

**TRANSPORT FOR LONDON**

**SURFACE TRANSPORT PANEL**

**SUBJECT: UPDATE ON 'A' BOARD ADVERTISING ON THE TfL ROAD NETWORK**

**DATE: 8 NOVEMBER 2011**

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**1 PURPOSE AND DECISION REQUIRED**

- 1.1 This paper updates the Panel on the enforcement of 'A' Board advertising on the TfL Road Network (TLRN), including the impact of the recently introduced 'zero tolerance' approach to targeted roads. A report had been requested by the Panel at its meeting of 11 May 2011.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 As part of the Better Streets initiative, TfL has been taking proactive steps to reduce street clutter and obstructions on the TLRN. This has included the removal of permanent assets such as pedestrian guardrail, bollards and signs. So far around 65km of guardrail, 3,000 bollards and 900 signs have been removed. An application was made to the Secretary of State to vary TfL's 'Special Signs Authorisation' for red route signs, to enable the removal of 8,000 'No stopping at any time' signs. Approval was granted on 28 October 2011 and a programme for the removal of these signs is being progressed. TfL has negotiated with its contractors to remove the sign plates at no cost while undertaking other activities, but the cost of removing the posts is estimated at around £360k. This is currently unbudgeted.
- 2.2 In addition to TfL's own Highway Assets, many advertising boards and signs are placed on the highway by traders. Guidance on managing advertising 'A' boards is provided in TfL's 'Quality Management' procedures. Frontagers are encouraged to make applications to the local planning authority for consent to fix appropriate advertising to the façade of the property, instead of placing it on the footway.
- 2.3 The guidance categorises footways by intensity of use with photographic examples of each and gives the minimum unobstructed width required for each category in order to maintain appropriate clear passage for pedestrians.
- 2.4 It is impracticable for TfL to pursue enforcement activity against every offender, but in a limited number of the highest profile 'prestige category' footways it is practicable to adopt a zero tolerance for 'A' boards, where action is taken against each and every offender. Streets falling into this category are shown in Appendix 1.

### **3 PROGRESS UPDATE**

- 3.1 Currently, the TfL Highways Team undertakes both proactive and reactive enforcement, using contractors, safety inspectors, TfL Route Managers, and customer feedback to identify locations where 'A' boards are generating complaints or are a safety concern.
- 3.2 Based on the criteria outlined in paragraph 2.3 above, a judgement is then made on what the most appropriate course of action is, and in the great majority of cases the issue is resolved by an informal discussion with local traders and the items either removed or relocated. Past working practices have involved around 400 informal discussions, from which it has been necessary to issue only about 20 formal removal notices per year.
- 3.3 Following the more recently introduced procedures, activity on the 'zero tolerance' routes has involved the issue of leaflets explaining that 'A' boards are not allowed, while at the same time recording details for the preparation of 'removal notices', return visits to issue those notices where advisory leaflets have been ignored, and subsequently returning to physically remove obstructions where there has been a failure to comply with the removal notice.
- 3.4 Between June and September 2011, activity on the 'zero tolerance' routes involved the issue of some 130 advisory leaflets, 51 removal notices and subsequent physical removal of 13 obstructions, predominantly on Tooley Street.
- 3.5 The legislation providing the power to take enforcement action, limits the period during which a 'removal notice' can be effective to a maximum of 28 days. Some frontagers have complied during the time, but then returned the obstruction to the street straight after. In those cases, Court action will be considered. The adoption of the 'zero tolerance' criteria has, however, produced sustained positive results within Central London.

### **4 NEXT STEPS**

- 4.1 One of the tools to ensure a more compliant response from any potential offender is to undertake joint visits with the local authority, as they have other areas of leverage on businesses, or to request them to take more proactive involvement themselves.
- 4.2 Through dialogue with the boroughs, both Islington and Tower Hamlets are managing 'A' boards on the TLRN together with any enforcement action. They are sometimes able to do this effectively by using dedicated street trading enforcement teams, and also have the ability to issue fixed penalty notices for non-compliance under street trading powers.
- 4.3 Discussions are at various stages with Lambeth, Southwark, Wandsworth, Westminster and the City of London, potentially leading to those boroughs adopting similar arrangements to those at 4.2. However, across London there are different local priorities that determine whether such arrangements are practicable.
- 4.4 Where no agreement exists with the borough, TfL will continue to make informal approaches across the entire network, but current efforts are being focussed on

4.5 The publication of the Government paper 'Signing the Way' in October 2011 identified further opportunities to reduce sign clutter once regulatory change has taken place. A further report will be prepared for this Panel, identifying the specific benefits which London authorities can expect from the regulatory change identified in the Government paper.

## **5 RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 The Panel is asked to NOTE the paper.

## **6 CONTACT**

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### Schedule of prestige footways with 'zero tolerance' for 'A' Boards.

- A200 Tooley Street
- A200 Duke Street Hill
- A 3 London Bridge
- A3 King William Street
- A10 Bishopsgate
- A10 Gracechurch Street
- A501 City Road (Moorefield Eye Hospital approaches)
- A3211 Upper Thames Street
- A3211 Lower Thames Street
- A3211 Byward Street
- A3211 Tower Hill
- A4 Knightsbridge
- A4 Cromwell Road
- A4 Cromwell Gardens
- A4 Thurloe Place
- A4 Brompton Road
- A3211 Victoria Embankment