the majority of works carried out are reactive; that is they are in response to a problem that has occurred which requires urgent work, which cannot be predicted in advance. It will never be possible, therefore, to perfectly plan and co-ordinate street works.

We believe, however, that the lane rental scheme will still help to encourage greater co-ordination and to incentivise a reduction in disruptive road works during peak times, even for reactive works.

- 3.12. Even where road works need to be carried out on major routes during peak times, road plating and other innovative ways of working enable works to be closed down during peak times and reopened again without having to shut down the works site. We believe that the Lane Rental Scheme needs to take account of this so as to encourage temporary opening of roads during peak times where possible, where works are being carried out. As long as roads are open during peak times this should be “free” and not chargeable under the scheme. This will ensure that even reactive road works lane rental charges are avoidable.

### Road Works Notices

- 3.13. For greater transparency of road works plans to local residents, as well as contractors themselves on site, it is important that the planned schedule of works is clearly advertised on the works site itself. This should give the reference for the works being carried out, the planned start and finish times for works and a contact telephone or e mail where late running works can be reported. We are recommending therefore that all road works be clearly signposted to allow local residents and site engineers to be clear about the expected and agreed timescale of the road works. This also allows companies to be clearly held to account for delays and slippage.

#### **Draft Recommendation Eight: Road Works Notices**

It is recommended that road works should be clearly signposted to allow local residents and site engineers to be clear about the expected and agreed timescale of the road works.

**“Notices (on works sites) never seem to start and finish when they say they will”**

**Local resident.**

- 3.14. We believe that improved planned and co-ordination of road works by all partners involved in carrying out works on the highway is an important part of the strategy to drive efficiency and effectiveness in highway maintenance and reduce disruption on our roads. Moreover, improved planning and co-ordination will benefit everyone, including utility companies, facilitating a more effective use of their time and resources, as well as a more efficient use of the public highway.
- 3.15. Regular joint co-ordination meetings between partners, more central information sharing and a regulatory and charging structure which incentivises co-operation and the efficient use of the highway, should all help to encourage a more joined up approach. And this in turn should help to avoid the blight of unnecessary disruption on our roads and help *Get H&F Moving*.

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# Acknowledgements

Our thanks to all of those who took time to attend to provide evidence to our inquiry or complete our questionnaire.

## Witnesses

*The following individuals, groups and organisations were interviewed during the inquiry:*

Councillor Nicolas Botterill – Cabinet Member for Environment and Asset Management  
Nick Boyle – Transportation and Development Manager, Hammersmith and Fulham Council  
Hammersmith and Fulham Tenants and Residents Association  
Ian Hawthorn – Head of Network Management, Hammersmith and Fulham Council  
Mr. Paresh Kavia – Thames Water  
Mr. David Leibling - London TravelWatch  
Mr. Peter Loft – Joint Chair London Highways Authority & Utilities Committee  
Mr. Brian Mooney – Association of British Drivers  
Local residents and businesses via questionnaire survey  
Councillor Joe Carlebach - Cllr Joe Carlebach - Councillor for Avonmore and Brook Green, Hammersmith and Fulham Council