

Attachments on Highway Assets Policy Document



1. Purpose

This policy outlines Birmingham City Council's position on the attachment of third-party items on the highway. It ensures public safety, protects council assets, and provides a consistent framework for managing requests.

2. Background

Assets on the highway are seen as an ideal means of promoting events and campaigns and are regularly used to support bunting, flower baskets, festive decorations, public awareness/information, flags and banners, etc.

In recent years the City Council has started to experience a demand for highway assets to support CCTV cameras, footfall counters, 5G equipment, and electrical vehicle charging points.

There is a common misconception that the highways can automatically accommodate attachments of any type, size or weight. This assumption is generally incorrect as not all columns are the same and many are unsuitable due to their design, age and material type.

The Highways Act 1980 provides a clear basis of the management of attachments on the highway. This includes the following

- i. **Section 132** – Power to remove unauthorised signs affixed to the highway without notice.
- ii. **Section 149** – Power to remove items causing nuisance or danger; enables removal with notice (nuisance) or without notice (danger) and recovery of reasonable costs.
- iii. **Section 137** – Wilful obstruction of the highway; prosecution possible with court-ordered removal and recovery of costs.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all council-owned highway assets across Birmingham and covers temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent attachments including but not limited to:

- Festive decorations
- CCTV, footfall counters, air quality monitors
- Electric vehicle charging points
- Signs and event signage
- Traffic survey equipment
- 5G and telecommunications equipment
- Banners, flags, bunting



4. General Principles

Permission Required: The Council will permit certain items to be attached to the highway; However, no item may be attached without prior written consent or licence from the Council. The following requirements must be met for the council to grant permission to attach an item to a highway asset.

- i. **Safety First:** Attachments must not compromise the structural integrity of the asset or pose a risk to public safety.
- ii. **Planning and Advertising:** All attachments must comply with relevant planning and advertising legislation and policy and be in line with the Council's 'No-platform Policy'.
- iii. **Adherence to Legislation:** All attachments must comply with relevant legislations and regulations. The Council will provide additional guidance on relevant legislation if requested.

Lighting Column Suitability:

If the application relates to attachments to lighting columns, applicants should refer to the latest version of the Lighting Column Attachment Guidance Document. In relation to street lighting, only steel columns in 'as new' condition (I.E. columns <7 years old or that have recently passed a condition test) may be used. Where the column location is of strategic importance to the applicant and the column condition results indicate that the column is not suitable, we will consider replacing the existing column with a new one in the same place. In such cases the applicant is expected to pay all costs associated with the supply, erection and connection of a new column and the disconnection and disposal of the old column.

Size & Weight Limits:

- For an existing, 'as new' lighting column <7 years old that has passed a recent condition test:
 - Max area: 0.3m²
 - Max weight: 20kg (including fixings)
- For single items that exceed these values, or multiple items that in combination exceed these values it may be necessary to replace the lighting column to one of suitable design at the applicant's cost.

General Prohibited Attachments:

- Advertising materials
- Litter bins or dog waste receptacles
- Items on unsuitable column types (e.g. concrete, cast iron, GRP)
- Offensive or inappropriate content



Application Process:

Applicants must submit:

- Completed application form
- Site drawings and proposed method statements
- Evidence of minimum of £10m Public Liability Insurance
- Licence fee (£150) and column and electrical testing fees where applicable (see Appendix D)

Applications must be submitted **at least 10 weeks in advance**. Where column replacements are required, works will take significantly longer than this.

Electrical Requirements:

Where an electrical supply is required:

- A valid MPAN must be provided
- Only approved external waterproof sockets may be used
- Internal column access is prohibited unless authorised and qualified (G39)

Responsibilities of the Applicant:

Applicant must:

- Accept responsibility for safe installation, maintenance, and removal of attachments if they intend to carry out the installation themselves
- If undertaking the installation, accept responsibility for ensuring public safety and traffic management during installation/removal, and follow the appropriate streetworks application process to permit the works
- Refer to the latest version of the Lighting Column Attachment Guidance Document if the application relates to attachments to lighting columns.
- Report damage and cover repair costs of attachments to relevant lighting columns.
- Comply with all terms and conditions throughout the licence period
- Maintain attachments in safe condition
- Comply with all relevant legislation (e.g. Traffic Management Act 2004, NRSWA 1991)
- Indemnify the Council against liability (e.g. through public liability insurance)
- Remove attachments promptly at the end of the licence period
- Cover costs for damage, removal, or replacement of columns if required

Council Reserved Rights

The council reserves the right to:

- Refuse or revoke permissions for any reason
- Remove unauthorised or unsafe attachments without notice
- Impose site-specific conditions and recover associated costs



Enforcement

Unauthorised or unsafe attachments will be considered for removal as part of routine council maintenance operations. No notice will be provided ahead of any removal. Attachments that present an immediate risk to pedestrian and road user safety, such as those obscuring visibility splays at junctions, or offensive material will be prioritised for removal. Licences may be revoked if terms are breached. Costs incurred by the Council will be recovered from the applicant.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed periodically. Technical specifications and fee structures may change; applicants should refer to the latest version of the **Lighting Column Attachment Guidance Document** if the application relates to attachments to lighting columns.

