# Redbridge’s Lane Rental Scheme reveals government’s focus on revenue over real traffic solutions



Redbridge Council’s plan to impose a Lane Rental Scheme on its busiest streets is yet another example of bureaucratic excess prioritising superficial solutions over real accountability. While the council claims this scheme will “reduce traffic disruption,” in reality, it amounts to little more than a tax on local businesses and utility companies that are already burdened by excessive regulation and red tape. The move comes amid a broader trend of councils implementing revenue-raising measures under the guise of congestion management—yet fails to address the root causes of traffic jams: poor urban planning, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and lack of effective enforcement of existing traffic laws.

The proposed charges, which could reach up to £2,500 a day on main roads like Ilford High Road and Wanstead High Street, are designed to incentivise companies to schedule works outside peak hours. But in practice, this just increases costs and burdens for those trying to maintain essential services. It’s a classic example of government meddling, creating economic barriers rather than facilitating efficient infrastructure repair. Councillor Jo Blackman’s claim that current arrangements lack “powerful and sensitive” incentives is a thinly veiled attempt to justify yet another bureaucratic scheme that ultimately will be funded by higher costs passed onto residents and businesses—the very people who can least afford it.

Furthermore, the scheme’s revenue is earmarked solely for local road maintenance, yet the entire process is predicated on never-ending interference from local authorities meddling in the day-to-day operations of companies that are already operating under excessive regulation. This approach does nothing to solve the deeper issues of traffic congestion, which are largely caused by government policies that restrict alternative transport options and overspend on vanity projects instead of maintaining a sensible, well-connected transportation network.

London’s experience with similar Lane Rental Schemes—pioneered by Transport for London in 2012—has shown that such measures often amount to just another expense for taxpayers, with limited evidence of significant improvement in traffic flow. While discounts are offered for better practice, these are merely band-aids on systemic failures. The real solution lies in smarter urban planning, better infrastructure investment, and a crackdown on delaying tactics used by utility firms. Instead, what we’re seeing is a bureaucratic cash grab disguised as congestion mitigation.

Across the UK, the Department for Transport advocates for fairness and transparency in these schemes, yet little is done to hold councils accountable when such measures merely serve local government revenues rather than the public’s genuine needs. The scheme in Redbridge will likely transform into another source of frustration for residents, who will see their journeys delayed or their costs increased, without any meaningful reduction in traffic congestion.

It’s high time we stopped rewarding government schemes that incentivise cost hikes and bureaucratic controls. Only by reducing unnecessary regulation and empowering residents and genuine transport solutions can we restore efficient movement on our roads. This Lane Rental Scheme will do little more than add another bureaucratic layer of expense and frustration—an undoubtedly costly “fix” for problems caused by further government intervention, not the market or common sense.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.yellowad.co.uk/redbridge-council-to-charge-for-roadworks-in-bid-to-reduce-disruption/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/transport-and-infrastructure/roadworks-and-closures/lane-rental-scheme/> - Redbridge Council has introduced a Lane Rental Scheme to reduce roadwork disruptions. Under this scheme, companies conducting works on high-traffic roads during peak times are charged daily fees: up to £2,500 for high-importance roads, £1,500 for medium, and £1,000 for low-importance roads. The funds collected are allocated towards road maintenance, and the scheme aims to encourage companies to plan works around peak travel hours, thereby reducing delays for drivers. The proposal has received full backing from the council's cabinet and is awaiting approval from the Secretary of State for Transport before implementation.
3. <https://www.redbridge.gov.uk/transport-and-infrastructure/roadworks-and-closures/lane-rental-scheme-consultation/> - Redbridge Council is consulting on its proposed Lane Rental Scheme, which aims to reduce roadwork disruptions by charging companies for occupying high-traffic roads during peak times. The consultation period runs from 28 July 2025 to 28 August 2025, inviting feedback from residents and stakeholders. The scheme categorises roads into high, medium, and low importance, with corresponding daily charges of up to £2,500, £1,500, and £1,000, respectively. The funds raised will be used for road maintenance, and the scheme is pending approval from the Secretary of State for Transport.
4. <https://www.tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2021/february/london-s-congestion-cutting-lane-rental-scheme-to-be-expanded-and-updated-from-may> - Transport for London (TfL) is expanding and updating its Lane Rental Scheme to further reduce congestion caused by roadworks. Starting in May 2021, the scheme will cover 69% of the TfL Road Network, up from 56%. Changes include reducing the length of charging periods to incentivise more off-peak work, providing substantial discounts to companies that improve their roadworks infrastructure, and introducing a new middle band charge of £1,500 per day. These measures aim to encourage utility companies to coordinate and complete works more efficiently, minimising disruption to road users.
5. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/lane-rental-schemes/guidance-to-english-local-highway-authorities> - The UK Department for Transport has issued guidance to English local highway authorities on implementing Lane Rental Schemes. These schemes allow authorities to charge companies for occupying the highway during street works, with the aim of reducing disruption to road users. The guidance outlines the legal basis for such schemes under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 and provides recommendations for their operation, including setting charges and managing funds. The document emphasises the importance of fairness and transparency in the application of these schemes.
6. <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/street-works-fines-and-lane-rental-surplus-funds/street-works-fines-and-lane-rental-surplus-funds> - The UK Department for Transport is consulting on the use of fines and surplus funds from Lane Rental Schemes. These schemes charge companies for occupying the highway during street works, with the aim of reducing disruption to road users. The consultation seeks views on how fines and surplus funds should be used, including potential reinvestment into road maintenance and improvements. The document outlines the current situation, including the legal framework and existing schemes, and invites stakeholders to provide feedback on the proposed use of funds.
7. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-18391626> - Utility firms in London are now subject to charges of up to £2,500 per day for roadworks on busy roads during peak times. The Lane Rental Scheme, implemented by Transport for London (TfL), aims to reduce disruption and encourage companies to carry out works during off-peak hours. The charges apply to 57% of the TfL road network, and TfL itself is not exempt from the charge. The scheme is part of a broader effort to improve traffic flow and minimise delays caused by roadworks in the capital.