

<b>LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN</b>	<b>WARDS:</b> All Wards
<b>REPORT TITLE:</b> Advertising Boards (A-boards)	
<b>REPORT OF:</b> Director of Environment and Sustainability	
<b>FOR SUBMISSION TO:</b> Culture and Environment Scrutiny Committee	<b>DATE:</b> 12 January 2026
<p><b>SUMMARY OF REPORT</b></p> <p>This report provides an update of a trial Pilot which we will be conducting in Goodge Street, in partnership with Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB), The Fitzrovia Partnership and other stakeholders to address the removal of Advertising Boards and de-clutter the street.</p>	
<p><b>Local Government Act 1972 – Access to Information</b></p> <p>No documents that require listing have been used in the preparation of this report.</p>	
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<p><b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b></p> <p>That the Committee note and comment on the contents of the report.</p>	

Signed:



Richard Bradbury, Director of Environment and Sustainability

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2025

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1. This updated report outlines progress since December 2024. The Goodge Street A-board trial is scheduled to launch in January 2026 with a dedicated event, delivered in collaboration with RNIB, The Fitzrovia Partnership, Camden's Business Engagement Team, and the Planning and Events teams.
- 1.2. The trial focuses on education, behaviour change, and creating safer, more inclusive streets—particularly for blind and visually impaired individuals. New features include a public launch, business-oriented educational materials (such as table and chair stickers with QR codes linking to RNIB resources), and clearer guidance on managing obstructions on private forecourts and other street clutter. Following Goodge Street, a similar approach will be implemented in Hampstead.

## **2. Background & Context**

- 2.1. In October 2023, the think tank Centre for London published a report titled Reducing Street Clutter in Central London, highlighting the need for safer and more accessible streets. The report emphasizes the importance of tackling street clutter to promote equality and improve the walking experience across London. Among its recommendations, it calls for a Pan-London ban on A-boards and urges local authorities to work with Business Improvement Districts to reduce the impact of commercial waste on public spaces. Goodge Street in Camden was identified as one of the streets of concern.
- 2.2. This briefing provides an update on the development of a joint trial aimed at removing 'A' boards from the public highway. The trial seeks to engage all stakeholders and pilot a scheme that delivers mutual benefits for all parties through education and innovation. The core objective is to work collaboratively with the business community to eliminate A boards, creating a safer and more inclusive environment for all pedestrians, with a particular focus on supporting blind and visually impaired people.

## **3. Project Aim and Objectives**

- 3.1. The trial aims to create a safer and more navigable environment for visually impaired individuals by removing physical obstacles. It will evaluate the impact and effectiveness of encouraging business to adopt innovative advertising methods instead of traditional A-boards. The trial will take place in Goodge Street. Key objectives are listed below:
  - Engage with business to address concerns about A-boards and educate business about the responsibilities of all to improve accessibility for all road users.
  - Work with the RNIB to introduce food style ratings for premises. Host a Camden Street event to highlight businesses on Goodge Street, highlighting the absence of A-boards and rewarding compliance.
  - Record footfall data to address concerns about the impact of removing A-boards on business. Show that improved pedestrian flow and street aesthetics will make the area more attractive.

- Promote innovative alternative advertising methods such as QR codes, banners, digital advertising, BID web pages, newsletters, and local forums.

3.2 Camden Officers will monitor compliance daily and capture data which will be shared with individual businesses throughout the trial.

3.3 The stakeholder group will continue to expand as other issues are highlighted

#### **4. Progress**

4.1 Progress was delayed due to internal changes within RNIB and The Fitzrovia Partnership, resource constraints, and competing service priorities. Additional delays arose from extensive discussions around branding and messaging, as RNIB chose not to adopt the original “*See Obstructions Differently*” identity or proposed alternatives. Concerns regarding accessibility and brand consistency led to a cautious approach. However, recent internal changes at RNIB have strengthened collaboration. The revised approach now centres on launching the trial with a dedicated event, as this is expected to have greater impact.

#### **4.2 Educational – Tables and Chairs Stickers**

The project has designed bespoke stickers for businesses to reinforce educational messaging (see attached copy as appendix A). Each sticker will feature a QR code linking to RNIB’s website, encouraging the public to learn more about accessibility. These stickers represent a quick, adaptable solution for future phases. One of the key issues highlighted by a blind resident on Hampstead High Street is businesses failing to replace chairs with tables, which this initiative aims to address.

#### **4.3 RNIB Changes**

Outreach to schools and younger audiences is now a key priority. A dedicated engagement and campaigning team have been established, and this is the team we are currently working with.

#### **4.4 Further challenges identified by the project include:**

- Private Forecourts – many premises have space and often use it to display A-boards.
- Charity collections/donations - left outside shops before opening.
- Builders’ merchants - currently use A-boards for apprenticeship advertising

The project team is in direct contact with businesses to discuss direct engagement with the Skills Centre to advertise. Although some issues are outside of the scope of immediate fixes, we aim to address these via our behavioural change and public awareness campaign.

#### **5. Trial**

5.1 We have re-evaluated and decided to launch the trial with an event to engage with the businesses and create momentum for change. The launch event

aims to raise awareness of the impact of street clutter to accessibility, engage businesses and the local community, and demonstrate practical solutions to create safer, more inclusive streets - particularly for blind and visually impaired people. It will highlight alternatives to A-boards, promote behavioural change, and build momentum for the wider trial.

## 5.2 **Launch Event**

These are the specifics for this event:

- **Information & Engagement**

Leaflets and balloons will help attract attention and share practical tips on how businesses and residents can contribute to a more accessible environment.

- **Blindfold Walks & Sim Specs**

Participants will experience walking blindfolded or with simulation glasses, guided by a sighted volunteer. This activity demonstrates how street clutter and obstructions can create hazards for visually impaired people.

- **Accessibility Tools Demonstration**

Explore everyday tools that support independence, such as magnifiers, liquid level indicators, and Penfriend audio labelling devices. These demonstrations show how small innovations can make a significant difference.

- **Alternative Advertising Showcase**

We also aim to present alternative forms of advertising that businesses can use instead of A-boards, helping maintain clear and safe pathways while still attracting customers.

## 6. **Further roll out and opportunities**

6.1 If the Goodge Street strategy succeeds; we will replicate it in Hampstead using our original brand identity.

6.2 We have met regularly with a blind resident in the area and have attended a neighbourhood meeting and will engage directly with the business community and residents and have their support on our branding approach.

6.3 The recent RNIB campaign 'How you can make our streets accessible for everyone', highlights several issues which presents a timely opportunity for Camden to demonstrate innovation and leadership in addressing accessibility challenges.

## 7. **Next Steps**

7.1 Meetings scheduled for early January 2026 to finalise event date and roles.

- 8.2 Build awareness and foster engagement with key stakeholders in advance of the street party
- 8.3 Access volunteer support: Time needed to secure an RNIB volunteer. Work with Events and Engagement team.

#### **8. Timeline**

- 8.1 It is proposed that the pilot will run for three months, based on previous trials in Edinburgh and York, to embed lasting change. The trial date is still to be finalised later this month, dependent on other works and availability. The trial data will be analysed and discussed with all stakeholders, including the business community.

#### **9. Conclusion**

- 9.1 Data captured from the trial will be used to evaluate its success and develop an approach to better manage and remove A-boards using existing legislation under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 336(1), Highways Act 1980 and Schedule 4 of the TfL LLA Act 2003. This will be accompanied by a communications approach to highlight issues and solutions for on-street advertising.
- 9.2 The project will also expand to improve engagement with visually impaired residents, using data and registers from other services to provide targeted communication in accessible formats. This approach will also support, involve and share public realm design and improvements to help blind and partially sighted residents navigate the borough, using RNIB channels and web pages.

#### **10. Finance Comments**

- 10.1 There are no financial impacts from this project.

#### **11. Legal Comments of the Borough Solicitor**

- 11.1 The Borough Solicitor was consulted on this report and comments provided in the report.

#### **12. Environmental Implications**

- 12.1 No specific environmental implications from the work in this report.

**REPORT ENDS**