

News story

Government to crack down on disruptive street works to cut congestion and improve roads

New measures could generate up to £100 million extra over 10 years to resurface roads across England.

From: [Department for Transport](#)
(</government/organisations/department-for-transport>),
[Guy Opperman MP](#) (</government/people/guy-opperman>),
and [The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP](#)
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- new proposals from the government's Plan for Drivers to cut traffic caused by street works
- utility companies that allow works to overrun face increased fines, which could generate up to £100 million extra to improve local roads

- launch of consultation follows record £8.3 billion increase to resurface roads across England as government continues to back drivers

A crackdown on disruptive roadworks could cut congestion for millions of drivers and generate up to £100 million extra to resurface roads, as the first key measures from the government's [Plan for Drivers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers>) are delivered today (15 January 2024).

Roads Minister, Guy Opperman, has launched a [street works consultation](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/street-works-fines-and-lane-rental-surplus-funds) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/street-works-fines-and-lane-rental-surplus-funds>) on a series of measures to prevent utility companies from letting roadworks overrun and clogging up traffic as a result.

The consultation seeks to extend the current £10,000 per day fine for overrunning street works into weekends and bank holidays as a deterrent for working on the busiest days for road travel. Currently, utility companies are only fined for disruption on working days. The measures could double fines from £500 up to a maximum of £1,000 for companies that breach conditions of the job, such as working without a permit.

The plans would also direct at least 50% of money from lane rental schemes to be used to improve roads and repair potholes. Lane rental schemes allow local highway authorities to charge companies for the time that street and road works occupy the road.

As a result, the measures could generate up to £100 million extra over 10 years to resurface roads while helping tackle congestion, cutting down journey times and helping drivers get from A to B more easily.

Launching on National Pothole Day, the consultation is part of a series of measures from the government's Plan for Drivers, a 30-point plan to support people's freedoms to use their cars, curb over-zealous enforcement measures and back drivers.

Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, said:

“ After investing an extra £8.3 billion to resurface roads across England, the largest ever increase in funding for local road improvements, this government continues to back drivers with these new measures from our Plan for Drivers.

“ Our new proposals seek to free up our roads from overrunning street works, cut down traffic jams and generate up to £100 million extra to resurface roads up and down the country.”

Roads Minister, Guy Opperman, said:

“ Being stuck in traffic is infuriating for drivers. Too often traffic jams are caused by overrunning street works.

“ This government is backing drivers, with a robust approach to utility companies and others, who dig up our streets. We will seek to massively increase fines for companies that breach conditions and fine works that overrun into weekends and bank holidays while making the rental for such works help generate up to an extra £100 million to improve local roads.”

While it's essential that gas, water and other utility companies carry out vital maintenance work to provide the services we all rely on, the 2 million street works carried out in England in 2022 to 2023 have cost the economy around £4 billion by causing severe road congestion and disrupting journeys.

The consultation comes after this government introduced a performance-based [street works regime](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-street-works-regime-to-clamp-down-on-pothole-pain) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-street-works-regime-to-clamp-down-on-pothole-pain>) to ensure utility companies resurface roads to the best possible standard, and new lane rental schemes where utility companies can be charged up to £2,500 per day for street works.

The measures can also help boost active travel by preventing street works from disrupting walking, wheeling and cycling while also providing opportunities to improve pavements and pedestrian crossings and make repairs to pavements and cycle lanes.

Edmund King, AA president, said:

“ Overrunning roadworks and poorly reinstated roads from utility companies frustrate drivers and cause unnecessary congestion, and trench defects can damage vehicles and injure those on 2 wheels.

“ We are pleased that the government is looking to extend the fines for over-running street works, invest more of the surplus fines in roads and ensure that those who dig up the roads repair them to a high and timely standard.”

In addition, the government plans to make all temporary, experimental or permanent restrictions on traffic digital. These so-called traffic regulation orders (TROs) include things like the location of parking spaces, road closures and speed limits.

Making these digital means they must now be added to satnav systems, ensuring drivers have the most up-to-date information, making journeys easier and paving the way for more reliable self-driving vehicles.

RAC Head of Policy, Simon Williams, said:

“ Drivers shouldn’t have to put up with temporary roadworks for any longer than is necessary, so we’re pleased to see the government is looking to do more to guarantee that utility companies minimise disruption by carrying out roadworks as quickly and efficiently as possible. They should also leave roads in better condition than they found them, which unfortunately is hardly ever the case at the moment.”

The measures follow the biggest ever funding uplift for local road improvements, with [£8.3 billion of redirected High Speed 2 \(HS2\) funding](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8-billion-boost-to-repair-roads-and-back-drivers) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/8-billion-boost-to-repair-roads-and-back-drivers>) – enough to resurface over 5,000 miles of roads across England – as the government continues to be on the side of drivers and improve journeys for more people, in more places, more quickly.

Kent County Council’s Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, Neil Baker, said:

“ I welcome the launch of the government’s street works consultation to consider measures aimed at preventing utility roadworks overrunning. We have already piloted a pioneering lane rental scheme on some of our roads, which encourages utility companies to work in the most efficient way to minimise disruption for the traveling public in Kent.

“ I will continue to work with government, the Department for Transport and other stakeholders to find ways we can reduce congestion in order to keep Kent moving.”

Clive Bairsto, Chief Executive of Street Works UK, said:

“ Utilities perform a vital role in connecting households, working to the highest standards, while complying with rigorous inspections to ensure works are high quality and lasting.

“ We look forward to engaging constructively with government throughout this consultation, representing our members and the wider industry, to ensure both utilities and local authorities can deliver infrastructure works while giving customers and road users the speed of delivery, lack of congestion and transparency they expect.”

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