

# London Councils' Transport and Environment Committee

## Code of Practice for the Attachment of Street Lights and Traffic Signs to Buildings in London

Item No: 21

**Report by:** Andrew Luck                      **Job title:** Transport Manager  
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**Summary:** This report seeks member approval to publish a Code of Practice on the attachment of street lights and traffic signs to buildings. The Code of Practice will allow London Local Authorities and TfL to adopt new powers under the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2013.

**Recommendations:** The Committee is asked to:

- Note and approve the contents of the Code of Practice for publication

### Background

1. Authorities in London are continually searching for ways to improve the urban landscape by reducing street clutter and removing unnecessary street furniture. One of the ways that this can be undertaken is by utilising existing building infrastructure to fix street lighting and traffic signs. This has the advantage of providing the essential traffic management and public safety information without the need to unsightly posts and signs which can be a hindrance to pedestrians. Similarly, the safety benefits of street lights are not compromised by lamp columns which can have a detrimental effect on the streetscape.
2. London authorities have previously been able to install traffic signs and street lighting on buildings, but permission had to be obtained from the building owner before works could commence. This was often difficult to obtain, costly to administer and took a considerable amount of time to implement.

### New Legislation

3. The London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2013 (LLA and TfL Act), which came into force on December 18 2013, contains provisions which amend the previous requirements of having to obtain consent from the relevant owner to affix traffic signs and street lighting to buildings, replacing this with a notice procedure. The new legislation states that a London authority may not fix an appointed day to adopt these powers, until a Code of Practice has been produced and published by the joint committee. Publication of the Code of Practice will therefore enable authorities to adopt the new powers if and when they wish to and help ensure a consistent approach across London.

### **The Code of Practice**

4. Last year London Councils established a working group with City of London, City of Westminster, LB Hackney, LB Richmond upon Thames, RB Kensington and Chelsea and Transport for London to examine the relevant legislation and discuss best practice to create the required Code of Practice. Whilst not subject to the provisions set out in the LLA and TfL Act 2013 or this Code of Practice, the City of London already have similar powers of using notices to advise building owners, so their knowledge was important in shaping some of the requirements of the Code of Practice.
5. The proposed Code of Practice can be seen in Appendix A. Subject to the Committee's decision, it will be published on the London Councils' website as an electronic downloadable document, freely available to all.

### **Financial Implications**

6. There are no financial implications associated with the agreement and publication of the Code of Practice. However, a requirement of the legislation, referred to in the Code of Practice, is that there is a mechanism for property owners to seek compensation from the authority if they do suffer any loss resulting from the fixing of a sign or light to their building. If there is a dispute in the settlement of such a claim, the matter should be referred to the Upper Tribunal (Lands Chamber). London Councils is currently working with the Ministry of Justice to establish the set-up costs (which at this stage are not expected to be high and potentially zero) associated with this and will report the financial implications to a future meeting of TEC to agree how any such costs should be shared amongst the boroughs and TfL.
7. The City of London has indicated that to date they have not had to escalate disputes related to compensation claims to the Upper Tribunal (Land Chamber). The small number of claims that have been received have been settled internally. Therefore, the number of cases that end up in the tribunal may well be limited, and it may not be possible to establish the precise cost of a case being taken to the Upper Tribunal until the situation arises. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted and concurs with the above.

### **Legal Implications**

8. There are no legal implications to London Councils arising from this report.

### **Equalities Implications**

9. There are no equalities implications to London Councils arising from this report.

### **Recommendations**

10. The Committee is asked to:

- Note and approve the contents of the Code of Practice for publication.