

The Cheshire East Council Lane Rental Scheme

Proposed Detailed Evaluation Plan – April 2025

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Introduction

The New Roads & Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA), as amended by the Transport Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA), contains provision for Highway Authorities to operate Lane Rental Schemes that involve charging Promoters for the time their activities (road and street works) occupy the highway during Traffic-Sensitive times.

The Cheshire East Lane Rental Scheme (CELRS) has been introduced to support Cheshire East Council (CEC) in their duty to co-ordinate and manage all activities on the highway in order to minimise disruption.

The CELRS will be evaluated on an annual basis. The first evaluation report will cover a full year from the commencement date specified in the Statutory Instrument / Lane Rental Scheme Order.

The CELRS Evaluation Report will be based on the original assumptions made within the CELRS Cost Benefit Analysis (CBA), data collected by the West and Shires Permit (WaSP) Scheme and CELRS data and monitoring reports.

The CELRS Evaluation Report will be circulated for review as part of the joint working arrangements before being published on the Cheshire East Council Highways webpage.

This document provides details on the evaluation methodology, and the baseline data to be used for assessment and comparison purposes.

In the interests of parity and transparency, representatives of both CEC and Promoters will be actively involved in monitoring and the evaluation process.

The Regulations permit a portion of Lane Rental revenues to be applied for the purposes of Lane Rental Scheme evaluation.

The evaluation plan includes provision for independent evaluation of the CELRS performance, including an assessment of the overall balance between costs and benefits arising from the CELRS.

Joint Working Arrangements

The joint working arrangements for the CELRS will be a group made up of Officers of Cheshire East Council and / or its Highway service provider, including Environmental Health officer(s), local Utility representatives who are members of the Joint Utilities Group (JUG) and any consultants or support staff employed by Cheshire East Council.

The Chair will be the Lead Officer from Cheshire East Council.

Cheshire East Lane Rental Scheme Scope

The CELRS has been designed to ensure that charges are only applied when Promoters occupy Lane Rental Streets at Traffic-Sensitive times and to allow waivers or reduced charges at other times or for different ways of working to encourage Promoters to adopt less disruptive working practices.

Background

The Government's expectation is that a robust evaluation plan will be built into any proposed Lane Rental Scheme that is submitted for Secretary of State approval.

As the evaluation plan is an integral part of the CELRS, there is a need to adhere to the plan in order to comply with the terms of any Secretary of State approval.

The CELRS Evaluation Report will inform Central Government's overall assessment of the effectiveness of Lane Rental Schemes nationally.

The CELRS Evaluation Plan is based on the principle that the original CELRS Cost Benefit Analysis output is repeated using actual data produced over the initial and following years of operation.

Actual impacts and benefits are therefore calculated in a manner consistent with the original assumptions.

Cheshire East Lane Rental Scheme Evaluation Plan Objectives

The principal objective of the CELRS Evaluation Plan is to assess the extent to which the CELRS objectives are being met and the ongoing appropriateness of key parameters, such as the list of Lane Rental streets and charge levels.

The CELRS seeks to limit the amount of disruption to Cheshire East's roads by encouraging the undertaking of activities at the least disruptive time for road users, and for the early completion of activities.

The CELRS is designed to limit the carrying out of activities at specified locations at specified times by applying a daily charge for any part(s) of the day that the highway is occupied by the activities during chargeable hours.

The daily charge will not apply if the activities take place outside of the specified times.

The CELRS therefore provides a mechanism for providing all activity Promoters with an incentive to change behaviour and minimise their occupation of Lane Rental Streets at

Traffic-Sensitive times which are the most critical parts of the Cheshire East Highway Network.

The CELRS applies the following guiding principles:

- The cost of disruption from activities on the highway network must be recognised.
- Inconvenience to all people using a street must be minimised, but particularly to people with accessibility requirements, and other vulnerable road users such as people walking or cycling.

The objectives of the CELRS are to:

- Apply the scheme to all work Promoters on a consistent basis.
- Promote behavioural change to minimise the duration of occupation of the highway at the busiest locations at Traffic-Sensitive times.
- Minimise the number of activities taking place during the most Traffic-Sensitive times.
- Contribute towards reducing disruption to all road users.

Cheshire East Council will measure against these objectives and evaluate whether they are being met.

The means by which that will be achieved are set out in the Evaluation and Governance section of the Cheshire East Lane Rental Scheme Document, and this CELRS Evaluation Plan.

Improvements Expected

The expected improvements from the CELRS are:

- Behavioural changes that minimise the duration of occupation of the highway at the busiest locations at Traffic-Sensitive times.
- Reductions in the proportional number of activities taking place during Traffic-Sensitive times.
- Contributions towards maintaining or improving journey time reliability on the highway network.

Evaluation Plan Assessment Parameters

The CELRS Evaluation Plan sets out the evidence and data that will be collected to enable a proper evaluation to take place, and the pre-Lane Rental benchmarks against

which the before and after comparison will be made. Therefore, the CELRS Evaluation Plan defines;

- The success criteria by which it will be measured.
- The information used for monitoring and assessment.
- Surplus Revenue Allocation.
- Base Innovation and Disruption Saving Assumptions.
- Customer Satisfaction Monitoring.
- Updating the Lane Rental Streets List.

Success Criteria

The principal success criteria is the delivery of benefits arising from the CELRS, which are defined as:

- Reductions in disruption and congestion delay for road users where activities are carried out in a less disruptive way, benefiting both business users and private individuals.
- Improved journey time reliability for road users where activities are carried out in a less disruptive way, benefiting both business users and private individuals.
- Revenue generated by CELRS. The regulations require the revenue generated from lane rental to be applied to measures that will help to reduce the disruption caused by future activities. Such measures would be expected to deliver further benefits to Promoters, activities undertakers and road users.
- Environmental benefits. By reducing the congestion arising at activity sites, the CELRS has the potential to reduce road transport-related emissions – particularly local air quality pollution that is exacerbated by stationary or slow, stop-start traffic.

Table 1 – Summary Monitoring and Assessment Table

Baseline Costs and Benefits Parameters	Year 1	Year 2 +	Net Present Value
Costs			
Lane Rental Scheme charges paid by Promoters	£	£	£
Costs of any behavioural change incurred by undertakers	£	£	£
CELRS administration costs	£	£	£
Total Costs	£	£	£
Benefits			
Reduction in delay costs seen by society (CBA Assessment)	£	£	£
CELRS surplus revenue allocation	£	£	£
Total Benefits	£	£	£
Net Benefits to Society	£	£	£

Surplus Revenue Allocation

An important element to the CELRS Evaluation Plan is an assessment of the allocation and subsequent impacts of any surplus revenues generated.

Surplus revenues will be applied towards initiatives that are associated with, and aligned to, the objectives of the CELRS, within the areas shown below;

- investment in innovation and developing new products or disruption-saving techniques
- trials of new techniques and products
- installing “pipe subways” or ducting that enable apparatus to be accessed more easily and without causing disruption to traffic
- measures to improve the quality or accessibility of records about the location of underground pipes, wires, and other apparatus
- measures to help abate noise, pollution or safety hazards arising as a result of works
- repairing potholes caused by utility street works
- implementing extraordinary measures to mitigate congestion caused by works, especially major works projects
- for surplus funds to be used for either capital or revenue projects

Base Innovation and Disruption Saving Assumptions

It is assumed that;

- Significant progress will be made in developing and applying new, less-disruptive techniques by the third year of the CELRS.
- There will be increased scope to work in less disruptive ways in years three (3) to five (5) onwards, therefore; in following years Promoters and undertakers are able to reduce their exposure to lane rental charges by increasing their expenditure on, and use of, less disruptive working practices.
- Lane rental charges will also provide an incentive for Promoters and undertakers to further invest in the development of less-disruptive techniques.
- There will be an increased use of innovative traffic management.
- There will be an increased use of innovative techniques.

Customer Satisfaction Monitoring

Another important element to the CELRS Evaluation Plan is an assessment of changes to the public perception regarding activities on the highway network.

Wherever possible, monitoring of customer satisfaction, public perception and stakeholder communication will be undertaken and reported on.

Examples of surveys and monitoring could include;

- Frustrations associated with activities carried out at busy times.
- Frustrations associated with repeated activities on the same stretch of road.
- Streets partially closed, but no-one working on site.
- Future activities communicated effectively.
- Acknowledgement that the cost of activities to society are being recognised.
- Understanding that the cost of activities to society are being repaid through network and operational improvements.

Updating the Lane Rental Streets List

Part of the assessment of the CELRS is a review of the Lane Rental Streets Lists.

It is anticipated that, depending on the extent of changes and developments to the Cheshire East Highway Network, the list of streets will be reviewed every, one (1) to three (3) years.

This is to ensure that the list is always appropriate and takes account of changes to the highway network, such as a bypass changing a congested high street into a quiet shopping area.

Lane Rental Charges

In accordance with the Regulations and the Scope of the CELRS, CEC will apply a daily rate of charge for the duration of the specified activities carried out by the promoter at the specified location during the specified times and days.

Calculating the Charge

To calculate the daily rate of charge, other than for immediate works, the duration of the activities shall begin on the date specified in the actual start of works notice and end on the date specified in the works stop notice, the date of works ended.

For all types of immediate works, charges will be waived for a period of 48 hours after which time the normal lane rental rules for the location will apply – taking the works start as stated within the relevant permit application and ending on the date stated on the relevant Section 74 works clear or works stop notice.

Promoters are strongly encouraged to consider the carrying out of immediate works outside of specified days and times wherever possible.

When calculating the actual work start and finish dates for all activities, the Permit Authority or the promoter may provide additional information to prove a variation to the duration and activity type, if different to any submitted notice. In all circumstances any charge will be applied according to the actual occupation and activity.

Section 74 overrun charges will apply in accordance with the Section 74 Regulations following the end of the agreed reasonable period, in addition to the CELRS charges.

Identifying Lane Rental Charge Periods

Within the CBA, a traffic model is used with an assumption being that activities are done outside Traffic-Sensitive times and / or with a shorter duration.

A comparison with normal behaviour is then possible, and this is done by simulation with normal activities creating reduced traffic flows using a traffic profile run in a Quadro model.

Lane Rental Schemes Guidance for English Authorities states:

‘An application must demonstrate how the scheme will deliver the benefits, and it must also justify the details of the scheme, including which roads which are included in the scheme, the charging structure etc. The application must include a full cost benefit analysis of the scheme with all the underlying data used to create the assumptions in that analysis.

Benefits attributed to lane rental should not include those benefits that could reasonably be expected to arise in the absence of lane rental under other mechanisms already in place within the area of the proposed scheme.’

To support promoters in identifying the times Lane Rental Charges apply to Lane Rental Streets, the journey time profile (as set out in the Cost-Benefit Analysis) has been aligned to the Traffic-Sensitive Streets times so Lane Rental Charges apply during Traffic-Sensitive times on the identified streets.

Lane Rental Charge Categories

The Regulations allow for a prescribed daily rate of charge, which may be waived or reduced in particular cases.

In accordance with the Regulations and with consideration to the objectives of the CELRS, there are a range of charge categories depending on the traffic control type, works type, location, times and days of work.

The CELRS 'Cheshire East Lane Rental Scheme Charges Policy and Table' sets out the traffic control type, works type, location, times and days of work and any applicable charge.

If an activity spans more than one traffic control type at any time during duration of the activities, then the daily rate of charge will apply for the days the different traffic control type is in place.

In instances where the activities have fully moved to a lower traffic control type, thereby changing the charging to be applied, the promoter must submit a timely permit variation. If the permit variation is solely for the purpose of notifying that the activities have transferred from one traffic control type to another then this permit variation would not be subject to a permit fee.

For the calculation of charges in such instances the Permit Authority will determine the timings for such changes based on the receipt of the associated permit variation.

In accordance with the Regulations 4(4) the Permit Authority reserves the right in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, to apply a discretionary discount to the lane rental charge.

Reference to Previous Lane Rental Trials Cost Benefit Analysis.

Prior to the introduction of the lane rental scheme a cost benefit analysis was carried out. This was based on a QUADRO programme.

A range of activities scenarios were modelled at selected locations across the network to establish representative values for the costs of the roadwork.

For each site, tests were carried out for lane closure and for full road closure, with and without the lane rental scheme in place, and for activities outside the time sensitive periods.

The QUADRO output was collated to determine average values for each charge band and network type.

These average values were used for the original cost benefit analysis and have been adopted for the post scheme monitoring of the trial schemes.

The cost benefit analysis, prior to the introduction of trial lane rental schemes, was based on the average values per activity and on assumptions about the potential behaviour change by Promoters.

Average Cost of Activities on the Highway

The average costs of activities on the highway established for the trial cost benefit analysis were based on outputs from the QUADRO program.

The costs per day of activities include vehicle delay, diversion, consumer and business impacts, accident costs, fuel carbon emissions, fuel tax revenue etc.

In order to maintain a consistent approach, these average representative costs have been used for the original CELRS Cost Benefit Analysis and any CELRS Evaluation Reports unless more accurate data is identified.

Evaluation Principles

In the CELRS CBA a traffic model is used with an assumption based on those activities being moved to outside Traffic-Sensitive times and a comparison made of the different impacts.

This is done by simulation with reduced traffic flows using a traffic profile run in a Quadro model.

These Lane Rental Charge periods can also be shown for weekday and weekend days.

The assumption is that a percentage of activities move to times outside Traffic-Sensitive Times, this was initially 10%.

This is shown as the total workdays that move from peak to off peak times.

Another factor considered is improved efficiency of work during peak hours or Lane Rental Charge Periods.

Analysis of whether activities are completed quicker will be evidence based and collected throughout the year.

The CELRS Evaluation Plan is an examination of actual data regarding the behavioural change from introducing CELRS with comparison to the original assumptions made in the pre-scheme Cost Benefit Analysis.