

City of London Corporation Committee Report

Committee(s): Streets & Walkways Sub Committee Planning & Transportation Committee	Dated: 16 September 2025 21 October 2025
Subject: Advertising board update	Public report: For Decision
This proposal: delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	- Vibrant Thriving Destination - Diverse Engaged Communities
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	n/a
What is the source of Funding?	n/a
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	n/a
Report of: Executive Director Environment	
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Summary

Advertising boards or A-boards pose safety and accessibility issues, particularly for people with impaired vision or mobility. In March 2020 the Planning & Transportation Committee approved a City-wide ban of A-boards to ensure clear and accessible pavements. However, the implementation of enforcement was delayed during the COVID-19 pandemic and to allow time for footfall to recover post-pandemic.

As footfall in the City of London increases and the working population rises, maintaining clear pavements is crucial for creating an inclusive environment that allows people to navigate our streets independently and safely. This Sub Committee received an update in July 2024 on the phased approach to implementation of the A-board ban, engaging with businesses and working towards enforcement by City Corporation Street Enforcement Officers in 2025.

Officers have conducted a City-wide study to identify the distribution, location, and purpose of A-boards. This identified A-boards or similar obstructions at 830 out of

1,994 surveyed sites, representing 42% of the total locations, with the majority (93%) serving exclusively as advertising tools with no wayfinding element. 75% of A-boards were positioned on public highway. This widespread use of A-boards on public highways poses challenges for maintaining clear, safe and accessible pavements.

Based on the findings of the study, an internal review was conducted to:

- understand how teams would react to the request to remove A-boards
- determine the feasibility of a licence-based system for the businesses using A-boards for wayfinding to support businesses without visible frontages.

Based on the above this report seeks approval to continue with current policy and begin engagement prior to enforcement (Option 1, recommended) or amend the A-board policy to allow A-boards for wayfinding purposes by exception and proceed to public consultation (Option 2). Further consideration could also be given to other exemptions under licence based on location or other factors. This can be considered as an option if Members agree to amend the current policy to allow exemptions.

Recommendation(s)

Members of the Streets & Walkways Sub Committee are asked to:

- Comment on the options and make recommendations to the Planning & Transportation Committee.

Members of the Planning and Transportation Committee are asked to:

- Note the comments of the Streets & Walkways sub-committee
- Agree to proceed with one of the following:
Option 1: Continue with current policy and begin engagement prior to enforcement (Recommended).
Option 2: Amend the A-board policy to allow A-boards for wayfinding purposes by exception (via a Way-board licence or other licencing criteria) and proceed to public consultation.

Main Report

Background

1. A-boards are usually used by businesses to advertise and promote their services. They are typically a simple stand-alone board on a heavy 'A' shape frame, which businesses place across the pavement, to attract attention. Their size and type differ across a broad range of business activities.
2. A-boards narrow the pavement and can cause an obstruction. Many campaigning organisations have been advocating for a complete ban of A-boards stating that it is essential for older, blind and partially sighted people, wheelchair and mobility aids users to have a clear route along the pavement.

3. The Royal National Institute of Blind People (2014) note: “The proliferation of A-boards can make it difficult for those with sight difficulties to negotiate the path. This can result in them walking into A-boards and injuring themselves or inadvertently walking into the road whilst attempting to avoid these obstructions. Falling over or bumping into an A-board can be painful and can adversely affect blind and partially sighted people’s confidence and mobility. The overuse of A-boards can restrict their freedom and opportunity to participate in their local community.”
4. Transport for all (2014) note: “Street clutter is not just a problem for visually impaired people, but a problem for wheelchair users, scooter users, buggy users, and older people too. Transport for All welcome this ‘zero-tolerance’ approach to businesses which repeatedly flout rules on keeping the pavement clear. Not everyone can step down into the road to bypass an A-board or other obstacle”
5. In May 2019 the first edition of the Transport Strategy was adopted. This included a proposal to keep pavement free of obstructions, including not permitting A-boards on the public highway.
6. In March 2020, the Planning & Transportation committee approved a City-wide ban of A-boards. However, the implementation was delayed during the COVID 19 Pandemic and to allow time for footfall to recover post-pandemic (Appendix 1).
7. Although we have not yet commenced enforcement of the policy, we are currently encouraging businesses that contact us not to place A-boards on the Public Highway. Instead, businesses are offered the opportunity to increase their business visibility through the City of London Corporation’s visitor-facing marketing channels. Businesses can be listed on thecityofldn.com, which currently features over 280 listings, and they may also submit events and offers. This provides an opportunity for potential coverage on the City of London Corporation’s website, newsletters, and social media platforms.
8. In October 2021, the Streets & Walkways Sub Committee approved our commitment to Transport for All’s Equal Pavements Pledge to: “Operate a zero-tolerance approach to street clutter. Issue warnings to businesses that obstruct pavements with A-boards and follow up with fines.” (Transport for All , 2021)
9. Transport for London (TfL) enforce a ban on A-boards on the TfL Road Network (also known as Red Routes) including within the City. In our neighbour boroughs there are several approaches, including:
 - Westminster, zero tolerance of A-boards with fixed penalty notices issued.
 - Hackney, no A-boards are allowed on the public highway, fines issued for obstruction.
 - Camden has restrictions on A- boards, however due to issues with compliance in some areas they have set up a working group and trial to best manage the complexities.
 - Islington has implemented policies to restrict the use of A-boards on pavements. A permit is available for some locations, with a fee.
10. With effect from 2 April 2024, the National Pavement Licence Guidance has been updated to state that: “Advertising boards are not included in the definition of furniture within the pavement licensing regime. As well as needing consent under

the Highways Act 1980, advertising boards also require express advertising consent under the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2007.” Prior to April, A-boards were not expressly prohibited, and some licences may have included A-boards within the pavement licence area. These licences expired in September 2024 and no business in the City of London has an A-board under their licence.

11. Hybrid policy approaches have been explored to balance business needs and pedestrian safety. However, the City’s narrow pavements and high foot traffic make these approaches inequitable. A policy that supports allowing A-boards on streets with wider pavements (such as Cheapside) could disadvantage businesses located in the narrower streets and lanes (such as Bow Lane) and does not create a level playing field for businesses to operate and compete. A paper brought to the Planning & Transportation Committee in 2014 highlighted complaints from traders and informed the subsequent reports to members.
12. Pressure on the City’s pavements is increasing, with footfall level now between 70-80% of 2019 levels and increasing year on year. Over the period of the City Plan, GLA projections suggest that 104,000, or 14.2% more people will be working in the City of London by 2041 (City Corporation, 2023). Accessible pavements that help people navigate their surroundings independently and safely will be key to accommodating future growth.

Current Position

13. Proposal 16: Keep pavements free of obstructions of the second edition of the Transport Strategy includes not permitting A-boards on the public highway.
14. This Sub Committee received an update in July 2024 outlining a phased implementation of the A-board ban. These updates detailed the City Corporation’s approach to engaging with businesses, raising awareness of the policy objectives, and encouraging the adoption of alternative methods that maintain clear and accessible pavements on the public highway. The phased approach was designed to support businesses transition ahead of formal enforcement, which was scheduled for 2025.
15. To guide our engagement strategy, officers conducted a baseline assessment to understand the distribution and use of A-boards. The findings indicated that A-boards were widely used across the City. Based on this study officers conducted a case study to gather information from internal teams using A-boards and assess stakeholder reception to the request to remove A-boards from our streets. A summary of the results appears below; and details of the A-board Baseline Study can be found in Appendix 2.
16. Our research highlighted the prevalence of A-boards in the City, and the challenges involved in balancing business needs with the goal of maintaining accessible, clutter-free pavements. It also highlighted that a small number of businesses use A-boards for wayfinding purposes, and as a result we have explored an alternative option for members to consider, detailed in Option 2.
17. Note that proceeding with either of the options outlined below will mean that there will be locations where we do not allow A-boards but do allow tables and chairs. There are separate licensing powers for tables and chairs, applications for which are considered on their own merits.

A-Board Baseline Study

18. To evaluate the distribution and use of A-boards throughout the City, data was collected via the Field Maps App. This process utilised a custom Geographical Information System (GIS) base layer of business locations developed by the City Corporation GIS team.
19. A-boards or similar obstructions were identified at 830 out of 1,994 surveyed sites, representing 42% of the total locations.
20. A-boards are primarily used for advertising, with 772 boards (93%) serving this purpose. A small percentage (0.7%) are used for wayfinding; these were usually businesses in alleyways. About 5.7% serve both advertising and wayfinding roles, and 0.6% fall under other uses, such as buckets full of flowers, or postcard stands for sale outside or delivery trolleys without branding (Table 1).
21. Chain café/sandwich bars (such as Pret a Manger, Itsu, café Nero) had A-boards at all of their locations, a total of 52 A-boards (amounting to 7% of A-boards counted). Some also had delivery trolleys with advertising outside.

Table 1: Distribution of A-boards by purpose

Category	Number of Boards	Percentage
Advertising	772	93%
Wayfinding	6	0.7%
Both advertising and wayfinding	47	5.7%
Other	5	0.6%

22. A-boards placement was photographed. Often A-boards were positioned in ways that reduced the available space on pavements and in some cases caused obstruction. In contrast, businesses that placed A-boards inside their premises maintained unobstructed pavements and were noted as examples of good practice; these instances were not included in the count of on-street A-boards.
23. The data on the type of land usage reveals that a significant majority of A-boards are on the public highway (Table 2). There were a number of boards on private land we cannot enforce on these areas or any land which is within curtilage of a building. We can only enforce on pavement legally defined as within 'Highway'. We do intend to encourage an approach on private land which is in line with our accessibility principles.
24. There was a wide spread use of A-boards across all wards, including streets such as Bishopsgate, Farringdon Street, and New Bridge Street, which are subject to TfL enforcement. TfL are enforcing their streets, with a total ban on A-boards, however there are incidences of businesses flouting the rules, which are reflected in the numbers.

Table 2: Distribution of A-boards by land type

Type of Land	Number	Percentage
Public highway	621	75%
Private land	153	18%
Uncertain	56	7%

Internal Review

25. The engagement with various teams displaying A-boards in the City highlighted diverse perspectives on their usage. Teams involved included the Air Quality Team, Street Environment Officers and the Guildhall Art Gallery. These teams served as case studies in understanding the practicality and impact of A-boards removals.
26. While all acknowledged the necessity of their A-boards for conveying key messages, communicating campaigns, and providing wayfinding information, they also recognised the importance of accessibility.
27. Teams raised concerns about having to remove their A-boards, however, all teams expressed a willingness to explore innovative solutions for effective communication without causing obstructions. One team trialled the use plastic sleeves on City Corporation bollards to convey information, which are less obstructive than A-boards.
28. Alongside these efforts, teams requested we provide information regarding available alternatives to A-boards, clarification on public land usage policies, and guidance on utilising them for temporary events. Recognising these needs, the City Corporation will schedule further workshops designed to foster the sharing of best practices and the identification of practical, compliant solutions. These sessions aim to ensure that all teams are empowered to communicate effectively while leading by example in accessibility and innovation.
29. It is worth noting that one team, despite having removed their A-boards, observed that other teams continued their usage, leading them to request permission to use A-boards again. This observation highlights the need for consistent enforcement to ensure all teams comply uniformly, preventing any group from feeling disadvantaged or pressured to revert to old practices.

Proposals

Option 1: Continue with current policy and begin engagement prior to enforcement (Recommended).

30. Option 1 aims to address obstructions through strict enforcement of A-board regulations, ensuring clear and accessible pavements.
31. This approach prioritises public safety and compliance with legal obligations, potentially reducing accidents and liability risks. Additionally, it aligns with the Equality Act and the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), reinforcing the City Corporation's commitment to creating inclusive and accessible public spaces.
32. Under both option 1 and 2 engagement and enforcement would be carried out in four stages:
 - Advisory letter - notify businesses of enforcement start.

This will be supported by further information on the reasons why we are asking businesses to remove A-boards, alternative methods that they can adopt with examples of best practice, and the contact of internal teams to explore signage or online marketing options.

- A warning letter - This will be issued, accompanied by policy guidance, after an A-board has been recorded following the advisory letter, warning of the next stage of penalty.
- Notice letter - Notice will be served to a premises if they do not comply following the Warning letter
- Enforcement letter - Served with a Fixed Penalty Notice and prosecution if necessary, depending upon which legislation is used

33. Each letter will refer to the previous, and to the next stage, so that the continuum of the enforcement process is clear. The above enforcement process adds an additional layer to s17 of the Local Authority and Transport Act 2003 (the Notice Letter of paragraph above, bullet point 4). The procedure in the LATA 2003 provides for a three-stage process. Following this revised process, with its four stages, will give businesses time to adapt to the changes and improve compliance. Further detail on the time between notices will be worked up after committee decision. It is important to develop the process with due regard to the risk of legal challenge.

34. Non-enforcement of the policy could undermine the local authority's commitment to the Equality Act and its Public Sector Equality Duty. Furthermore, the risks caused by the continued obstruction puts the City Corporation at risk of litigation for non-compliance with duties under Section 130 of the Highways Act 1980.

35. Businesses that rely on A-boards for visibility and customer engagement are likely to express frustration and concern. These businesses may perceive the removal as a threat to footfall and economic viability, particularly those without prominent frontages or located in alleyways. Conversely, businesses that are already compliant or located on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) - where A-boards are already banned - may welcome enforcement. They might see it as a move toward fairness and improved accessibility.

36. Adopting this course of action is expected to promote consistent compliance, minimise the risk of legal misinterpretation, reduce potential barriers, and uphold the City Corporation's commitment to inclusivity and equality.

Option 2: Amend the A-board policy to allow A-boards for wayfinding purposes by exception (via a Way-board licence) and proceed to public consultation.

37. Under this option there would still be a City-wide A-board ban (enforced using the same four stage process outlined above) but businesses would be able to apply for a Way-board licence by exception and subject to meeting set eligibility criteria. Eligibility criteria and guidance is under development and the current draft can be found in Appendix 3.

38. Less than one percent of signage was identified as being used exclusively for wayfinding (0.7%) and 5.7% were identified as utilised for both advertising and wayfinding purposes. A licensing system could allow a limited number of businesses to use A-boards to make their business more visible.

39. Although this approach could support a select number of businesses it would require a change in policy and a consultation.

40. As of 2 April 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities clarified that A-boards are not considered “furniture” under the Pavement Licensing regime. The proposed eligibility criteria and licensing guidance for Wayfinding A-Boards will be drafted to align with the following legal frameworks:
- The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007 under Class 3A
 - The Highways Act 1980 – As long as the Wayfinding would not cause an obstruction s130 or a nuisance s149
41. Licences would incur a fee and would require a formal application procedure. Applicants would be required to demonstrate that the need for a Way-board and meet stringent accessibility criteria, as outlined in draft guidance. Each application will be reviewed, and licences will be granted to successful applicants.
42. Enforcement will focus on verifying whether a valid licence is present for any Way-board displayed. The proposed licensing scheme is intended strictly for exceptional circumstances only, and all businesses must adhere to the established guidelines. Any other board in place would go through enforcement process potentially with a fine as outlined in option 1.
43. Option 2 will require additional administrative resource in the form of a dedicated staff member responsible for licensing, compliance, appeals, and general administration. The initial set-up will be the most time and resource intensive, and needs should reduce as the rules and processes are understood. Accessibility of the City’s streets for disabled people could be affected by any ‘allowed’ A-boards under this option. Blocking of pavements and sight lines and introducing barriers disadvantages some disabled people. The implications are explained further in the next section of this report.
44. Further consideration could also be given to other exemptions under licence based on location or other factors. This can be considered as an option if Members agree to amend the current policy to allow exemptions.

Strategic implications

45. An A-board ban supports the delivery of Corporate Plan Outcome: Vibrant thriving destination and supporting a Diverse and Engaged Community by improving the user experience for people walking and wheeling and striving to ensure people can travel independently, safely and without restriction.
46. The City of London Transport Strategy sets out our approach to improving accessibility in the Square Mile (Outcome 3: The Square Mile is accessible to all). The removal of A-boards is included in Proposal 16: Keep pavements free of obstructions. This proposal supports the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) by ensuring that public spaces are accessible and non-discriminatory, fostering inclusivity and equality, and our commitment to Transport for All’s Equal Pavements Pledge.
47. A change in policy to Option 2 could support a small number of businesses who face location-based visibility challenges, offering them an option to have a Way-board through a licensing scheme. Although the City of London is host to around 20,000 small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), only 5% are retail or food and beverage. While this may enhance visibility for select businesses, it must be

considered within the City Corporation's broader commitments under the Equality Act.

Financial implications

48. Option 1 will be businesses as usual and will be met within existing resources; however, there will be an impact on the total number of tasks SEOs are required to undertake. The initial phase of introducing the system will require some extra administrative tasks. Once in place there will be a layer of additional administration, but this will be covered by existing resources. There will be no additional financial implications.
49. The implementation of Option 2 will introduce additional administrative requirements for both businesses and the City Corporation. Establishing a licensing system will necessitate dedicated staffing to oversee compliance checks, appeals processes, and ongoing licence administration.
50. Initial estimates for the ongoing costs, which are mostly staff costs, are between £18,000 and £31,000 for the first year, with higher costs anticipated during the initial phase as the system is established. These costs are expected to reduce over time as procedures become more streamlined, and demand stabilises.
51. A fee for licences will be charged and it is estimated that full recovery of costs for managing a licence system could be met. Should there be a shortfall in the cost recovery, the staff costs can be met from the Policy and Projects existing local risk revenue budget.
52. For Option 1 and 2, the initial costs of implementing the enforcement system together with 'one-off' costs for Option 2 (for the EQIA, engagement, and consultation) will be met from existing Strategic Transport budget allocations.
53. There is also a risk of some additional legal costs, associated with appeals.

Resource implications

54. The enforcement and inspection of licences would have an impact on SEO time, as it would be an additional task to current workload and may impact on other tasks, requiring reprioritisation of workloads. There will be a need to have a fixed penalty and enforcement system under both options. Some further work to finalise an agreed enforcement process and protocol for issuing FPNs would be required.
55. Option 2 cannot be delivered with existing staff resources. Recruitment, training, and effective resource management will be required. As noted above charges for licenses would need to be set at a level that aims for full cost recovery. There is a vacant post that could be allocated for this task. In the longer term the task is not anticipated to be full time and that officer could pick up other tasks to support the Transport Strategy team.

Legal implications

56. Highway authorities have duties to protect the use of the highway for all, including some extra provision for disabled people. All of these are listed here. Under legal advice we are proposing to use Highways Act 1980 (Section 137), and our duties under the Equality Act.
57. Under UK legislation, businesses must obtain permission from the highway authority before placing A-boards on public footways or carriageways.

The **Highways Act 1980 (Section 137)** prohibits any obstruction of the highway without lawful authority, which includes the unauthorised placement of advertising boards. Local authorities may issue specific conditions for A-board use, such as maintaining clear pedestrian access and ensuring boards are stable and removed outside trading hours. Therefore, no A-boards are on street with permission at present.

58. Under the **Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 2007**, A-boards are classified as advertisements and may require express consent from the local planning authority. Even where deemed consent applies, authorities retain the right to restrict or revoke permission based on public safety or amenity concerns. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in enforcement action or removal of the boards.
59. There is a reasonable risk that not removing A-boards would breach the Highways Act 1980 (Section 130): The City Corporation has a duty to assert and protect the rights of the public to use and enjoy the highway. A-boards that obstruct pavements may breach this duty, particularly if they impede access for disabled people or create hazards.
60. There is a reasonable risk that not removing A-boards would breach the Equality Act 2010 (Section 20(4)): Public bodies must make reasonable adjustments to avoid placing disabled people at a substantial disadvantage. Allowing A-boards to obstruct pavements could be seen as a failure to meet this duty, especially if it affects wheelchair users or people with visual impairments. Inconsistent enforcement or failure to act could expose the City Corporation to legal action from individuals or advocacy groups, particularly under the Equality Act or Highways Act.
61. The **Provision of Services Regulations 2009** requires that fees charged by a competent authority for authorisation schemes under an authorisation scheme must be reasonable and proportionate to the cost of the procedures and formalities under the scheme and must not exceed the cost of those procedures and formalities. Such fees should also be justified and transparent.

Risk implications

62. There is a reputational risk to the City Corporation if our streets are not considered to be accessible to all. There is also a reputational risk if we are considered to be implementing a policy that may have negative implications for smaller, independent businesses.
63. Removing A-boards from the City Streets has the potential to reduce injury caused by obstruction, especially to people who are blind or visually impaired (RNIB, 2021). A-boards left unchecked may cause trips, falls, or collisions - particularly for people with visual impairments or mobility issues. This could result in personal injury claims against the City Corporation.
64. Drafting of an exceptional circumstances eligibility criteria for Option 2 introduces an additional layer of complexity and risk; criteria can be open to interpretation that result in disputes, or misunderstanding that can lead to perceptions of favouritism, or claims of unfair treatment, further exposing the City Corporation to both legal and reputational challenges. The introduction of exceptions and a licensing scheme could create ambiguity around the rules, leading to inconsistent

application and enforcement. These outcomes risk undermining public trust, creating legal challenges, and hindering effective service delivery.

65. Proceeding with Option 2 would necessitate a change in policy and consultation, which may be received negatively, particularly by disability advocacy groups, given our previous commitments and pledges to maintaining uncluttered and accessible pavements. It would be a departure from the previously established policy of a complete A-board ban.
66. There is also a risk of businesses misinterpreting consultation on a limited change to the policy as re-opening the A-board debate, undermining efforts to implement the wider ban.
67. Allowing exceptions through a licensing system for A-boards might invite legal scrutiny under both the Highways Act 1980 and the Equality Act 2010. There is a risk that the City Corporation could face legal challenges or claims of non-compliance, especially if exceptions result in physical obstructions that could disproportionately disadvantage disabled people, wheelchair users, or those with visual impairments.
68. There is a risk of legal challenge at the point of enforcement, for either option 1 or 2 if not undertaken with due care and process. The City Solicitor has advised on approach and we will ensure the risk is minimised.
69. Further delay in implementing enforcement may erode confidence in the City Corporation's ability to uphold its policies and commitments, particularly considering the prior decision to implement a City-wide ban on A-boards.

Equalities implications

70. The Equality Act 2010 S20 (4) provides support to remove A-boards. The Act requires that where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage. The Act states that:

(2) The duty comprises the following three requirements:

- (3) The first requirement is a requirement, where a provision, criterion or practice of A's (where 'A' means the responsible party) puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- (4) The second requirement is a requirement, where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage.
- (5) The third requirement is a requirement, where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.

71. Option 1 provides the greatest equality benefits, significantly enhancing accessibility and safety, especially for disabled people, young and elderly and other vulnerable groups. Any movement towards exceptions or delays in enforcement risks undermining legal compliance, public trust, and the City's stated goals for an inclusive environment.
72. Fallen or poorly placed A-boards may impede access and obstruct street-level sightlines, particularly for people using wheelchairs or children who navigate the environment from a lower eye level. It could hinder their ability to anticipate hazards, locate crossings, or respond quickly in emergency situations. The Department for Transport's *Inclusive Mobility* guidance reinforces this by stating that clear, unobstructed sightlines are essential for safe navigation (Department for Transport, 2022 and Transport for All, 2025). Therefore, it is important to consider the risks that displaced, or poorly positioned A-boards pose to accessibility and also to the overall safety and security of public spaces
73. Option 2 offers a strict eligibility criteria and accessibility guidance, which should mitigate negative impacts, balancing of the needs of businesses and the rights of disabled people. Ongoing consultation and practical support for affected businesses are recommended to achieve an equitable and lawful outcome.
74. The EQIA can be found in Appendix 4.

Climate implications

75. None identified at present

Security implications

76. No specific security implications have been identified

Conclusion

77. Moving to engagement and enforcement of the current A-board policy will significantly enhance the accessibility and safety of public spaces for people walking and wheeling, particularly for disabled people, older people and people with small children, or using prams or mobility aids. Maintaining clear, unobstructed pathways is essential to achieving the Transport Strategy's vision of "a Square Mile that is inclusive and accessible to all". Whilst there will still be some businesses who attempt to flout the rules, enforcement of the system would certainly lead to an improvement in reducing the number of A-boards on our streets.
78. It is important to recognise the needs of businesses that use on-street advertising to attract customers. Many businesses, particularly independent retailers, face significant challenges in a competitive marketplace, and for some, the visibility provided by A-boards can be a tool for engagement and growth. Any policy or enforcement strategy should therefore consider practical support for these businesses - such as guidance on alternative advertising options, clear signage policies, and transition periods - to help them adapt while ensuring public spaces remain accessible and safe for all.
79. If the recommended option (Option 1) is agreed, we will move forward to enforce our current policy with a phased approach. We will finalise our communication material and communicate our intentions and the rationale behind these changes to all affected businesses and our stakeholders. Engagement materials will

provide context and transparency regarding the necessity of creating safer, more accessible public spaces. Promotion of the changes and engagement would be recommended to commence in January 2026 with enforcement commencing before March 2026.

80. If Option 2 is agreed, officers will complete the eligibility criteria and define the circumstances in which a licence may be issued. The process will include drafting detailed terms and conditions for all approved licences. The policy and eligibility criteria wording will be finalised with input from the legal team and prepared for publication on the City Corporation website for public consultation. Engagement will take place with the Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), representative disability groups, and other relevant stakeholders. At the conclusion of the consultation period, members will receive a report detailing the outcomes and next steps. The lead in time for the detail would suggest consultation can commence in January 2026, although some earlier engagement with representative groups could take place sooner.
81. Further consideration could also be given to other exemptions under licence based on location or other factors. This can be considered as an option if Members agree to amend the current policy to allow exemptions.

Appendices

- Appendix 1: 2020.03.31 Planning and Transportation Committee Agenda Item 2 Advertising A-Board Policy
- Appendix 2: A-Board Baseline Report
- Appendix 3: June 2025 Proposed Draft Way-Board Licensing Policy
- Appendix 4: 2025.09.16 Streets & Walkways EQIA A-Board Policy Amendment

Background Papers

City Corporation, Streets and Walkways Sub-committee 12.10. 2021, Transport for All Equal Pavements Pledge, Available at:

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