

<b>Committee(s):</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Streets & Walkways Sub Committee	15th October 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Update report: Replacement existing street furniture to support City of London Wireless Concession.	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Director of Built Environment	<b>For decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Steven Bage Strategic Infrastructure Advisor	

### Summary

At your meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 Members approved a report recommending 10 initial locations where 3 metre street furniture columns would be replaced with 8 metres columns across the Square Mile to support the roll out of 5G mobile small cell equipment, and that a subsequent report be received by Members at a later date, to ensure satisfaction with the 10 locations, with a view to delegated authority being granted to the Director of Built Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Streets & Walkways Committee relating to the approval of an additional 150 replacement columns.

Provided Members are satisfied with the impact of the 10 initial locations, this report seeks approval from Streets & Walkways Sub Committee to grant delegated authority to the Director of the Built Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman to permit the replacement of 3 metre columns with 8 metre columns in a further 150 locations, on the basis that the initial 10 locations are not considered to present an impact on users of the public highway. All of the initial locations were approved by the Highways, Access and Development Division of the Department of Built Environment, with street furniture being installed in line with the Public Realm Technical Manual and the protocol for replacing columns outlined in Appendix 3.

It is considered that the 10 initial locations, and subsequent 150 new 8 metre columns will not adversely affect users of the public highway.

### Recommendations:

- i. **It is recommended that subject to Members being satisfied with the 10 initial locations, delegated authority be granted to the Director of the Built Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Streets & Walkways Committee to approve the further replacement of 3 metre columns with 8 metre columns in 150 locations to facilitate the housing 5G small cell equipment to improve mobile coverage across the Square Mile.**

## Main Report

### Background

1. At Streets & Walkways Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018, Members approved a report of the Director of Built Environment seeking to replace selected existing 3 metre non-electrified street furniture columns (housing road signs / cigarette bins) with taller 8 metre columns to house small cell mobile equipment providing enhanced mobile coverage and supporting the City Corporation's Wireless Concession agreement (signed with CTIL), to ensure that better mobile coverage can be provided in areas of the Square Mile where there is a notable absence of street furniture. 8 metre columns are required in order to ensure that mobile signals are not impacted by buses, trees and other structures on the highway which can affect user coverage at street level. Members requested a further report to be sent to Streets & Walkways Committee to verify that an initial 10 locations where 3 metre columns were replaced with 8 metre columns would not adversely impact on users of the public highway, allowing Members to take a more informed decision in considering the implications of granting delegated authority to the Director of the Built Environment for a further 150 columns to be installed.
2. The Wireless Concession signed between the City Corporation and CTIL promotes the City as an exemplar in providing world class wireless infrastructure and is viewed as a corporate priority, which relates to section 9.a) of the Corporate Plan, *"To champion and facilitate a world leading digital experience"*. It and has already delivered a world leading free to use gigabit Wi-Fi network and 200 4G small cells (the largest roll out of its kind in the UK) using street furniture, and at no cost to the City. The Wireless Concession is expected to generate £12m in revenue to the City Corporation over 15 years.
3. A recent letter sent to the Town Clerk from the Minister for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, outlined that the Government welcomes efforts from local authorities to support new investment in digital connectivity to benefit communities, with a particular focus on the granting of access to council owned assets and infrastructure to support roll out of fibre and mobile networks. Similarly, the London Assembly Regeneration Committee's *"Digital Connectivity in London"* report has recognised the leading role of the City Corporation in delivering a world leading wireless infrastructure across the Square Mile.

### Current situation

4. The existing roll out of 200 small cells has utilised much of the City owned street furniture assets that are suitable for hosting mobile infrastructure required by mobile operators. The replacement of existing 3 metre columns with 8 metre columns in 150 locations represents only 4% of existing street furniture stock, and will be sufficient to be able to accommodate new 5G small cell roll out for the foreseeable future. The future roll out of 5G across the City will be dependent on a network of infrastructure at street level and in reasonably close proximity. The installation of new taller 8 metre street furniture columns is fundamental to ensuring that the City Corporation can respond to the demands for deployment of 5G

networks across the Square Mile to support the needs of workers, residents and visitors and the competitiveness of the City as a global business centre.

5. Without the replacement of existing street furniture with 150 new 8 metre locations there is a real risk that mobile operators may divert investment in 5G infrastructure to other cities across the UK. By taking advantage of the opportunity to replace existing street furniture with larger columns the City Corporation will be able to avoid increasing street furniture to facilitate 5G roll out. Similarly if mobile operators are unable to access sufficient street furniture to deploy new 5G infrastructure within the Square Mile, they may resort to requesting their own larger columns (often 10 metres tall) through the Planning system in order to meet customer demand.
6. It is considered that the 10 initial locations, and subsequent 150 new 8 metre columns will not adversely affect users of the public highway, which has been confirmed through consultation with the relevant colleagues in the City of London Access and Highways Teams in the Department of Built Environment, and undertaking the processes outlined below:
  - Appendix 1 - Site specific comparison assessment and location map, outlining new 8m columns compared with previous 3m columns.
  - Appendix 2 - 8 metre and 3 metre column height and footprint comparison.
  - Appendix 3 - Protocol for replacing 3 metre columns to 8 metre columns.
  - Approval of street furniture installations by City of London Access team, Highways team and Development Division of Planning (paras 8-10 of this report).
  - Conformity with the City of London Public Realm Manual (para 12 of this report).

### **Assessment of currently installed 8 metre columns**

#### *Appearance and dimensions of new 8 metre columns*

7. The “Site specific comparison assessment and location map” shown in Appendix 1 shows photographs of the new 8 metre columns installed on the public highways in comparison with the previous 3 metre columns. Appendix 2 similarly shows the increased footprint of the 8 metre columns, rising from 7cm to 15cm in diameter. Whilst Members expressed a view that columns should be installed as close to the kerb or building line as possible, some columns have had to be installed further away from the kerb line to avoid being struck by vehicles, and also to ensure vehicle doors can be fully opened when parked close to the kerb.

#### *Approval from City of London Highways team / Development Division*

8. The Highways Division of the Department of Built Environment has confirmed that the replacement of the columns will not fundamentally affect pedestrians and other users of the highway, with each location having been surveyed with the Highways Division on its own merits and deemed to be acceptable from a highways perspective, as it is replacing existing street furniture locations rather than adding new street furniture.

9. Similarly, the Development Division in the Department of Built Environment has confirmed that the installation of the 8 metre columns and associated mobile infrastructure are considered non-material in urban design and conservation terms. Further engagement with the Development Division will be undertaken in considering additional future sites for replacement columns beyond the initial 10 new sites, pending Member's approval of this report.

#### *Approval from City of London Access team*

10. The Access Team in the Department of Built Environment, has approved all of the 10 initial locations where new 8 metre column locations have been installed on the basis that they conform with statutory passing distance and do not narrow pavement width or restrict the movement of users on the public highway. Any further installations will comply with this requirement. All columns installed near to bollards have been installed alongside them to avoid any narrowing of the footway.

#### *Equality Analysis*

11. An Equality Analysis "Test of Relevance" has been undertaken which found that there will be no impact on any of the Equality Groups outlined in the Test of Relevance. The Access Team and City Public Realm team has subsequently confirmed that owing to the outcome of the Test of Relevance, a full Equality Assessment for this proposal will not be required and no further action is required.

#### *Conformity with the City of London Public Realm Technical Manual*

12. Members have previously requested that the proposals outlined in this report must conform the Public Realm Technical Manual. The City Public Realm team has confirmed that the 10 initial locations are in line with the Public Realm Technical Manual, which will be updated in Q1 2020, and will include a section providing guidance on design and location of street furniture housing small cell infrastructure in conjunction with public realm.

#### *Protocol for replacing 3 metre columns to 8 metre columns*

13. The protocol for replacement of 3 metre columns with 8 metre columns (Appendix 3), requires the consulting of the Highways, Public Realm & Transportation, Access & Planning teams within the Department of Built Environment, and has been rigorously followed during the installation of the 10 initial 8 metre columns. The process will continue to be applied going forward in rolling out the 150 new 8 metre columns, pending Member's approval.
14. The protocol and a process chart (see Appendix 3) have been devised in consultation with colleagues in the Department of Built Environment with columns being installed on the basis that they must fulfill the following criteria that:
  - There is an ongoing need for the column to host street signage.
  - There are no major planned programmes of enhancement to be undertaken that could require removal of the columns.

- That statutory passing distances have been upheld between the column and building line or structures on the highway.
- All installation works are coordinated in a timely manner and must take place out of hours.
- The total duration of installation works for each column will not take more than 2 days, preventing ongoing impact on users of the public highway.

15. Locations for the 150 new 8 metre columns have not yet been determined and will be driven by demand from mobile operators, based on where greater 5G coverage and capacity is needed. It is expected that requests for new 8 metre columns will come forward in batches, with consent being sought from the Director of Built Environment in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of Streets & Walkways committee, pending Members' approval of this report.

### **Financial considerations**

16. The installation of the 10 initial 8 metre columns and subsequent 150 additional 8 metre columns will be funded entirely by CTIL, and at no cost to the City Corporation. The City will retain ownership of the new columns as highways assets, which will be able to support future initiatives such as the housing of sensors for smart city initiatives.

### **Conclusion**

17. It is important that the City Corporation is able to provide sufficient street furniture to support the Wireless Concession, which has put the City Corporation in a leading position to benefit from improved mobile coverage and the numerous advantages which 5G is expected to bring. The granting of 150 new 8 metre columns will attract new investment from mobile operators and ensure that the Square Mile can become one of the first 5G cities, reinforcing the competitiveness of the City of London as a global business centre and an early adopter of new technology.

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