



Department
for Transport

Department of Transport Policy Update

April 2026

1. Lane rental

- **New Statutory Funding Requirement**

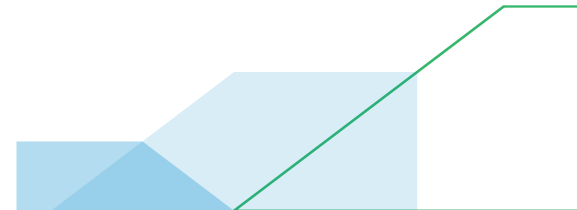
At least 50% of net surplus lane rental funds must now be invested in highway maintenance work. DfT expects this to only apply to surplus net proceeds generated on or after the 5 January 2026.

- **Updated National Guidance**

Guidance now allows greater network coverage flexibility, removes unnecessary requirements and requires a higher standard of evidence as part of the cost benefit analysis.

- **Approval powers will be devolved to Mayors**

Lane rental scheme approval responsibilities move from Department for Transport to regional Mayors in late 2026. With this will come new statutory guidance for Mayors on how to assess schemes.



2. EV Charge Point Operators

- **EV CPOs Added to the Permit Regime**

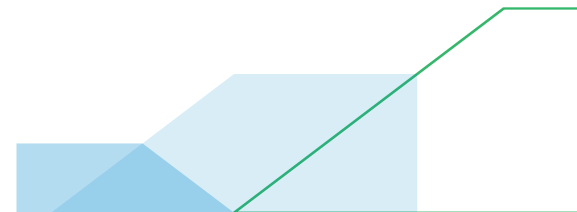
EV charge point operators are now fully within the street works permit system. This replaces the section 50 licensing model, giving authorities clearer oversight, better coordination tools, and a consistent national framework for EV installations.

- **Mandatory Use of Street Manager and SWA Codes**

All CPOs must obtain a Street Works Act (SWA) code from GeoPlace and submit all permit applications through Street Manager.

- **Full enforcement framework now applies**

CPOs are now subject to fixed penalty notices, late start/stop notice penalties, reinstatement requirements, and potential section 74 overrun charges. The performance-based inspection regime applies in full, giving authorities confidence that EV installation does not compromise network safety, reinstatement quality or asset condition.



3. Guidance updates

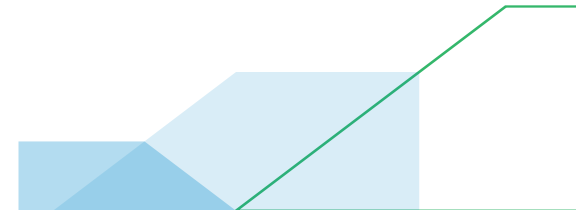
- **The Safety at Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice**

The Safety at Street Works and Road Works Code of Practice is being updated for the first time since 2013. The revised Code strengthens protections for vulnerable road users, modernises signage and site layout requirements, and aligns with updated legislation such as Inclusive Mobility and TSRGD. External legal review is underway, with consultation expected in summer 2026.

- **Coordination Code of Practice**

We're working closely with the HAUC working group on this to make sure the recent legislative changes and where appropriate HAUC information notes are incorporated.

Beyond this it's also a unique opportunity to look again at some of the recommendations produced last year by the transport select committee to understand if and how any of those can be incorporated into the update.



4. Unadopted roads

- **Growing Challenge on New Developments**

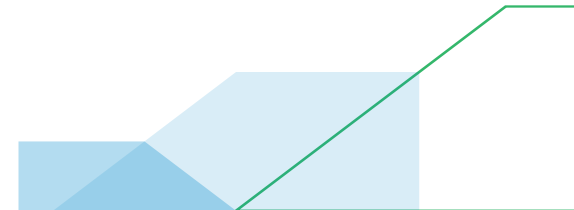
Unadopted roads are increasingly common on large, modern housing estates, where roads may remain privately owned for years. Local authorities, developers and residents all report difficulties with the current adoption system under the Highways Act 1980, citing delays, inconsistent standards and complex ownership arrangements.

- **Residents and Stakeholder Impacts**

Residents often face higher estate charges, limited enforcement powers, unclear responsibilities and safety or drainage concerns. Developers prefer adoption but frequently encounter delays, rising costs and inconsistent local requirements.

- **Government Activity Underway**

Despite devolution, all schemes must comply with national criteria including coverage, quality, and governance standards. MHCLG has consulted on estate management reform, and DfT has commissioned Ipsos to review the declining rate of road adoption. No decisions have been taken.



5. Summary



A Transformational Period for Street Works Policy

Lane rental is expanding rapidly, with new statutory requirements, improved guidance and decision-making moving to Mayors in 2026. EV charge point operators now enter the permit regime, bringing consistency and much-needed oversight to a fast-growing sector.



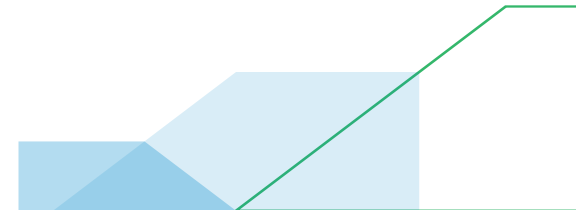
Guidance Modernisation in Progress

The Safety Code and Coordination Code are both undergoing significant updates to reflect modern practice, strengthen safety and improve coordination across the network.



Future Challenges Being Reviewed

Unadopted roads are an area of growing concern. Work is underway across government to understand the scale of the issue, but no commitments are being made at this stage.

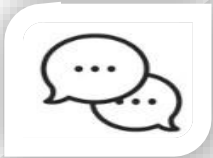




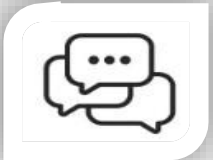
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Questions



Comments



Concerns