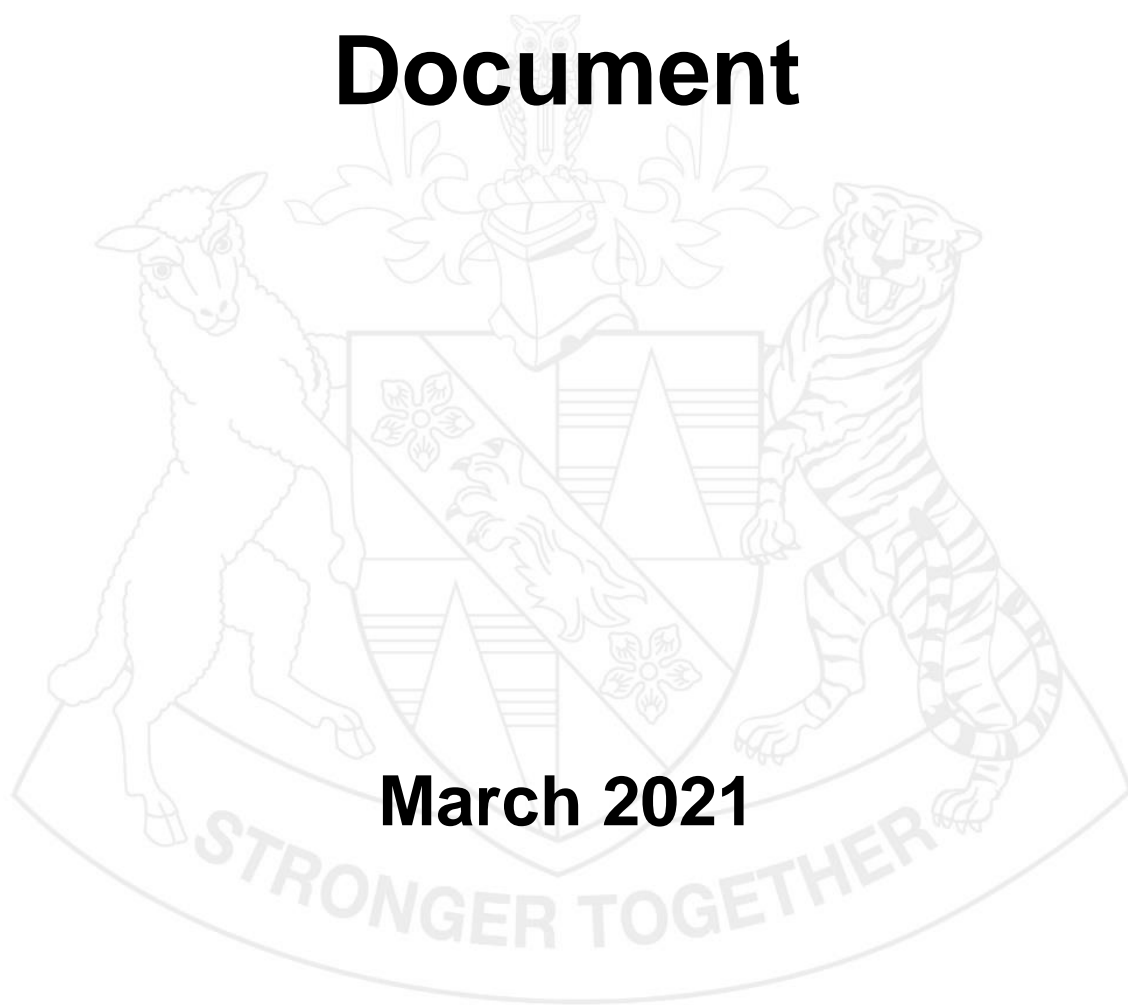


Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document



March 2021



Oadby & Wigston
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	2
2. Defining Public Realm	3
3. Aims of the Public Realm Strategy	4
4. Who is the Public Realm Strategy For?	5
5. Policy principles supporting the Public Realm Strategy	6
6. Setting the Scene – A Brief History	9
7. Overview of current issues and challenges with the Borough’s Public Realm	11
8. Streetscape Audit	15
9. The Vision for Public Realm	31
10. Ways of Achieving the Vision – Overall Principles and Policies	35
11. Ways of Achieving the Vision – Targeted Principles and Enhancement Opportunities within main centres	38
12. Ways of Achieving the Vision – Borough wide key principles and enhancement opportunities	47
13. Public Realm Best Practice	68
14. Monitoring and Management	73
15. Glossary of Terms	74

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document is a planning guidance document that focuses on public realm and public spaces within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. The document will supplement current planning policies contained within the Councils Local Plan and provide greater guidance for any development affecting the Borough's public realm.
- 1.2 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is compact, urban in nature and adjoins the southern boundary of Leicester City. As set out in the Local Plan, the town centre of Wigston and the two district centres of Oadby and South Wigston are fundamental to the aspirations, improvements and development of the entire Borough. Allied to this must be an improvement in the quality of the Borough's public realm. The Borough Council must develop a vision for its streets and spaces of the three centres, to improve, not only their image, but to establish a better position for potential investment.
- 1.3 The following Supplementary Planning Document has been broken down into specific areas; an introduction to public realm and policy influences, then onto specific issues relating to existing public realm within the town and district centres (and their direct surroundings) and the vision for the Borough, and then finally looking at design principles, use of materials in key areas, and monitoring and maintenance.
- 1.4 With the Borough being diverse in so many ways, a single Borough-wide approach to Public Realm would be inappropriate and too generic. Standard public realm design principles and use of materials for the entire Borough would stifle the rich diversity and heritage, restrict unique identity and curb innovative design. Although the main focus of this document is the town and district centres of the Borough, this document will seek to improve public realm across the whole Borough of Oadby and Wigston. Well-designed public realm will make best use of the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, the way that it functions and will seek to meet the demands of the wider community.

2. Defining Public Realm

- 2.1 The Borough's streets and public spaces are a public service that is available for use 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round. With this demand comes a need for public spaces that are of high quality, designed to be efficient and are flexible for different user's needs. Research has proven that the establishment of high quality urban design and public realm can not only regenerate areas, but also improve the health and well-being of those who use it, improve the environmental sustainability of the area and help to create a sense of place.
- 2.2 For the purpose of this document 'Public Realm' can be defined as the following:



Peace Memorial Park in Wigston

'Public spaces between buildings and structures, or alongside side watercourses, that are of the built and/or natural environment, that are open and accessed for free by the public'

- 2.3 Public spaces included in the above definition would include – streets, pavements and relevant highway, public squares, pedestrian green spaces (such as Burtons Corner towards the north of The Parade in Oadby and the Pocket Park in Bell Street, Wigston), urban parks (a good example being Peace Memorial Park in Wigston), and other pedestrian networks, such as canal towpaths and the Historical Lanes in Wigston that connect north to south and east to west.
- 2.4 The document however goes further than just highlighting the spaces, and looks in detail at the sort of items that would be used within the defined spaces. Examples of these items are; seating, bollarding or railings, litter bins, bus stops, and lighting (which would all come under the generic term of street furniture), signage and markings (both vehicular and pedestrian), public art and planting.

3. Aim of the Public Realm Strategy

- 3.1 Well designed public spaces support a wide variety of activities and encourage social interaction, to promote health, well-being and social and civic inclusion. The Borough's town, district and local centres are a focus for 'civic pride', and are places where the community interacts on a daily basis. They are also places where businesses serve the population. Improvement to public realm in each of the centres (and their direct surroundings), paralleled with cleaner and safer streets, will encourage increased use and impact positively upon the local economy.
- 3.2 The parks and green spaces of the Borough provide refuge from the predominant urban environment and help to mitigate climate change and increase bio-diversity. High quality, green open spaces designed to be inclusive for all users provide amenity value, support a range of activities and help to support an active life for everyone.
- 3.3 The key aim of this Public Realm Strategy is to add value, advice and guidance to the relevant policies in the Local Plan and the implementation of development schemes in the town and district centres, other regeneration areas, and the wider Borough. It also sets out best practice and new standards and style. It seeks to give guidance as to how the streets can be reclaimed by pedestrians and bring the environmental standards up to a level commensurate with the status afforded the Borough by the Local Plan. Improvements to the public realm of the Borough will create a sense of pride, local distinctiveness and a positive identity that generates social and economic confidence.
- 3.4 This public realm strategy has been prepared to provide guidance for any public realm improvement / redevelopment scheme that occurs within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston.
- 3.5 This document provides a strategic basis for environmental enhancements and sets out the improvements which are necessary to transform the Borough's public realm. All development of and improvements to the Borough's public Realm should aim to achieve a net-gain in biodiversity.
- 3.6 The Public Realm Strategy will be a formally adopted Supplementary Planning Document. To this end, the Public Realm Strategy will apply to any development where there is public access or where development is likely to have an impact on the public realm.

4. Who is the Public Realm Strategy for?

4.1 The Public Realm Strategy will provide advice and guidance for the following:

Those proposing new development

- The relevant departments of Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council that are proposing public realm improvements, design, landscape design, and engineering works (for example, street scene, traffic management, highways, and maintenance);
- Oadby and Wigston Borough Council departments whose decisions have an impact on the public realm, for example, through licensing of uses, advertising, and other consents;
- Other public sector bodies proposing new developments;
- Developers proposing new development, planners, transport planners, urban and landscape designers, architects, transport engineers, waste management, utility companies and public realm management professionals.

Those with an interest in new development

- Citizens of the Borough with an interest in the planning and design issues;
- Local amenity groups and other stakeholders, for example Friends of the Peace Memorial Park;
- Statutory Consultees, for example the Environment Agency, Police, etc;
- National, countywide and local public sector bodies funding or partnering public realm projects, for example Leicestershire County Council; and
- Council planning and economic development officers with responsibilities in development control, Section 106 agreements, policy, urban design, landscape design, and engineering (street scene, traffic management, highways, and maintenance).

5. Policy principles supporting the Public Realm Strategy

National Policy and Guidance

- 5.1 National Planning Policy Framework. The government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that, *'The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Being clear about design expectations, and how these will be tested, is essential for achieving this. So too is effective engagement between applicants, communities, local planning authorities and other interests throughout the process.'*
- 5.2 Additionally the NPPF states that *'to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage, plans or supplementary planning documents should use visual tools such as design guides and codes. These provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design. However their level of detail and degree of prescription should be tailored to the circumstances in each place, and should allow a suitable degree of variety where this would be justified.'*
- 5.3 Planning Practice Guidance, Design states that *'well-designed places can be achieved by taking a proactive and collaborative approach at all stages of the planning process, from policy and plan formulation through to the determination of planning applications and the post approval stage.'*
- 5.4 National Design Guide (2019) sets out the principles for good design which *'involves careful attention to other important components of places. These include:*
- *the context for places and buildings;*
 - *hard and soft landscape;*
 - *technical infrastructure – transport, utilities, services such as drainage; and*
 - *social infrastructure – social, commercial, leisure uses and activities.'*
- 5.5 The National Design Guide goes on to state that *'a well-designed place is unlikely to be achieved by focusing only on the appearance, materials and detailing of buildings. It comes about through making the right choices at all levels, including:*
- *the layout (or masterplan);*
 - *the form and scale of buildings;*
 - *their appearance;*
 - *landscape;*
 - *materials; and*
 - *their detailing.'*
- 5.6 All new public realm developments will need to consider these components to help shape the character of a place.

Local Policy and Guidance

- 5.7 Local Plan (2019). The Council's Local Plan is very positive towards the creation of high quality spaces that are well connected and encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling, walking and public transport. In particular, the following Local Plan policies are applicable;
- Policy 5, Improving Health and Wellbeing.
 - Policy 6, High Quality Design and Materials;
 - Policy 10, Public Realm;

- Policy 26, Sustainable Transport and Initiatives;
- Policy 44, Landscape and Character.

- 5.8 These policies prescribe that all development that affects public spaces and connections, is to be of high quality design that is in keeping with the local landscape and character, that promotes vitality and maximise economic potential.
- 5.9 Additionally, Policy 10, Public Realm requires that *‘all proposals for large scale development and / or refurbishment and / or regeneration must incorporate high quality public realm on-site and / or contribute towards public realm improvements off-site. All proposals that propose new public realm or impact upon the existing public realm must ensure that the pedestrian is prioritised over other modes of transport and that materials and design are of the highest standards.’*
- 5.10 Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (2019) states that *‘Public realm relates to both the publicly and privately owned spaces between buildings and structures that are part of the built and / or natural environment that are open and freely accessed by the public’*. The document outlines the situations in which Developer Contributions will be sought towards funding the creation and / or enhancement of public realm within the Borough.
- 5.11 The document details that the *‘scale of the contributions sought will reflect the character and scope of the works required and will therefore be negotiated on a case-by-case basis’*. The document also outlines that for any developments situated within the town or district centre boundaries within the Borough, *‘contributions sought for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities (incorporating Green Infrastructure) will be directed towards relevant, CIL compliant Public Realm schemes’*.
- 5.12 Environment Strategy and Action Plan (2020) sets out how the Council will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions both in terms of actions that it can take as an organisation in its own right and in terms of the Council role in influencing local residents and businesses and encouraging a partnership approach involving a range of stakeholders.
- 5.13 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council Tree Strategy (2019) highlights how trees are an integral part of connecting commerce, recreation and public health. They have a positive impact on the landscape, enhance the built environment and increase biodiversity. The document sets out how the council will look after its own trees, how it will deal with protected trees and how it will consider trees and development. This guidance also includes information on the maintenance and preservation of hedgerows.

Countywide Guidance

- 5.14 The Leicestershire Highways Design Guide (2018) covers the design of highways and transportation infrastructure for new developments in areas for which Leicestershire County Council is the highway authority. The guidance provides a flexible approach *‘to help design development layouts that provide safe and free movement for all road users, including cars, lorries, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.’* The document also *‘recognises that roads have a wider role to play in creating a sense of place and community as opposed to simply having a functional transport role.’*

Best Practice Guidance

- 5.15 Manual for Streets (2007 and 2010). In 2007 and 2010, the Department for Communities and Local Government (now the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government) and the Department for Transport published the ‘Manual for Streets’ and ‘Manual for Streets 2’ respectively. The documents suggest that streets are the arteries of communities, with a community’s success depending on how well it is connected to local services and the

wider world. The aim of the documents are to assist in the creation of streets that meet the needs of all users in a well-connected network, by embodying the principles of inclusive design. It suggests that people should be at the heart of the design process and *'streets should not be designed just to accommodate the movement of motor vehicles. It is important that designers place a high priority on meeting the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users, so that growth in these modes of transport is encouraged'*.

- 5.16 Active Design (2015). In 2015 Sport England produced 'Active Design'. This was to encourage the design of high quality flexible streets that support and sustain a broader variety of users and community activities and increase the attraction of cycling and walking. Streets should be about more than just vehicular through routes or highways dominated by traffic. Efforts should be made to prioritise the role of streets 'as places' and above those of just movement corridors. The greater the concentration of mixed uses, (homes, shops, employment, leisure and education etc), the greater the attraction for pedestrian movements which can be encouraged and promoted and this can help to improve health and air quality.
- 5.17 Streets for All (2018). Produced by Historic England provides guidance on the design of public realm located within or near historic assets to help with the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment. It is widely accepted that a sensitive approach, such as in relation to the positioning of lights or signs within a conservation area, can significantly improve the experience of residents and visitors. Too much clutter, such as a multitude of road markings or large flashing screens, can create impressions which severely damage historic landscapes.
- 5.18 The guide acknowledges that the public realm must evolve to accommodate modern needs and maintain safety and accessibility for all. It considers how modern public realm needs can be successfully integrated with traditional appearance and character.
- 5.19 The Right Bin in the Right Place (2020). Produced by Wrap, this is a guide for councils and sets out a recommended approach to 'binrastructure', with regard to the design, number and location of public litter bins and other items of street furniture designed to capture litter. The guide recommends that regular cleansing and high quality binrastructure can lead to reductions in litter, suggesting that litter on the ground can act as a beacon for further littering.
- 5.20 Uniting the Movement (2021). Sport England produced a 10-year vision to transform lives and communities through sport and physical activity. Sport England believes and advocates that sport and physical activity has a big role to play in improving the physical and mental health of the nation, supporting the economy, reconnecting communities and rebuilding a stronger society for all. Sport England seeks to be a catalyst for change and join forces on 5 issues which includes connecting communities, connecting with Health and Wellbeing and Active Environments.
- 5.21 Acknowledgement is made of the work that has already been undertaken to the Borough's public realm, since the publication of the Council's first Public Realm Strategy SPD. Improvement schemes include; complete public realm improvement works to Bell Street in Wigston and The Parade in Oadby; public information and heritage boards throughout the Borough; heritage trails; and, public art works.

6. Setting the Scene – A Brief History

- 6.1 Initially, the Borough consisted of two distinct settlements - Oadby and Wigston. Oadby, a large village by the 1860s, established itself around agriculture. It expanded rapidly in the late 1800's and early 1900's as wealthy Leicester City businessmen, mainly factory owners in the shoe and stocking industry, built large family houses immediately to the north west of the village in close proximity to Leicester City.



An historic photograph of London Road, Oadby.

These houses still remain as fine examples of the Arts and Crafts movement, with many now in the ownership of the University of Leicester which established its Oadby Campus after the Second World War.

- 6.2 Wigston, originally two settlements, was amalgamated into Wigston Magna in 1529. The two settlements were linked by a series of 'Lanes' which still remain today. The canal and railway brought further growth to what had been a predominantly agricultural community, resulting in further development to meet industrial and housing needs.
- 6.3 South Wigston, a new town developed in the late nineteenth century (by Orson Wright) follows the tradition of setting up 'model' towns by Victorian philanthropists. Unlike other 'model' towns of the time though, it was not just intended to house workers of the local brickyard. Other commercial premises, particularly associated with the clothing industry were established right from the start. The railway was key to this development.

- 6.4 During the 1960's and 70's significant change took place within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston. Both Wigston and Oadby centres saw major redevelopment, with the majority of their heritage and historical buildings lost, whereas, South Wigston's centre has remained relatively unchanged, and has kept its historical character.



An historic photograph of Leicester Road, Wigston.

6.5 During 2007, improvement to South Wigston's core public realm was completed. Paving, kerb stones and tree surrounds were improved, as well as some street furniture, including bollards, seating, litter bins, railings and cycle racking. The vision of improving the public realm within South Wigston along Blaby Road, was to create a more uniform and consistent palette of materials that reflected the existing historical character of the locale. Within the 13 years since these works were carried out, the public realm has slowly dated and would benefit from regeneration works.

6.6 Throughout the centres of Oadby and Wigston, public realm improvements have taken place also. In 2014, Bell Street in Wigston and The Parade in Oadby were updated with new, high quality public realm schemes. The works were carried out through a joint partnership between Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council with the works partly funded through European Regional



An historic photograph of Blaby Road in South Wigston

Development Fund monies. Further works to bring Leicester Road in Wigston and Leicester Road / London Road in Oadby to the same standard, would be beneficial.

7. Overview of current issues and challenges with the Borough's Public Realm

Clear and Cohesive Design Principles

- 7.1 When street furniture is due to be replaced due to wear, damage, or end of life, the Borough Council will ensure that replacement items help to create a unique Borough identity and reflect the high quality design principles.
- 7.2 Currently, the quality of the Boroughs public realm is mixed. A fair amount of it lacks consistency and contributes to a poor visual appearance of the streetscape in general. However, parts of the public realm in the centres of Oadby on The Parade and Wigston on Bell Street have been relatively recently redeveloped and are of high quality. Where the redevelopment work has been carried out, this has added formality and uniformity to the centre's surfacing and street furniture.
- 7.3 The public realm redevelopment that took place within South Wigston in 2007 was intended to formalise and uniform the centre's streets and street furniture. The main shopping street of Blaby Road, post development, does have a relatively consistent palette and use of materials, however more could be done to reduce street clutter and the over reliance of bollarding and railings to restrict and direct pedestrian flow. Additionally, after more than a decade in situ, the areas public realm would benefit from further regeneration / refurbishment to bring it back up to the standard achieved in back in 2007.
- 7.4 For the majority of the public realm outside the redevelopment works in each of the centres, the surfacing lacks a coherent structure and comprises a palette of many different materials that have little cohesion. Ad hoc public realm surfacing improvement, utilities reinstatement or replacement, patch repairs, and cluttering of signage and road markings add to a lack of consistency and contribute to a poor visual appearance of the streetscape in general. This public realm would greatly benefit from being redeveloped to the same high and consistent standard as the areas that have already been completed. Where future works are completed, in addition to considering the urban form and whether improvements can be made to increase active travel, consideration should also be given to consulting the local community that use the spaces.
- 7.5 Having clear and cohesive principles for the choice of materials, design, quality and location of street furniture, signage and planting, with a clear hierarchy of public squares, streets and green spaces and their coordination with higher level strategies, plays an important role in raising the quality of the Borough's streetscape and encouraging people to use them. Additionally, where appropriate, softer, more natural forms of landscaping should be used when normally they wouldn't be such as the 'grid system' or 'grasscrete' deployed for the over-flow car park at Parklands / Brocks Hill should be considered. This form of (normally hard) landscaping is sustainable, promoting natural drainage and biodiversity, whilst giving the area open and undeveloped feel.

Loss of Heritage and Local Distinctiveness

- 7.6 The wider Borough, town and district centres and Conservation Areas are in danger of losing their distinct character and charm as a result of informal use of materials that do not have a particular historical association with the area. Public realm design

and initiatives need to take account of the locale and its heritage or 'local' designs, in order to negate any further loss of heritage, local distinctiveness and/or character.

- 7.7 A particular issue, especially within areas that still have original paving materials, is utility reinstatement. As shown, within the 'Street Audit' section, the required due care and attention to detail has not always been taken when reinstating or matching original materials after utility works. The standard of all reinstatement works will be managed appropriately.
- 7.8 According to 'Streets for All' (Historic England), having a clear identity for streets that have a historical or distinctive character that helps to identify the significance of the street and adds value through public realm, can have a significant influence on inward investment and sense of place. It is suggested that commerce and industry, particularly in the growing knowledge based sectors, are greatly influenced by cultural and historical signals radiated by streets and a place's public realm. The borough has nine historic urban Conservation Areas, the majority of which would benefit from on-going improvements to their public realm which are in keeping with the historic context of the area.

Usage

- 7.9 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston is a place where people from all cultural backgrounds can meet, work, interact, shop and entertain themselves. However, other than in a few spots around the wider Borough and the recently redeveloped, The Parade in Oadby centre and Bell Street in Wigston centre, generally, the public environment does not encourage people to pause and enjoy the streets, heritage, public spaces or facilities. The wider public realm in most locations is not currently conducive to more casual behaviours, for example, extension of nightlife to streets or the encouragement of outdoor cafes or restaurants. The primary purpose of the Borough's streets is as conduits rather than places to be.
- 7.10 The Local Plan seeks to increase, the usage of the Borough's streets, especially within the main centres. Streets and public spaces need to encourage a multitude of users and usages; encourage greater footfall and dwell time, leading to increased economic spend and inward investment.

User Conflict

- 7.11 There are great demands on public realm. Public realm is part of a 24 hour cycle, with joggers and walkers in the early morning, to shoppers at lunchtime, to bar and restaurant customers in the evening. All public realm needs flexibility to facilitate use by a wide variety of user groups. In general, public realm in the Borough is not as flexible as it should be and does not allow for the full range of users.
- 7.12 Current Government guidance, suggests that the pedestrian should be the number one user of streets and public realm, followed by cyclists and that the motorised vehicle should not be comparable in terms of prioritisation. All users of the Borough's public realm should be able to move around freely and safely and not feel threatened or 'at risk' from unauthorised pedal or motor vehicles. Any area that is designed to be shared by pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooters will need to ensure that it is of sufficient quality and character (for example width), so that there will be no conflict between any of the users. The key is to ensure all users of a space are doing so in harmony. Changing the behaviour of our streets is a challenging proposition, but any improvements made are a step closer to the overall vision of attractive, walkable streets.

Movement and Connections

- 7.13 Freedom of movement is paramount if a public realm is to be successful. People need to be able to get from one place to another, as efficiently as possible. Many factors play a role in ease of movement, including, how connected a place is, how cluttered a place is and what materials have been used to implement a public realm scheme.
- 7.14 As explained in more detail later on in Section Ten, 'connections' refer to much more than physical connections, they can be visual, interpersonal, cultural and environmental. The majority of the physical connections within the Borough, more specifically the main centres are relatively good, however improvements should still be sought to ensure that the public realm continues to improve.
- 7.15 In terms of street clutter, a useful premise is 'less is more', for example, if there is no clear public benefit for the item, then it should not be placed upon the street or within the public realm. An abundance of road markings or pedestrian signage can not only cause confusion and compromise safety but is aesthetically displeasing and in the main unnecessary.

Crime, Safety and Integration

- 7.16 Safety and security are an essential element of successful places and spaces, and the overall sustainable community's agenda. Well designed and positive places are attractive environments and are places free from crime and the fear of crime, and contribute to public quality of life. Use of the correct materials, and appropriate public realm design within the Borough can help reduce crime, the fear of crime and create a greater sense of place. Furthermore, improvement of public realm, whether it be through 'Target Hardening' or 'Place Making', can dramatically reduce anti-social behaviour on streets and other public spaces. As well as target hardening and place making it is important that any public realm design takes into account natural surveillance and does not integrate enclosed spaces, or blind spots that could be susceptible to anti-social behaviour. In general, the Borough's public realm is reasonably open, however improvements could be made, whether it be through replacement of street furniture or improved lighting schemes. The Borough has recently invested in Domehawk CCTV to help reduce crime and increase safety for users in certain areas of the Borough. This was an upgrade project which supplemented the existing CCTV units with new units that take advantage of improvements in CCTV technology and connectivity. There are plans to further expand the CCTV network in the Borough based upon the demonstrated benefits of the existing units, with the expansion being rolled out in partnership with key agencies

Economic Impact

- 7.17 Evidence illustrates that there are direct links between the quality of public realm and economic performance. Poor quality public realm and the perception of poor quality public realm can have a dramatic impact on footfalls, visitors, and shopper 'stay' times. Improvements to the Borough's public realm, especially that located in town and district centres, can have an effect on increased consumer spend and inward investment.
- 7.18 First impressions count and can have a significant effect on the vitality of an area. All public realm should entice the user in, prolong the length of stay and add to the 'experience', to make the user want to come back again and again.

- 7.19 A useful example of how a public realm scheme can have a dramatic impact upon perceptions and footfall is Corby centre redevelopment, which since completion has documented significant increases in shopper numbers and inward investment. More information regarding best practice examples can be found later within this document.

Environment

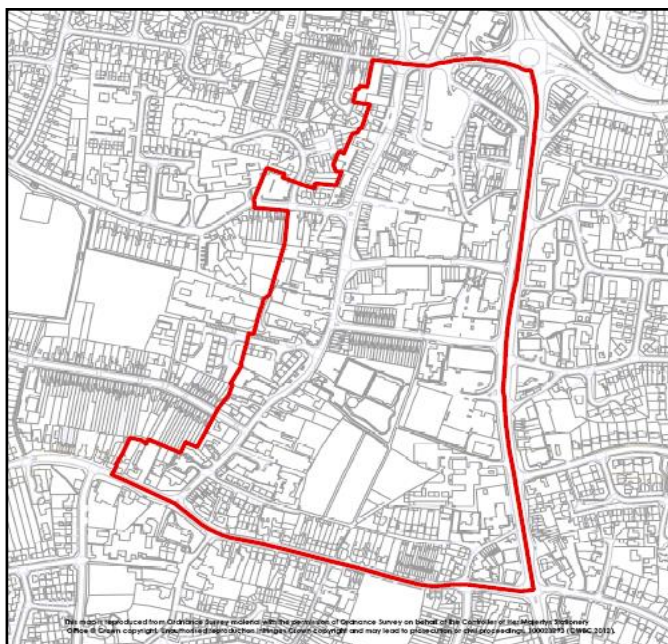
- 7.20 The benefits of protecting and enhancing the natural environment have become more important with the effects of Climate Change and the loss of Biodiversity. To help improve the natural environment the Council will aim to achieve a net-gain for biodiversity through all public realm improvements across the Borough.

8. Streetscape Audit

- 8.1 An important part of this Public Realm Strategy is the streetscape audits undertaken for each of the three main centres. The audits are a baseline from which the strategy itself stems. The audits review the streetscape as a 'whole' and consider the overall condition of the existing public realm.
- 8.2 Specific audits for each town and district centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston respectively were undertaken.

Wigston

- 8.3 For the purpose of the public realm audit, the Wigston centre has been broken down into three character areas; the Northern periphery; the Town core; and the Southern periphery. Note – the 'centre' refers to a boundary that has been drawn up around Wigston for the purpose of this Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document and does not necessarily reflect adopted or official town centre boundaries.

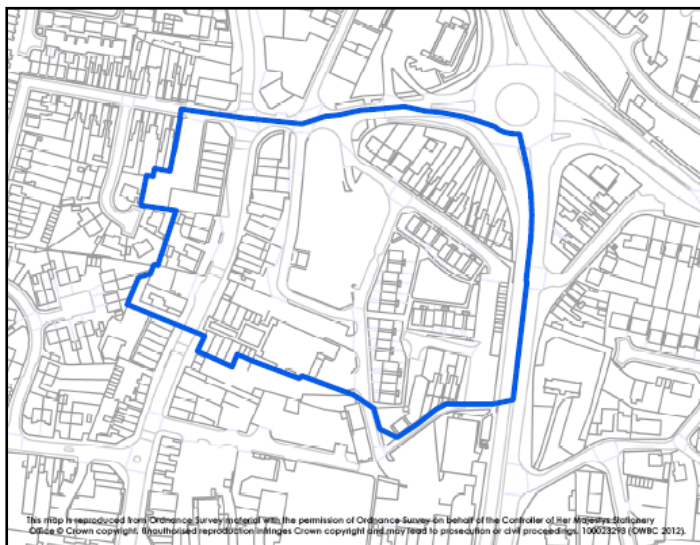


A map of Wigston Centre for the purposes of this Public Realm Strategy

Wigston Northern Periphery

- 8.4 The Northern Periphery of Wigston, as identified for the purpose of this document, is made up of a mix of retail, commercial and office space uses. The majority of its public realm is dated with relatively narrow pedestrian paving, restricting the use of street furniture, specifically seating.

- 8.5 The Northern Periphery has a mix of uses, and is not solely retail. Betting shops, banking establishments, car sales and public houses, are just a few of the different uses that are associated with the northern end of Wigston centre. A large proportion of the area is also designated public car parking (Junction Road). This area provides a very poor impression of the town centre to visitors and directions to the town centre could be confusing if you were unfamiliar with the area. Enhancements to these car parks need to be considered to soften/improve their appearance through the use of planting, possibly the use of green walls on boundaries



A map of the Northern Periphery of Wigston for the purposes of this Public Realm Strategy.

to screen the rear of premises. Appropriate navigation signage would also improve the area.

- 8.6 Currently the northern end of Leicester Road's public realm, in general, is of poor quality and lacks a consistent palette or use of materials. Utility reinstatement is also particularly obvious. Much of the pavements in this area are privately owned and therefore owner's approval would have to be sought if a comprehensive public realm scheme was planned for the area.

- 8.7 'Street clutter' is not such an issue within the northern periphery, however there is a lack of public seating. This lack of provision may well be down to the pavements being of a relatively narrow width, although could be due to a number of other reasons, such as lack of demand for seating in this area, or highway/pedestrian access restrictions.

- 8.8 Pedestrian alleyways that connect the Leicester Road section of the northern area to the Junction Road public car park are relatively narrow, and lack illumination during hours of darkness.

- 8.9 The Arcade shopping area located off Leicester Road in the northern area is a pedestrian only environment with a number of retail units, ranging from national multiples to local retailers. Within The Arcade the surface paving is relatively consistent in material and palette, but is in a poor condition. Redevelopment works that improve the quality and design of the surface materials should be sought. Additionally, recent safety works to the canopy have left exposed concrete and are unattractive and detract significantly from the area. Work to fully remove or repair the canopy to a high standard should be sought. The Arcade area is privately owned and therefore owner approval would have to be sought should a comprehensive public scheme be planned for the area. Links should be developed to connect The Arcade to Long Lane to encourage pedestrian access to the town centre.



The Arcade in Wigston

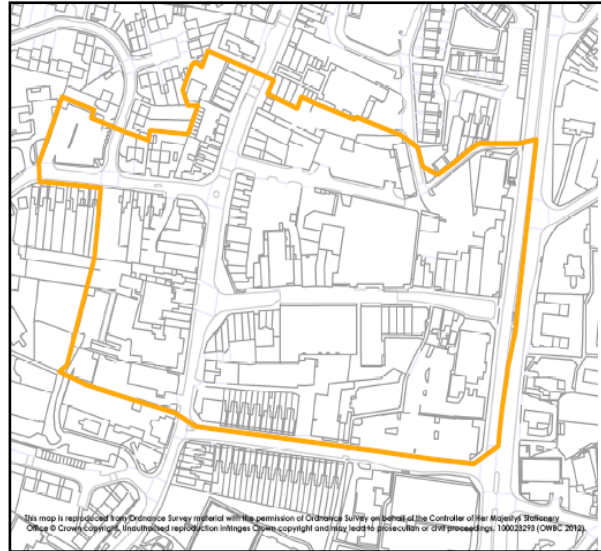


Poor paving and reinstatement, Leicester Road.

Wigston Core

8.10 The Town Core is the most important shopping destination within Wigston, and includes the retail dominated areas of Bell Street, and Leicester Road.

8.11 Leicester Road is predominately retail in its use, however unlike Bell Street and The Arcade, is motor vehicle dominated, with the highway dividing either side in two. With only two traffic light controlled pedestrian crossings and two major road junctions without such crossings, Leicester Road is not perceived as being the most pedestrian friendly of shopping destinations. Crossing from one side of the pavement to the other, especially at peak traffic periods, is not the easiest.



A map of the Core of Wigston for the purposes of this Public Realm Strategy.

8.12 With Leicester Road being vehicular dominated; there are few defined areas for sitting and relaxing, whether this is by design or need. Seating, cycle parking and litter bins are currently concentrated on the wide expanse of paving situated on the corner of Leicester Road and Bell Street, creating a busy and cluttered space which although has been improved recently, still has some scope for further improvements. Raised platforms have been added near the junction with Aylestone Lane to slow the traffic and are often mistaken by pedestrians for crossing points.

8.13 The key shopping destinations in this area, in general, have an abundance of signage and street clutter.

8.14 Bell Street is the main shopping destination within Wigston, with over 30 units, and national chains, such as Sainsbury's, Boots and Specsavers. Being Wigston's primary shopping street, most of Bell Street has a relatively high footfall and pedestrian flow. The majority of the street has been pedestrianised, with just a short section adjoining Long Street / Leicester Road being open to vehicular use. Overall the width is good, with minimum distances at pinch points around 11 metres. Other than the far western end, adjacent to Long Street / Leicester Road, Bell Street is paved in small blocks, grey and black in colour. Street furniture of benches, bins, granite tree planters and decorative granite cubes is placed regularly along Bell Street to provide a high quality public realm.



Street Clutter within the Core Area of Wigston.



The consistent, high quality Public Realm, Bell Street.

8.15 Bell Street is pedestrianised in nature and no vehicles are allowed to access the street (with some exceptions). The western end or the Bell Street / Long Street / Leicester Road junction has been improved but may well benefit from being pedestrianised in accordance with the remainder of Bell Street.

8.16 The eastern end of Bell Street is a cul-de-sac and has no vehicular access onto or off Bull Head Street. The addition of the Pocket Park adds greenery to the otherwise urban space and encourages an increase in dwell times and use.

- 8.17 The area along Frederick Street connects the Northern Periphery and Wigston Core. The area currently has an urban backwater feel which could benefit from some reinvigoration, through the use of street art, planting and removing barriers (for example studs could be used to define ownership boundaries e.g. between Frederick Street car park and Wilko car park rather than a barrier). Added to this, through redesign of the highway more of the area could be pedestrianised. This would enable the utilisation of the space for a more defined pocket public square area, with the possibility of street art (or green wall) on the back of Sainsbury's to further soften the area and the addition of lighting and modern seating. Increased signage around the area would help visitors to the town navigate with ease.

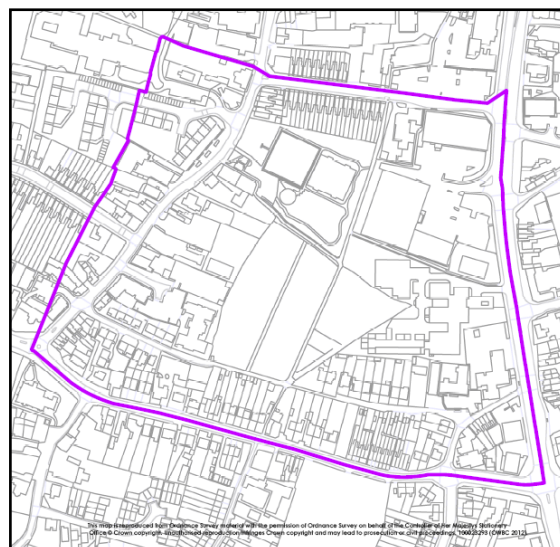
Wigston Southern Periphery

- 8.18 The Southern Periphery character area provides an important location for secondary retail, and community services, together with a collection of public and private office buildings. The 'neighbourhood' feel with residential properties and small number of local shops is in strong contrast to the heavy volumes of traffic that is experienced, especially during peak times. Forming the entire Southern Periphery are the two Conservation Areas of Wigston All Saints and The Lanes.



Pocket Park, Bell Street

8.19 In general, pavement and footpath widths are adequate, however there are areas where they do narrow to pinch points, restricting and decreasing the ability for pedestrian flow. The pavements and pedestrian footpaths are segregated by a number of side road and rear access junctions, many of which are 'blind' to the pedestrian and could impact upon pedestrian safety. Similar to the presence of narrowing footpaths, the lack of continuity along the pedestrian frontages, causes unnecessary barriers to pedestrian flow and detracts from the 'pedestrian experience' and ease of movement.



A map of Wigston's southern periphery boundary



Illustrations of the number of surfacing materials used and the general condition

8.20 The public realm situated within the Southern Periphery is of a sporadic and pocketed nature, and uses a number of different materials and designs. From the audit undertaken it is apparent that there has been a lack of an overall wider vision for the public realm in this area. Many of the pavements, especially those opposite Peace Memorial Park to the front of Elizabeth Court, use 3 or 4, in some cases 5 different surfacing materials.

8.21 Peace Memorial Park located along Long Street in the Southern Periphery is an asset that needs safeguarding and enhancing where possible. Existing use of iron railings

along the street frontage provides definition, security, and a sense of arrival to one of the Borough's best urban assets.

8.22 The park is a good example of a well maintained urban green space, which has a good mix of sporting activities space and more informal relaxation space. Furniture within the park is of good quality and has been designed and manufactured to minimise maintenance.

8.23 The Lanes, located within the Southern Periphery is a historical pedestrian network that connects Moat Street and Bell Street (north - south), and Leicester Road and Bull Head Street (east - west). Materials predominately consist of tarmacadam pathways and iron



Peace Memorial park in Wigston.



Illustrations of the condition of The Lanes in Wigston.

railings with the odd presence of original brick built walling. The majority of the pathways are narrow with high intruding hedge lines which prevent natural surveillance from the surrounding areas and properties, and create an uninviting atmosphere of apprehension.

- 8.24 The majority of the street furniture provided for public use along The Lanes, is in need of repair or replacement due to its poor state. The lamp lights used along the length of The Lanes are well designed and built, however like other street furniture are in need of refurbishment. Vandalism is apparent at various points along The Lanes pedestrian pathway network also.
- 8.25 Long Lane is a key piece of historic infrastructure, the line of which hasn't changed since it was first developed as a village path – even the kink around Paddock Street car park is exactly how it was originally designed, as a path between two fields. This link to the historic past of Wigston should be celebrated and improvements need to be made to make this a much more inviting path through Wigston which was the link between the Two Steeples of Wigston. Historic interpretation and signage would be crucial to developing this.

Oadby

- 8.26 Like Wigston, for the purpose of the public realm audit, the centre of Oadby has been broken down into three character areas, the Northern periphery; the Core; and the Southern periphery. Note – the 'centre' refers to a boundary that has been drawn up around Oadby for the purpose of this Public Realm Supplementary Planning Document and does not necessarily reflect adopted or official district centre boundaries.



Oadby Northern Periphery

A map illustrating Oadby centre for the purposes of this strategy

- 8.27 The majority of the Northern Periphery of Oadby's centre is major highway in nature. The Harborough Road (A6) is a dual carriageway, characterised in this area with a 4 way traffic light controlled vehicular junction. There are a small number of retail units to the north, which are identified as secondary frontage within the Council's Local Plan.
- 8.28 The northern area also includes Sandhurst Street. Sandhurst Street is characterised by a mix of residential and commercial plots. The majority of the western side of Sandhurst Street is terraced with semi-detached residential units with on street parking provision, whereas, the eastern side is predominately rear parking and service access for units fronting onto The Parade. The pavements along Sandhurst Street are of poor quality and are in a bad state of repair.



A map showing the Northern Periphery of Oadby centre.

8.29 On street parking along Sandhurst Street is designated for Permit Holders. Sandhurst Street is also the only vehicular access route for Sandhurst Street public car park. Movements from the car park to the town centre could be confusing if you were unfamiliar with the area. The addition of signage would help navigation.

8.30 Towards the northern tip of The Parade, there is a small urban pocket of green space (Burtons Corner) that has seating, litter bins, planting, public art and informal grassed areas. The surface material that runs through the area is block work in nature and, as with the street furniture and planting, is in good condition. Burton's Corner is a distinctive gateway into Oadby's centre from the north.

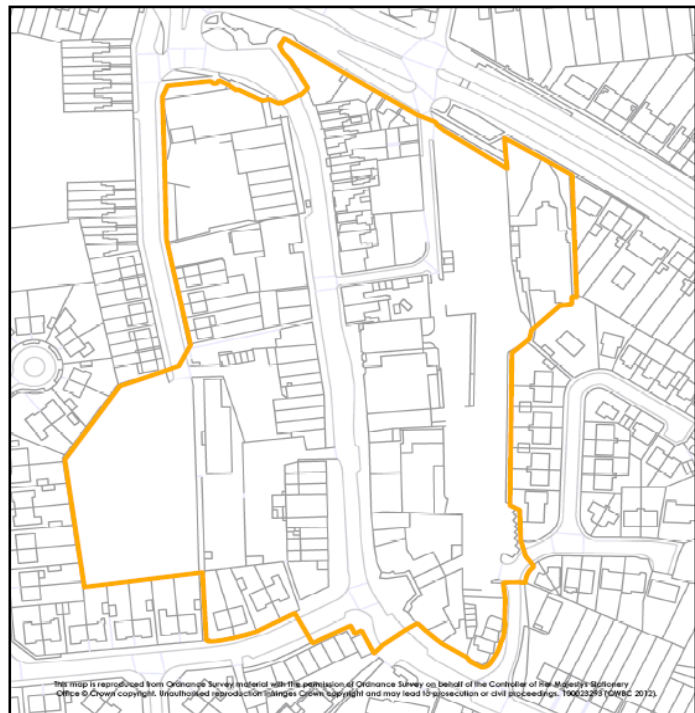


Burtons Corner showing high quality public realm

Oadby Core

8.31 Oadby's town core is the principal shopping location. The town core is 'home' to national retail chains, such as Marks and Spencers and Boots, as well as more local stores and businesses. With this mix of national and local businesses trading side by side, Oadby's core has something for all and appeals to a wide variety of potential shoppers.

8.32 Bar some properties towards the north, the majority of Oadby's centre was constructed around the 1950's to 1970s. Most buildings are of 2 or more storeys in height, but do not have an overbearing feel which is in part down to the relatively wide carriageway and pavements. In terms of building aesthetics, the core of Oadby is largely devoid of high quality architecture and any sense of historic fabric has been lost.



A map illustrating the boundary of the Oadby Core.

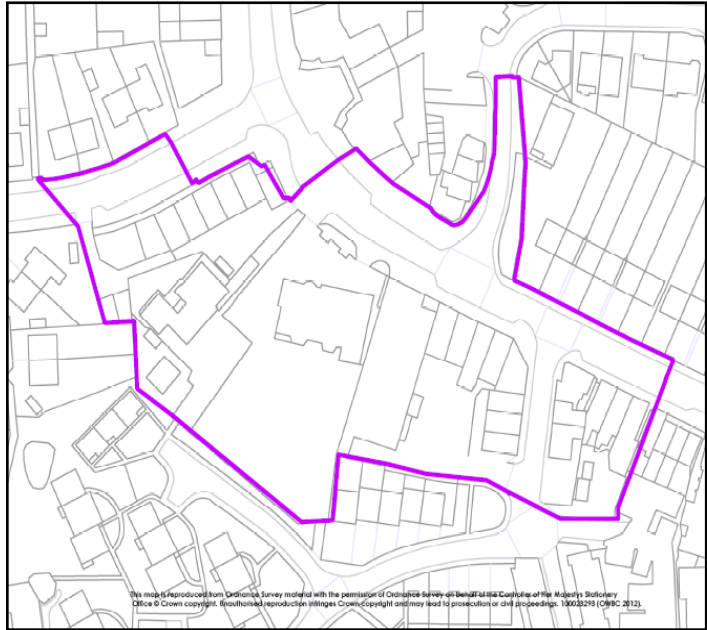
8.33 The majority of the pavements situated within the core are of good width, and do allow a free movement and pedestrian flow and the wide pavements lend themselves to outdoor cafes and eating opportunities, as well as break-out spaces for drinking establishments. The public realm in Oadby core along The Parade was updated in 2014 and is of high quality, although there are some areas that could benefit from a little maintenance to preserve the high quality.



High quality, uncluttered Public Realm in Oadby core.

- 8.34 Oadby core contains East Street Car Park which provides a poor impression of the town centre to visitors and directions to the town centre could be confusing if you were unfamiliar with the area. Enhancements to the car parks need to be considered to soften it through, for example, the use of planting, and green walls on boundaries to screen the rear of premises. Signage is required to help navigation.
- 8.35 There are currently two designated pedestrian crossings, which are traffic light signalled, to get from the east side to the west, of The Parade, one in the centre and one at the southern end.
- 8.36 The core has a high quality provision of street furniture of consistent design. The pedestrian footpaths are paved in a uniform material of high quality and street clutter has been minimised making the core an easy and pleasant space to maneuverer around.
- 8.37 Towards the southern end of The Parade, vegetation in the form of mature pavement trees and high quality granite planters provide a break from its otherwise 'stark' urban form. For a well-used retail location, that does see significant numbers of pedestrian footfall, vehicular speeds can be relatively high. A 'raised table' has been added to the central area in an attempt to slow the speeds of vehicular traffic.

8.38 The Southern Periphery of Oadby's centre is where the transition from 1950's to 1970's commercial and retail units, to pre and post war residential properties occur. There is a dramatic change in the 'feel' and scale of the properties. Other than the Tipu Sultan Restaurant, which is set back from the carriageway, building heights are no higher than two storeys in height and front directly onto the pavement.



8.39 Up to the junction of Brooksby Drive and The Parade pavement widths are still relatively wide, however, they do narrow considerably past this point. In terms of pavement quality and state of repair in the southern area, some improvement work has been carried out although as you approach the edge of the southern periphery the pavements are in poor condition and pavement areas have been haphazardly repaired or reinstated.

8.40 The highway within this area does have designated 40 minute maximum parking zones and a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing situated directly outside the Oadby Library.

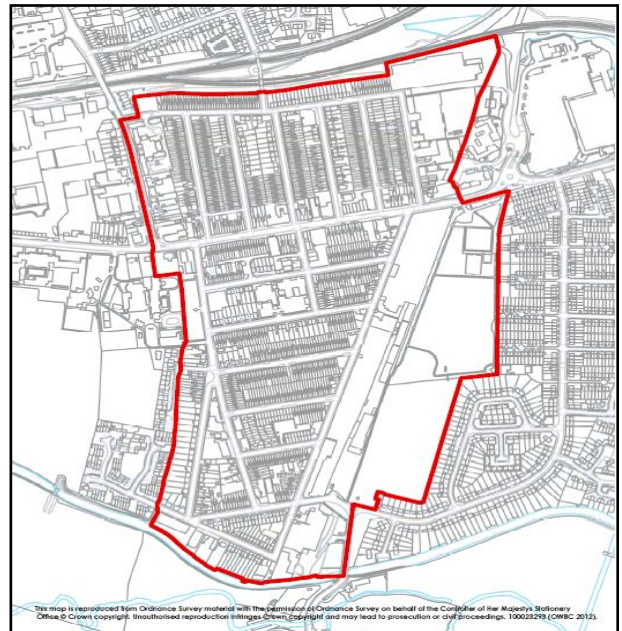
8.41 The Southern Periphery, as defined within this document, also abuts the Oadby London Road and St Peters Conservation Area. The pavement areas along London Road are also generally in poor condition and have again been haphazardly repaired or reinstated.



24

South Wigston

8.42 Out of the three main centres within the Borough, South Wigston demonstrates the most historical character. The majority of its buildings were built during the late 1800's and were built on a parcel of land encased within the, then, Wigston to Nuneaton Railway Line, Saffron Road, and the Wigston to Rugby Railway Line. Its form can be likened to the 'model' town's philosophy of the Victorian period, however South Wigston differed from most, as it was to house not only brickyard workers, but also a wider population, as well as other commercial properties, particularly related to the hosiery industry.



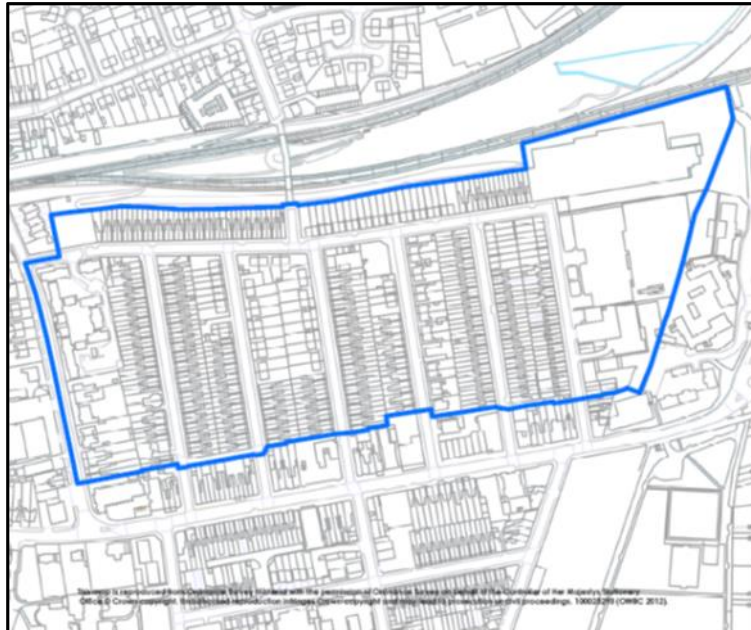
A map showing the extent of South Wigston's boundary

- 8.43 South Wigston is a gift of industrial archaeology – the Grand Union Canal, the Railway, Victorian Model Town and philanthropy. These should be celebrated with interpretive boards, signage and creation of walking trails. South Wigston currently suffers from health inequalities and the opportunities to exercise in the town should be encouraged through the development of walking trails with physical distance markers. The proposed installation of Wi-Fi affords the opportunity of creating a digital walking trail utilising the Wi-Fi. Signage and walking routes from the station should also be emphasised along with signage to the college, town centre, canal and employment areas.
- 8.44 For the purpose of this document, South Wigston centre has been dissected into three main areas; the Northern periphery; the Core; and, the Southern periphery. Note – the 'centre' refers to a boundary that has been drawn up around South Wigston for the purpose of this Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document and does not necessarily reflect adopted or official district centre boundaries.

South Wigston's Northern Periphery

- 8.45 The majority of the northern area of South Wigston is residential in nature, and is characterised by one way streets. Unlike the Core (as described later) the public realm is relatively poor and in need of updating and redevelopment. The pavements are in need of attention and are generally a mix of different materials and colours. There is a distinct lack of street furniture, specifically seating, however this is not untypical of a predominately residential area. Similar to most areas where the paving is in need of attention, utility reinstatement is particularly obvious.

- 8.46 The one way traffic 'nature' of the area brings with it a relatively high level of street signage and road markings.



A map shows the extent of South Wigston's Northern Periphery.

- 8.47 Very few properties within the northern area of South Wigston have off street parking and thus the streets are lined with motor vehicles.



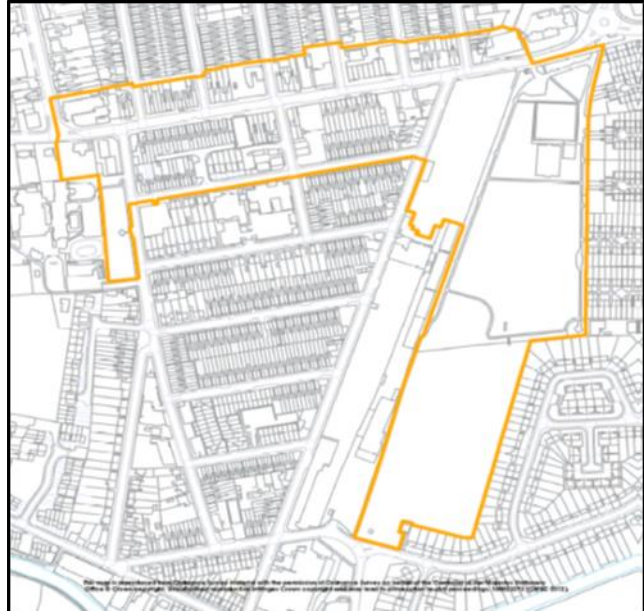
Illustrations of the level of signage and condition of the surfacing.

South Wigston's Core

8.48 The South Wigston Core is the centres main retail destination. There is an abundance of units all of very differing variety and type, catering for both the local population and those slightly further afield.

8.49 During 2007 a public realm improvement scheme for South Wigston, a partnership between Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council, was completed.

8.50 The quality and condition of the public realm within the South Wigston core is mixed. The improvement programme had a positive impact, however more can be achieved and the work that has been completed is now in need of some maintenance and improvement work itself. The relaying of kerbstones and some paving has created a safer and more effective pedestrian environment, however the abundance of railings and bollards seem to contradict current government initiatives to reduce the number of barriers to pedestrian movement.



Map showing South Wigston's Core boundary

8.51 Street clutter, in terms of signage and road markings, could be reduced also. Utility reinstatement is an issue, as it is within the other two centres of Oadby and Wigston and it is something that needs monitoring and enforcing if needs must.

8.52 Crossing from one side of the highway to the other is restricted to traffic light controlled pedestrian crossings.

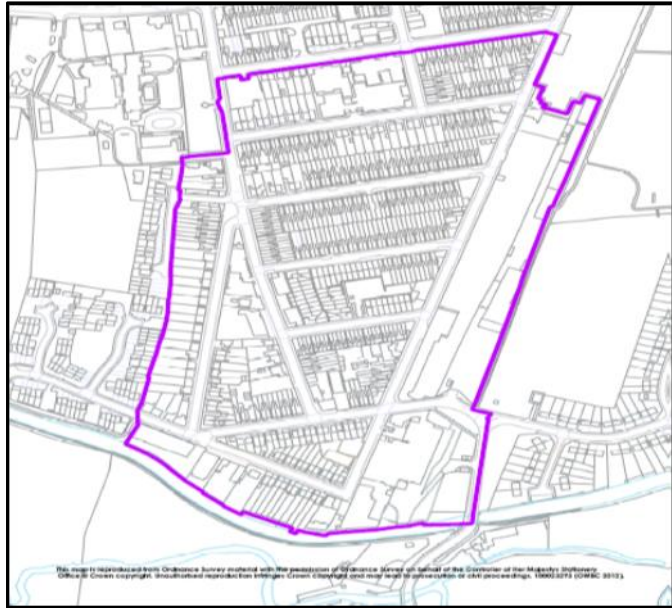


Illustration of the consistency in materials post redevelopment and shows the maintenance work needed.



The public realm fronting South Leicestershire College.

- 8.53 Towards the far eastern end of Blaby Road, the development of South Leicestershire College's campus has significantly improved the streetscape and public realm, although this could now benefit from some maintenance and cleaning. Innovative design and use of materials has enabled creation of a relatively large area of urban open space adjacent to Blaby Road public park. Blaby Road Park itself is a large (around 5.5 hectares) expanse of urban green space that is available for many differing types of informal and formal public uses.



Map shows the extent of the Southern Periphery boundary

South Wigston's Southern Periphery

- 8.54 Similar to the Northern periphery of South Wigston, the southern areas are predominately residential in nature, however are mixed with some industrial and commercial uses sporadically located. The streetscape is characterised by terraced housing and on street allocated parking. The majority of the southern periphery is a one way vehicular network, which brings with it an abundance of road signage and markings.
- 8.55 Paving within the area is a mix of ageing paving slabs and tarmacadam. Some of the street corners, in particular, the Dunton Street and Bassett Street junction have relatively recent block work and street furniture, which although is refreshing and an improvement to existing paving, adds to the palette of differing materials, design and colours.
- 8.56 Overall there is little consistency with paving materials or styles and there is a general lack of useable street furniture, for example seating and litter bins.



Illustration of sporadic improvement attempts and general surfacing condition.

The Wider Borough

- 8.57 It would not be possible for this document to audit each and every part of the Borough area outside of the three main centres, therefore a very broad summary overview is given. Once schemes or future projects are under consideration, an audit will be carried out at a very early stage to ensure that the most appropriate works are completed. Once completed, any new public realm improvement projects should be added to the streetscape audit for future monitoring.
- 8.58 Similar to the centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston the wider Borough has examples of good public realm practice as well as examples of poor public realm that is in need of attention and enhancement. Added to this, some areas of the Borough feel very green and have street trees, grass verges and pockets of planting. Conversely, many areas and often those with poor public realm, feel very urban in nature and lack any form of greenery or biodiversity.
- 8.59 There are several green lanes throughout the Borough, which are remnants of the Borough's history and the use of these and connectivity that they offer should be promoted through improved linkages to them from the town centres and other places of interest. These make ideal, safe pathways and cycle ways and could be used as the start of connected 'greenways' through and across the Borough. These pathways include:
- Footpath from Stoughton, crosses Manor Road and Woodfield Road, beside Uplands Park, via Tudor Drive and King Street to London Road, Oadby.
 - Fludes Lane from A6 Harborough Road to end of Florence Wragg Way, which provides pedestrian access to London Road from Manor, Grange and Grange Farm estates.
 - Mere Walk, which runs through parts of Wigston.
 - Various routes from Rosemead Drive estate which 'funnel through' Chicken Alley or Lawyers Lane, Oadby.
 - The Lanes which run around the original centre of Wigston.
 - Gas Lane which runs from Newgate End to Pochins Close and Davenport Road in Wigston.

- The Grand Union Canal towpath running along the south of the Borough from South Wigston at Crow Mill to Kilby Bridge.

8.60 Although this Public Realm strategy concentrates upon the three main centres, it is important that the public realm within the Borough as a whole is improved and enhanced where relevant. Added to this, new developments are often designed around the use of cars and this can leave them with no real connection to the wider community. Extra care must be taken to how the public realm of new development connects with the wider community and how it can be improved to encourage active travel, through walking and cycling in and around the development, reducing the need to design all movement around car use.



Illustration of poor and good examples of public realm in the wider Borough.

9. The Vision for Public Realm

9.1 The vision for the Public Realm Strategy for the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is;

To Create Capable, Distinctive, Accessible, Thriving, and High Quality Mixed Use Public Open spaces” that are;

- ***Safe***
- ***High Quality and Efficient Use of Materials***
- ***High Quality and Consistent Design***
- ***Logical and Legible***
- ***Connected***

9.2 The 5 themes mentioned above are the key attributes that all public realm within the Borough should illustrate and embrace through enhancement. There has also been a committed drive to de-clutter streets and create sustainable urban centres that are more accessible to the pedestrian. Through the Public Realm Strategy the Council will to create public realm and spaces that are more logical, legible and usable.


9.3 There needs to be an innovative approach to integrating movement in streets and spaces, which doesn't necessarily follow the 'boundaries of traditional and conventional solutions'. Existing or proposed barriers should be removed to allow for more accessible streets that encourage pedestrians to roam and not be constricted by street clutter or signage. An over reliance on street signage, barriers, markings, and unnecessary furniture, creates spaces that are illogical, confusing and restrictive to the pedestrian. The Council will consider all new requests for street furniture, but where it is considered that it is unnecessary and will add to street clutter, these requests may be denied.



New Road in Brighton, illustrating effective shared surfaces.



9.4 The pedestrian should be the 'key' component of public realm design. Design should 'turn the tables' on conventional ways of thinking and make the motorised vehicle second to the pedestrian and other sustainable modes of transport. We should be encouraging pedestrian and cycle access, use and travel within our town centres, and discouraging the use of the motorised vehicle where possible, through specific targeted design principles.

Consider first 	Pedestrians
	Cyclists
	Public transport users
	Specialist service vehicles (e.g. emergency services, waste, etc.)
	Consider last
	Other motor traffic

Extract from Manual for Streets, Department for Transport 2007.

Note: for the purpose of this document, mobility scooters for the disabled, will be classed with pedestrians.

- 9.5 The Department for Transport has suggested the need to bring about a transformation in the quality of English streets, which will require a culture change from existing design ideas. There needs to be a breaking away from the 'standard' and prescriptive methods in order to create these high quality safe streets. All Public Realm design should apply a 'user hierarchy', with the pedestrian at the top.
- 9.6 The 'Shared Space' concept should be taken into account during the design process. Case studies have shown that good design and shared spaces can decrease the number of pedestrian and vehicle accidents, thus a safer environment, whilst making streets more attractive and appealing. At the time of writing however, there is currently a Government moratorium on Shared Space schemes. This is to remain in place until new Government policy is issued to address safety concerns raised regarding Shared Space and visually impaired users. This new national policy will supersede any guidance contained within this document regarding Shared Spaces.
- 9.7 Although it is clear that each of the three centres within the Borough are distinct from one another, public realm within each has to be of consistent and high quality design. Good design will incorporate character and heritage, and should amplify also. If achieved, high quality design will not only bring physical benefits to the centres, but social, environmental and economic too. Modern, high quality and innovative urban design will thrust the Borough to the forefront of regeneration projects.
- 9.8 Public Realm should be 'inclusive' in all aspects. No one aspect should have priority (other than pedestrians and cyclists over motorised vehicles) over another...no social or cultural group will have priority or advantage. Design will incorporate all, to create fully inclusive public spaces and realm. Such a premise is extremely important within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, with the Borough being one of the most culturally and socially diverse areas in the East Midlands.

Photographs illustrating how public realm improvements can enliven an area, New Road, Brighton.



Photographs illustrating how public art can be incorporated into the public realm in Sunderland and Manchester.

- 9.9 The provision of Public Art is also important throughout the design process of Public Realm. The centres should show ‘ambition’ and ‘innovation’, and should incorporate contemporary Public Art into Public Realm. Public Art should seek to; both enhance the existing local distinctiveness and character, and create an ‘identity’ in areas of redevelopment. Public Art, will not only encourage the aesthetic interest of the centres, but can be used to highlight important spaces or define/aid legibility, as well as being educational or thought provoking.
- 9.10 As well as high quality design, the use of high quality sustainable materials is paramount. Materials used for the street furniture, the street surfaces, or the ‘green spaces’, should be environmentally friendly and sustainable. For example, Sustainable Drainage Systems should be incorporated to negate any increase of surface water or runoff, or street lighting should be energy efficient or self-sufficient.
- 9.11 To help mitigate Climate Change, improve flood resilience and reduce the loss of Biodiversity, the Council will ensure that all new public realm and all public realm regeneration projects seek to have a Biodiversity net gain and improve flood resilience where possible. Any measures incorporated into the public realm must be of high quality design and must add to the aesthetic quality and interest of public realm schemes. The use of innovative methods to improve biodiversity and improve flood resilience will add to achieving modern, high quality, state-of-the-art urban design.



Photographs of innovative lighting schemes in Stockton and Wembley.



Photographs of high quality street furniture, New Road, Brighton and Cardiff



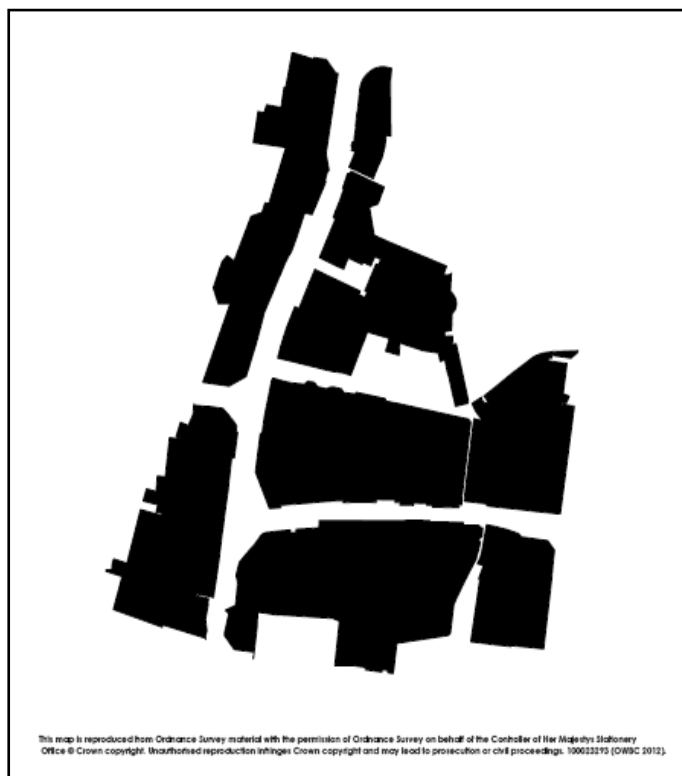
Photographs of sustainable drainage methods in Derry and Coventry.

10. Ways of Achieving the Vision – Connections

- 10.1 The following section of the Public Realm Strategy will concentrate on realising the 'vision' for the Borough's public realm. General principles and policies which apply to the whole Borough are followed by more specific detailed principles and guidance for the Borough. In considering proposals for development, account will be taken of both the principles and guidance.
- 10.2 A high quality public realm is vital to make the Borough an attractive place in which to shop, live and work. In addition to this, where opportunities exist public realm will seek to enhance the character and setting of heritage assets within the Borough.
- 10.3 The public realm should be attractive to all and at all times of the day. It is particularly important to encourage the evening economy and make the Borough feel secure and attractive for people using it during the day and at night. Visitors and residents should expect to experience a level of urban quality commensurate with the best regional examples. The following general principles and guidance need taking account of during development or redevelopment of any public realm:

Connections

- 10.4 The town and district centres of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston function on a network of connected routes and spaces. This network or 'framework' of movement should allow for efficient and direct travel by either foot or bicycle.
- 10.5 Using Nolli's principles (an 18th Century Italian architect) and applying it to a mapping exercise, it is possible to illustrate the movement 'framework' for all three of the Borough's main centres. Public spaces, which include alley ways, lanes, streets, roads, and public squares are shown in white, whereas non public (private) spaces are illustrated in black.



A map illustrating the physical connectivity of Wigston.

Physical Connections

10.6 The overall physical connectivity of the three main centres (as shown in the maps using the Nolli principles) within the Borough is relatively good. However, it is the quality of these connections that fails to live up to modern expectations and usage demand.

10.7 The movement 'framework' for each of the centres is fairly logical and direct (following existing historical routes) and allow a relative ease of movement, but do need material improvement.

- 10.8 Having a clear logical approach and seeing improvements to public realm and spaces within each of the centres will increase integration and usage.

Visual Connections

- 10.9 Streets, alleyways, lanes, and other public spaces that make up the movement 'framework' need to flow and celebrate important views and vistas, rather than isolate from them. Connections between places and spaces need to add to the sense of place and encourage usage. Public spaces benefit from the removal of barriers and street clutter. The government has urged Council's in England to rid streets of unnecessary signage in a bid to make them tidier and safer. The government suggested that *'our streets are losing their English character. We are being overrun by scruffy signs, bossy bollards, patch work paving and railed off roads'*.



A map illustrating the physical connectivity of Oadby.

- 10.10 Measures for directing and controlling the movement and flow of pedestrians are currently stark and in need of improvement. To ensure an improved experience within the centres, controls of movement are to be subservient to the overall sense of place and need incorporating into design principles and defined within the public realm quality.



A map illustrating the physical connectivity of South Wigston.

Interpersonal Connections

- 10.11 Currently cafes, bars and restaurants are not encouraged to 'break out' into the streets and other open areas, providing more animated spaces. The Local Plan through its policies supports the use of outside eating spaces, to increase social interactions and create an atmosphere of vibrancy. Public spaces should be flexible and be exploitable (shared surfaces) for a variety of uses and user groups. All users of the public realm should feel comfortable and safe, for example innovative traffic management solutions should be employed to break down barriers and encourage respect between vehicles and pedestrians.

Cultural and Environmental Connections

- 10.12 The physical connections or networks of movement should be designed in such a way, as to reconnect people with the environment. Urban green spaces, should be well connected and celebrated; public realm design should engage the 'senses' and stimulate; and urban form should incorporate sustainable urban drainage systems into its design.
- 10.13 The history or culture of a centre should be celebrated through public realm design and redevelopment. Local distinctiveness should be enhanced through the use of public art, creating a modern identity, strong sense of place and ownership. Public squares should be flexible in order to accommodate a variety of activities and cultural events, whether it is a seasonal market or religious celebrations.

Barriers to Connections

- 10.14 Having a clear and logical public realm is vitally important for any large centre. Barriers to movement can have a significant effect on how successful a centre is, in particular economically. No public realm within the Borough should be cluttered by signage or street furniture, as these can have a dramatic effect on both pedestrian and vehicular flow and movement. Where possible, bollards and railings should not be used to direct or restrict pedestrian movement. If directing or diverting of movement is required, it should be done through good design and use of surface materials or street furniture such as bicycle racking, litter bins or seating. As a standard, public realm should not have any form of bollarding or railings, unless absolutely necessary. During the design stage of any public realm scheme, pedestrian desire lines should be a key consideration.

Connections across the Borough

- 10.15 Across the wider Borough connections currently prioritise car users. The Borough has several main routes which provide connections between the town and district centres, local centres, green open spaces and heritage sites which provide an environment that does not promote walking or cycling along these desire lines. When public realm is redeveloped along these main connection routes, the Borough Council, working in partnership with the County Council, will seek to provide an environment which promotes walking and cycling where the road layout makes this possible and safe to do so.
- 10.16 Routes for consideration could include, but is not limited to the following:
- Aylestone Lane, Wigston;
 - Blaby Road, South Wigston
 - Brabazon Road, Oadby;
 - Bull Head Street, Wigston;
 - London Road, Oadby;
 - Moat Street, Wigston;
 - Oadby Road, Wigston;
 - Wigston Road, Oadby;
 - Saffron Lane, South Wigston;
 - Station Road, Wigston.

11. Ways of Achieving the Vision – Targeted Principles and Enhancement Opportunities within main centres

- 11.1 The following principles provide greater detail on the approach that is to be undertaken in each centre of Wigston, Oadby and South Wigston regarding public realm. The principles and opportunities outlined below stem from the specific street audits that were undertaken for each of the Borough's three main centres.

Wigston Centre

- 11.2 With Wigston being one of only two town centres within the Leicester Principal Urban Area its public realm and retail offer has to be commensurate to its status. The Local Plan objectives for Wigston focus upon encouraging the growth of its retail core and making the town centre distinct and sustainable. To support the objectives set out in the Local Plan it is proposed that any public realm schemes within the centre of Wigston should be modern, clean and contemporary in design, and use the highest quality materials.

Wigston Northern Periphery

- 11.3 The public realm within the Northern Periphery, in general, is relatively poor. Possible enhancements could include; the resurfacing of pedestrian pavements, the Arcade area and alleyways (connecting the Junction Road public car park to Leicester Road), creating a safer pedestrian environment; improved lighting schemes within all pedestrian environments; and an increase in essential street furniture.
- 11.4 Major redevelopment works are identified for the Northern Zone. It is therefore important that any public realm works proposed take account of future redevelopment so that significant investment is not wasted.

Wigston Northern Periphery Key Principles

- 1. Enhancement of the public realm along Leicester Road will be encouraged. Only schemes that improve the quality, consistency and palette of surfacing material will be supported.**
- 2. Any surfacing materials and street furniture should be of the highest quality and be consistent with those set out in Table 1.**
- 3. Public Realm improvements stemming from any redevelopment of Wigston Northern Periphery must utilize the highest quality materials that are either consistent with or complement those set out in Table 1. In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along Bell Street.**
- 4. Lighting within the alleyways and pedestrian walkways connecting Leicester Road with Junction Road public car park should be improved. Lighting should produce bright illumination, be building mounted and sited to avoid any shadow spots. Where existing column lighting is to be replaced, where possible this should be reinstalled as building mounted lighting.**

Wigston Core

- 11.5 Full pedestrianising of Bell Street has had a positive impact not only upon the feel and sense of place but also on the local economy. Any increase in pedestrian footfall could impact positively upon economic spend. Full pedestrianisation of the street has also created an event space that provides a space capable of holding a local or seasonal market. Currently at the Leicester Road end of Bell Street there are disabled parking bays and a taxi rank. These would need to be relocated should this area be pedestrianised.
- 11.6 A decrease in unnecessary street clutter specifically signage is essential for the Town Core area as a whole. Reducing the amount of clutter and making sure only 'essential' signage and markings are kept will significantly alter the look and feel of the area.
- 11.7 The eastern end of Bell Street, adjacent to Bull Head Street, is where Bell Street is at its widest and is an ideal location for public events and an entrance gateway. The redevelopment of the public realm and creation of the pocket park has had a positive impact on the gateway and proves a draw despite the lack of national retail chains towards the eastern end.

Wigston Core Key Principles

- 1. Further redevelopment of the surfacing along Leicester Road/Long Street and Bell Street will be sought. Any public realm scheme for the above mentioned streets will need to use consistent and high quality materials (as set out in Table 1). In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along Bell Street.**
- 2. Removal of any unnecessary street signage or road markings will be encouraged.**

Wigston Southern Periphery

- 11.9 Peace Memorial Park should be actively encouraged as an asset to Wigston centre. The park is a prime example of a well maintained urban park, an almost oasis from the constant flow of traffic and sounds associated with a main town centre. A possible enhancement could be to create a greater sense of invitation and arrival for prospective users.
- 11.10 The large expanse of paving opposite Peace Memorial park, to the front of Elizabeth Court is of a reasonable standard with, some planting and benches and consistent paving. However, further planting between the curb edge and the current planting would provide a green barrier between motor vehicles and pedestrians. This would help to encourage walking and further seating could help to encourage a prolonged 'stay' time in the area. It could be designed so as to become a standalone expansion to Peace Memorial Park or an events space, for example, through the use of pavement water features or appropriate street furniture, specifically seating.
- 11.11 The Local Plan seeks to reinstate and encourage the redevelopment of The Lanes through improved public realm provision and quality. Potential improvements to The Lanes should include; greater provision of high quality street furniture, in particular lighting, seating and litter bins; improved physical and natural surveillance; and

enhancement or redevelopment of pathways using high quality and appropriate materials that maintain the historic links in The Lanes south of Paddock Street. As well as the use of high quality materials within Public Realm improvements it is paramount that materials used are as maintenance free as possible.

Wigston Southern Periphery Key Principles

- 1. The redevelopment of The Lanes will be actively encouraged, and will also form an integral part of Wigston town centre redevelopment. For The Lanes north of Paddock Street materials and types of street furniture used should be consistent with those illustrated in Table 1. For The Lanes south of Paddock Street all street furniture, including lighting should respect the local historical character of The Lanes. This should be consistent with the historic street furniture proposed for South Wigston in Table 2 below. Lighting should be identical to that already installed in The Lanes using the casting mould held by the Council. In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along Bell Street.**
- 2. Peace Memorial Park will be safeguarded from any detrimental development, and any enhancement schemes encouraged.**
- 3. Appropriate enhancement of the open space opposite Peace Memorial Park fronting Elizabeth Court will be considered favourably. High quality innovative design and use of materials is essential in any proposal put forward.**

Table 1: Proposed Public Realm in Wigston and Oadby Centres

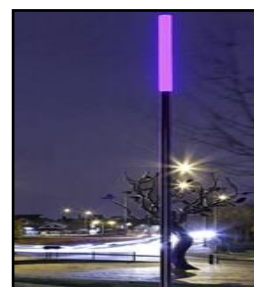
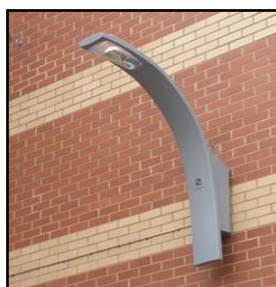
Street Furniture

- Preferred materials include stainless steel (or powder coated steel) and/or timber.
- Preferred design would be modern and contemporary.
- Materials, manufacture and design would need to be of the highest quality and should require minimal or no maintenance.



Lighting

- Preferred materials include powder coated steel or aluminium.
- Preferred design would be modern and contemporary.
- Materials, manufacture and design would need to be of the highest quality



Surfacing

- Preferred surfacing would be paving flags. Paving flags should be suitable for high levels of pedestrian use, plus vehicular use in shared spaces.
- Preferably flags should be of a large size (dimensions to be agreed on a case by case basis with the Borough Council) and should be of an appropriate colour and modern in design.
- Materials, manufacture and design would need to be of the highest quality and should require minimal or no maintenance.



Note: photographs are examples of the public realm required within Wigston and Oadby centres but are not exclusive.

Oadby Centre

- 11.12 Oadby centre is currently defined as a district centre. With Oadby's centre being generally void of buildings of historical or heritage value, the logical approach for redevelopment of the public realm would be a modern and contemporary one, similar to that of Wigston's town centre.

Oadby Northern Periphery

- 11.13 The Local Plan encourages public realm and elevation improvements for areas located within the Northern Periphery. Burtons Corner, located at the northern gateway to Oadby's centre is an asset that needs retaining and enhancing at every opportunity. Elevation improvements proposed include the blank façade that is directly opposite Burtons Corner on the southern side of The Parade.
- 11.14 Sporadic public realm improvements within the Northern Periphery have added to the number of differing materials and palette. Public realm works or schemes put forward for the redevelopment and enhancement of the northern areas of Oadby's centre will need to be consistent with the Oadby Core and Oadby Southern areas and use high quality materials.

Oadby Northern Periphery Key Principles

- 1. Any public realm works that have a negative impact upon Burtons Corner will not be supported.**
- 2. Further enhancement of Burtons Corner will be sought at every opportunity.**
- 3. Public realm works that are proposed within the Northern Periphery must be of the highest quality and consistent with those set out in Table 1. In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along The Parade.**
- 4. Public realm proposals that improve the elevations of The Parade, especially the blank northern elevations of The Parade will be encouraged.**

Oadby Core

- 11.15 One of the key objectives for Oadby, is *‘to create a safe, distinctive and pedestrian friendly environment by maximising the opportunities presented by the existing highways and ensuring that the pedestrian is prioritised over the car’*.
- 11.16 The Council has implemented improvement works to The Parade including improvements to paving, new street furniture, planters and trees and two raised tables to reduce traffic speeds. The Council is looking to pursue further opportunities for improvements to public realm along The Parade, which would include, further improvements to street furniture, implementation of more shared surfaces, and prioritising the pedestrian over the motor vehicle.
- 11.17 With the majority of the pavements within the core of Oadby, outside of the redeveloped area of The Parade, being of poor quality, a comprehensive public realm redevelopment/regeneration scheme would be welcomed in these areas.
- 11.18 The pavements in some areas of The Parade are relatively generous. The Borough Council will encourage the use of the pavements as break-out spaces for cafes and restaurants in these areas provided that they do not hinder pedestrian movements or connections in any way.

Oadby Core Key Principles

- 1. Any public realm development is required to be of the highest quality both in design and material used and be consistent with examples illustrated within Table 1. In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along The Parade.**
- 2. Proposals to use pavement areas as break-out spaces for cafes, restaurants and drinking establishments will be supported as long as they do not affect pedestrian connections or movement.**
- 3. Proposed public realm improvements should reduce the amount of existing street clutter within Oadby’s core.**
- 4. Pavement located trees should be retained where possible and be in conformity with policies set out within the Trees and Planting section of this SPD.**

Oadby Southern Periphery

- 11.19 The Southern Periphery suffers from poor quality public realm, in particular regarding its surfacing materials. Although the area does not have significant built development proposals, improvements to the public realm are still sought. These would include remodelling the Brooksby Drive entrance into East Street public car park along with the car park itself and improvements to the pedestrian access into the public car park to the standard expected from a modern centre.

Oadby Southern Periphery Key Principles

- 1. Any public realm enhancement scheme occurring within the Southern periphery of Oadby will need to be of the highest quality and be consistent with materials and designs illustrated in Table 1. In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along The Parade.**

South Wigston

- 11.20 In 2007 a public realm enhancement scheme was completed within the centre of South Wigston. The scheme concentrated upon South Wigston's main shopping street, Blaby Road and was a joint project between Oadby and Wigston Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council. Although the project significantly improved the public realm within South Wigston's centre, ongoing maintenance is required and further enhancement works are still sought to keep the centres public realm up to a high standard.
- 11.21 South Wigston's centre differs greatly from both Wigston and Oadby centres, in that the majority of its buildings remain from its inception. The centre demonstrates historical character and may not benefit from modern or contemporary public realm designs. Added to this, the centre in its entirety (as defined within this document) is situated within the South Wigston Conservation Area.
- 11.22 Improving the appearance and functionality of the public realm is vitally important for the future of the centre of South Wigston. Good urban design will add value by increasing economic viability of development as well as delivering social and economic benefits.

South Wigston Northern Periphery

- 11.23 With the northern area being predominately residential in nature, the amount of seating, planting and litter bin provision is lower than that of the core retail environment. Street clutter however is still an issue. Removal of signage and road markings that are not essential for pedestrians and/or motorists would make a vast difference to the streetscape.
- 11.24 With the streets being mostly one way, an aspirational improvement to the Northern Periphery would be the creation of shared space streets. However without such significant investment and redevelopment, a lower level intervention could include the repaving and resurfacing on pedestrian footways and improved lighting.

South Wigston Northern Periphery Key Principles

- 1. Surfacing materials used within public realm enhancement schemes should be consistent with those illustrated within Table 2.**
- 2. All street furniture, including lighting should respect the local historical character of South Wigston.**
- 3. Significant redevelopment of the public realm specifically the creation of shared spaces will be encouraged where safe to do so.**

South Wigston Core

- 11.25 With the core being South Wigston's main retail destination, the provision of street furniture needs to be higher than that of the northern or southern periphery. However, only appropriate and effective street furniture and surfacing materials will be supported. Compared to the other main centres within the Borough, South Wigston's core public realm is acceptable; however enhancement and maintenance opportunities still need to be taken.

- 11.26 An enhancement scheme for Blaby Road Park was completed in 2013. Any future enhancement scheme that comes forward which contains proposals for further improvements will be encouraged. As well as being an urban asset in terms of recreation and play space, the park acts as a green corridor to Crow Mills and the Grand Union Canal. The public realm fronting the newly built South Leicestershire College is a good example of simple but effective public realm improvements, but like the remainder of South Wigston core, would benefit from some maintenance. It is important that public realm best practices like that fronting the college are maintained and enhanced at every opportunity.
- 11.27 Architecturally, South Wigston is an historical asset. Safeguarding and improving contextually significant pieces of architecture or design, and merging with contemporary and innovative ways of thinking is important.

South Wigston Key Principles

1. **Public realm schemes that propose to increase the significance of the pedestrian over the motor vehicle will be encouraged.**
2. **Schemes that seek to improve the public realm fronting Blaby Road to the north of Blaby Road Park will be encouraged. Creating a greater sense of arrival and invitation into the park from Blaby Road should be considered within any proposals.**

South Wigston Southern Periphery

- 11.29 Similar to the north, the Southern Periphery of South Wigston is predominately residential, and is characterised by a cluttered one way streetscape. At every opportunity, the public realm should be enhanced, either through aspirational schemes or lower level improvements to the pavement surfacing, lighting and other street furniture.

South Wigston Southern Periphery Key Principles

1. **Surfacing materials used within public realm enhancement schemes should be consistent with those illustrated within Table 2.**
2. **All street furniture, including lighting should respect the local historical character of South Wigston.**
3. **Significant redevelopment of the public realm specifically the creation of shared spaces will be encouraged where safe to do so.**

Table 2: Proposed Public Realm in South Wigston Centre

Street Furniture

- Preferred materials include cast iron, powder coated steel and/or timber.
- Preferred design would be traditional or contrasting modern.
- Materials, manufacture and design would need to be of the highest quality and should require minimal or no maintenance.



Lighting

- Preferred materials include powder coated steel or aluminium.
- Preferred design would be traditional or contrasting modern.
- Materials, manufacture and design would need to be of the highest quality.



Surfacing

- Preferred surfacing would be paving flags. Paving flags should be suitable for high levels of pedestrian use, plus vehicular use in shared spaces.
- Preferably flags should be of a large size and should be of an appropriate colour and traditional or contrasting modern in design.
- Materials, manufacture and design would need to be of the highest quality and should require minimal or no maintenance.



Note: photographs are examples of the public realm required within South Wigston centre but are not exclusive

12. Ways of Achieving the Vision – Borough wide key principles and enhancement opportunities

Surfacing Materials

- 12.1 The Borough Council requires the use of high quality, robust materials in all public spaces. The type of material used for surfacing should be appropriate for its function, for example areas predominately for pedestrians will require differing materials to shared surfacing. Surfacing materials used within any public realm scheme will need to be useable and safe in all weather conditions and at all times of the day and must not incorporate any trip hazards. Any surfacing material that increases the likelihood of slipping or falling will not be deemed appropriate.



High quality surfacing materials, Derry.



High quality surfacing materials, Brindley Place, Birmingham.

- 12.2 All materials used within the Borough's public realm must not contribute to surface water run-off. All public realm should either; use permeable surfacing materials; incorporate the use of Sustainable Drainage Systems; or have other appropriate methods to drain away surface water. Any proposed discharge of surface water should be achieved in collaboration with Severn Trent's drainage hierarchy.
- 12.3 To increase consistency throughout the Borough's public realm, a clear paving design is vital. Within any public realm scheme a simple palette of a few materials and colours will ensure uncluttered looking streets and public spaces. When choosing surfacing materials for a public realm scheme, thought should be given to the character of the area the development is in and the uses of the area. The use of the same material in all areas of the Borough would not be appropriate. All surfacing materials used should be high quality and hard wearing. Where appropriate, consideration should be given to using creative surfacing designs to add interest and create high quality public realm. When installing new paving in public realm schemes, surplus surfacing materials should be bought (and stored) to ensure that future paving repairs can be consistently matched.

- 12.4 Any repairs or reinstatement of public realm should be undertaken by competent professionals and should be finished to the highest quality level possible. Any repair or reinstatement works to the public realm surfaces should effectively restore original surfacing as soon as possible, to cause minimal impact. Any repair or reinstatement work that uses differing materials from existing will not be acceptable unless previously agreed. Where a utility repair is carried out and the reinstatement work is not in accordance with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways (SROH), the utility company will be required to make good reinstatement at their cost. Where this cannot be achieved then it will be re-instated by the County Council and the utility provider will be recharged for the work.



Acceptable high quality public realm utility reinstatement

- 12.5 Additionally, where appropriate, softer, more natural forms of landscaping should be used when normally they wouldn't be such as the 'grid system' or 'grasscrete' deployed for the over-flow car park at Parklands / Brocks Hill should be considered. This form of (normally hard) landscaping is sustainable, promoting natural drainage and biodiversity, whilst giving the area open and undeveloped feel.

Surfacing Material Key Principles

1. Any redevelopment to public realm surfacing is required to use the highest quality material that whilst being robust, demonstrates high quality design.
2. Surfacing materials used within any public realm scheme should be consistent or complementary in material, design and quality.
3. Surfacing materials within the Borough's public realm should use a simple palette of colours.
4. As far as possible, proposals should incorporate the use of permeable surfacing and flood source control.
5. Any repairs or reinstatement of public realm should be undertaken by competent professionals and should be finished to the highest quality level possible.
6. Where a utility repair is carried out and the reinstatement work is in differing materials, the correct paving material will be re-instated by the County Council and the utility provider will be charged for the work carried out.

Street Furniture

- 12.6 For the purpose of this section, street furniture includes seating, litter bins, cycle racking, bollards, bus shelters and railings.

12.7 The improvement of an area or street's sense of place is vital in public realm and shared space design. Having street furniture designed and integrated into new public realm, in particular shared spaces, can have significant benefits on an area, for example increased economic activity due to increases in footfall and dwell times.

12.8 Street furniture is best situated in well overlooked and visual locations. Cycle racks in particular, need to be in locations that are well overlooked to deter the theft of cycles. In terms of seating, having it well located and well-designed is of particular benefit to disabled users, older people and people carrying heavy objects, for example shopping.



High quality and effective street furniture.

12.9 High quality street furniture can have a remarkable effect on an area. The use of creative or modern designs can transform an area's sense of place and identity.

12.10 Each area should have a unique seating design that reflects its history but also the areas future direction. Street furniture within:

- **South Wigston** should reflect its rich character and historical feel. Designs chosen for a public realm scheme should sit comfortably within the conservation area and nearby Listed Buildings, as well as reflecting design features distinct to the locale.
- The centres of **Wigston and Oadby** should incorporate designs and materials that are less traditional and more contemporary. The Local Plan seeks significant investment and redevelopment of each centre as well as advocating each to have unique identities from one another.



High quality public realm and street furniture, Coomber, Northern Ireland.

Street Furniture Key Principles

- 1. Any street furniture that is to be placed within a public space should be of high quality and innovative design, whilst still being functional and comfortable.**
- 2. All street furniture should be made of the highest quality materials, be robust and be as maintenance free as possible.**
- 3. Street furniture should be of a design that ensures that it is durable and resistant to vandalism.**
- 4. Street furniture should reflect the existing character of an area as well as its future aspirations.**

Lighting

12.11 As mentioned above, the design of any public realm must be able to support a '24 hour' economy, as well as provide security and safety. Lighting has a significant influence on the character of an area, as well as providing a basic security requirement during the hours of darkness. The timing of when lights will come on (and go off) will be agreed before the start of any new public realm scheme. High quality lighting can also have an influence on pedestrian activity, which in turn can have an influence on economic spend.



Example of high quality and effective lighting schemes

12.12 A lighting scheme that is well thought-out, consistent and, in some respects, imaginative can completely transform an area or place. Well designed lighting schemes should not only have a dramatic impact at night through the perception of space and user safety, but also during daylight hours when they can be perceived as public art.

12.13 All lighting schemes should be designed to enliven public spaces, enhance key pedestrian routes, and highlight important cultural and historical assets including locally important buildings and places.



Example of a high quality and effective lighting scheme

12.14 High quality lighting can contribute towards:

- Reducing the risks of night-time accidents;
 - Assisting in the protection of property;
 - Discouraging crime and vandalism;
 - Making residents and street users feel secure; and
 - Enhancing the appearance of an area after dark.
- 12.15 Although the ethos of this Public Realm Strategy is to ensure that priority is to be given to the pedestrian, it is important that when considering lighting schemes, both the carriageway/ highway and footways are illuminated appropriately, including any traffic calming measures or pedestrian crossings.
- 12.16 Lighting that is to be incorporated into the Borough's public realm should be fully integrated into the streets and other public spaces. In order to help reduce 'clutter', where possible, lighting should be mounted to buildings and other built structures rather than to their own standalone columns.
- 12.17 Ground lighting and up lighting that highlights important features, such as structures, buildings of importance or trees will be encouraged where appropriate.

Lighting Key Principles

1. **All lighting should use the most appropriate materials and be visually attractive in its design. Design, however should not inhibit illumination and should reflect the character of the area in which it is located.**
2. **When locating lighting, building mounted fittings should be the first consideration to minimise clutter, when the column does not contribute towards the public realm in its own right.**
3. **If building mounted light fittings cannot be accommodated, the scale and design of the column must fit with the scale of existing area in which it is located.**
4. **All lighting should be situated within locations that provide maximum illumination whilst being visually attractive.**
5. **All lighting should promote safety and security through illumination.**
6. **Ground lighting and up lighting that enlivens a space and highlights important features will be encouraged where appropriate.**

Signage

- 12.18 It must be noted that for the purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document, 'signage' refers to both physical signage and markings placed on pavements and roads.
- 12.19 The signage currently on the Borough's streets contributes significantly to the clutter. Over repetition or duplication of signage reduces the impact of a sign. Proposed public realm scheme design should always start from a position of no signage and introduce them only when there is a clear function and need for them.



Examples of high quality signage

- 12.20 The table below, taken from the Department for Transport's, Manual for Streets, is a good starting point or baseline for understanding what/which signs are needed for an area. It is an objective of the Borough Council and County Council to reduce the amount of 'clutter' that is currently on our streets. Reducing the streets of unnecessary signage is a simple and easy way of doing so. Signs that have no clear purpose should be removed to reduce clutter and ensure that essential signs or messages are prominent and not lost in the plethora of other signage.

- 12.21 The 'Traffic Signs Manual', published in 2006 states that *'it is desirable to limit the number of posts in footways, especially in urban areas, because proliferation creates additional hazards for visually handicapped pedestrians and unnecessary obstructions for people with perambulators or wheelchairs'*.



An example of high quality signage.

	Prompts
Users	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What signs are necessary to assist users, including non-motorised users? • Are directional signs needed for vehicular traffic, including pedal cyclists? • Is information provided in the necessary formats to be accessible to all? • Can navigation be assisted by means other than signs? For example, landmarks or other visual cues, etc. • Can road markings be dispensed with in some places?
Place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can necessary information be integrated into the place without dominating it? • Can some pedestrian direction signs be designed to contribute to the sense of place by using a locally distinctive format? • Are traditional direction signs¹² appropriate for the setting?
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any hazards that require signs? • Can significant locations, such as school entrances, health centres, local shops, etc., be indicated by a measure such as surface variation to reduce the need for signs?
Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What signing is necessary to give effect to TROs? • Is it necessary to regulate traffic or parking? • Can behaviour be influenced by means other than signing? For example, can parking be managed by the physical layout of the street?
Speed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are signs specified at the minimum size required for the design speed of traffic (new build) or 85th percentile speed (existing streets)? • Can traffic speeds be controlled by measures (such as planting to break-up forward visibility) to reduce the need for signs?

Prompts for Use of Signage, extract taken from *Manual for Streets* – DfT – 2007

12.22 According to the Department for Transport ‘*reducing the use of signing reflects general good practice, but is particularly appropriate within shared spaces*’. Good signage should allow users to find their way around an area simply and safely, and should have clear directions to key or interesting locations. Signage is important for all users of an area but is of particular significance to visitors who may not have any prior locational or directional understanding. Although it is imperative to have high quality, logical signage, the development of legible public realm through high quality design can reduce the need for signage, and in turn reduce street clutter. All signs should be clearly visible and located without trees or shrubs growing across the sight lines. Any newly installed signage should be situated so that it does not cause an obstruction itself.

12.23 Although the Council is promoting the use of a consistent design, palette and materials throughout the Borough as a whole, it is fully aware that different areas do have their own identity and character and that the public realm within these needs to reflect that.

Walking Routes and Cycle ways

12.24 Walking and cycling are key forms of sustainable travel and are ideal for shorter trips and can also be a form of leisure activity which can positively affect people’s health and wellbeing. The positive impacts of walking and cycling can include:

- Reduced traffic congestion
- Reduced air pollution
- Higher quality public realm

- Better physical, mental and social health

Investing in infrastructure and support for walking and cycling can also increase economic growth and vibrancy. Increasing levels of walking and cycling can stimulate economic growth in urban areas and benefit local shops.



Examples of high quality walking route signage

- 12.25 To encourage walking and cycling the Council needs to help create environments which promote physical activity as a normal part of everyday life. This can be achieved through creating high quality, well lit infrastructure including linked walking and cycling routes across the Borough with signage that includes, not just distances, but the average times taken to walk or cycle the route. Location and route maps should also be provided at key locations.

Walking Routes and Cycle ways Key Principles

1. Where possible, signage should reflect the character of the area in which it is located.
2. Walking routes should, where possible, be linked to provide a coherent, interesting pathway/cycle way network that connects a number of destinations. Where possible these should join up with the footpaths and cycle ways developed by Leicester City Council and Leicestershire County Council to provide a comprehensive network of routes in and out of the Borough as well as through it.
3. Clear and concise signage should be provided for walking routes including distances and the time taken to walk the route.
4. Location and route maps should be provided at key locations.
5. Where pathways join cycle ways or roads, priority must always be given to ensure the safety of the pedestrian.
6. Where cycle ways join roads, priority must always be given to ensure the safety of the cyclist.

Public Art

12.26 The term refers to art, in any medium, that has been planned and integrated into the physical public domain and is accessible to all. The common definition of public art is deliberately broad and can refer to a variety of media and take many forms, however for the purpose of this Supplementary Planning Document; Public Art includes sculptures, mosaics, clocks, water features or displays, light or sound displays, artistic vegetation planting, murals and gateways, and artist designed street furniture and lighting columns.



An example of how public art can be integrated into a public space



An example of how public art can be integrated into a public space, Doncaster

12.27 Any public art should be fully integrated into a new public realm scheme or existing public realm. Public art can be an effective tool, as it can communicate ideas, engage local people and visitors, and promote heritage and the 'future'. It can also encourage interest and pride in the outdoor environment, as well as attracting inward investment. It must be noted that art alone cannot improve a dull or flawed townscape; it needs to be set within high quality public realm.

12.28 Public art should be designed and implemented in the context in which it is sited. A good example of this in the Borough is the stone timeline set within the Pocket Park in Bel Street, Wigston. The 'context' could include; the locale's formal architectural style or scheme design, the wider history or heritage and/or its cultural significance. Through the reinforcing of sense of place and identity, public art that reflects the locale can increase the level of ownership the public have, which in turn can help to decrease anti-social behaviour.

12.29 Public art should be designed to make an impact and stimulate the senses, whilst still being relevant to the area in which it is located. Although it is recognised that the majority of public art will arise from large scale development schemes, such as South Leicestershire College in South Wigston, high quality standalone public art or pieces of art work will be looked upon favourably (for example: clocks, water features or pieces of cultural/historical interest).



An example of how public art can be integrated into a public space. Stockton

Public Art Key Principles.

- 1. All public art should be integrated into the public realm, either physically or contextually. Public art should be sited as to not pose a road safety distraction.**
- 2. Any public art that is to be sited within the Borough is required to use high quality materials and be as maintenance free as possible.**
- 3. High quality standalone pieces of public art, will always be encouraged where appropriate.**

Parks and Open Spaces

12.30 Local outdoor spaces are essential in providing areas for the community to meet, integrate and enjoy various forms of recreation. Parks can bring relief from the urban environment and attractive parks with high quality public realm will help to encourage the use of them. There is considerable evidence that shows that green spaces in rural and urban areas are highly beneficial to health and well-being and also provide space for people to meet. Creating landscapes that respond to the ‘wants and needs’ of communities and making the spaces accessible, fun, safe and interesting is key to getting people to use them and being more physically active.

12.31 The use of high quality street furniture can provide spaces to dwell for those that want to enjoy the park or open space, but don’t necessarily want to use the space as an active space. All street furniture should reflect the character of the park or open space and sit comfortably within the area that it is situated. If the park or open space is close to one of the borough centres, street furniture could be of a design similar to that used in that urban centre. For other parks and open spaces it may be appropriate to create a character of its own. All street furniture should be a high quality and innovative design, whilst still being functional and comfortable and should be as maintenance free as possible.

12.32 To encourage walking, running and cycling in parks and open spaces, when redevelopment of the area takes place, consideration should be given to the width of the pathways to ensure that they are safe for walkers, runners and cyclists to use. It should be ensured that all pathways are well lit and open. Lighting can either be traditional or as a form of public art, but should be in accordance with the lighting section earlier.



Dandelion Public Art as a form of lighting, Dubai

12.33 Consideration should be given to establishing walking routes within each park and open space. Consideration should also be given to establishing distance marker routes in the borough's parks to give participants the opportunity to walk, jog or run a set distance. Where walking routes or distance markers are used, information boards should provide displays of the whole routes around the area.

12.34 Informal activity spaces should be easily accessible from cycle and pedestrian routes and clearly defined from formal sports areas. Green living walls and gabions should be considered as alternatives to fencing to define the formal sports spaces as additionally they can be used to soften the boundary between formal and informal spaces and provide wildlife habitats.



An example of a high quality wooden park bench.

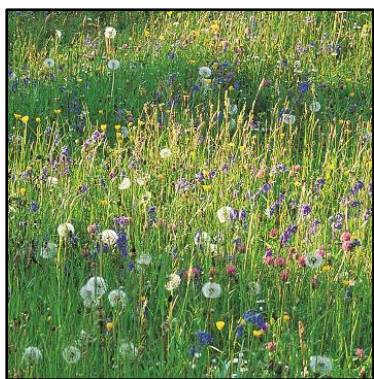


High quality example of a living wall.



High quality example of planted stone gabions.

12.35 Thought should be given to planting schemes in public parks. Schemes should be in keeping with the character of the area in which they are to be planted. A variety of planting types should be considered across each park to provide different environments for users of the park and different wildlife habitats. All development should aim to achieve a net-gain for biodiversity. Schemes to be considered should include formal planting, wildflower planting, sensory gardens, orchards, urban woodlands and community gardens.



An example of wildflower planting.



An example of a community garden.



An example of a sensory garden.

Parks and Open Spaces Key Principles

- 1. All street furniture should reflect the character of the park or open space and should sit comfortably within the area that it is situated.**
- 2. If a park or open space is close to one of the borough centres, street furniture should be of a design similar to that used in that urban centre.**
- 3. All street furniture should be a high quality and innovative design, whilst still being functional and comfortable and should be as maintenance free as possible.**
- 4. It must be ensured that pathways are wide enough to ensure that they are safe for walkers, runners and cyclists to use safely.**
- 5. It should be ensured that all pathways are well lit and open.**
- 6. Walking routes should be established within each of the Boroughs park.**
- 7. Distance markers should be erected alongside routes in the borough's parks to encourage walking, jogging or running around a set distance.**
- 8. Where walking routes or distance markers are erected, information boards should provide displays of the whole routes.**
- 9. Informal activity spaces should be easily accessible from cycle and pedestrian routes and clearly defined from formal sports areas.**
- 10. Green living walls and gabions should be considered as alternatives to fencing to segregate different areas.**
- 11. Planting schemes should be in keeping with the character of the area in which they are to be planted. A variety of planting types should be considered across each park or open space to provide different environments for users of the park or open space and different wildlife habitats.**
- 12. All development should aim to achieve a net-gain for biodiversity.**

Trees and Planting

12.36 With the Borough being predominately urban in nature, trees and planting schemes can provide an attractive relief to the extensive built up areas. The placement of trees and/or planting within any public realm scheme is greatly encouraged. Trees are a vital element within any streetscape that are not only visually attractive but provide natural shading from weather conditions, help to absorb run off from precipitation, as well as supporting the reduction in pollution which ultimately leads to climate change. The removal of any street trees or planting schemes that are not to be replaced, will be resisted. Any new or replacement planting schemes should aim to add a net-gain for bio-diversity.

12.37 In addition to trees; shrubs, planting schemes and other forms of soft landscaping can soften the built environment and add character, form, mass and visual interest. Traditional bedding schemes can greatly enhance an area with the bright colours and positive responses they receive and is a type of planting scheme that the Borough Council will encourage where appropriate, specifically within urban green spaces and public squares. It is recognised that bedding displays can be more expensive to implement and maintain than other types of soft landscaping, therefore schemes could include an element of permanent planting to make them more sustainable.



High quality bedding planting, Hyde Park, London.

12.38 Where space is at a premium, modern green 'living walls' should be incorporated into the public realm design. Green 'living walls' can have many advantages including visual improvement to unattractive buildings, increasing biodiversity in the urban areas and helping to reduce pollution. The buildings



Modern high quality 'Living Wall' planting scheme, Covent Garden, London.

that they are incorporated on will benefit with increased energy efficiency as the plants help to cool the air in the summer months and add a layer of insulation to buildings in the winter and green walls can help to reduce noise levels also.

Trees and Planting Key Principles

- 1. Where trees are introduced into the public realm they should complement the existing or proposed urban form and respect or enhance local views.**
- 2. All planting of trees (or trees as hedgerows) must be in accordance with the Borough Council's Tree Strategy.**
- 3. Trees that are to be planted within the public realm should not obscure signs, lighting, CCTV surveillance, or views where natural surveillance is an important factor. Where trees are to be planted near road junctions, driver's sightlines must be maintained.**
- 4. Trees or shrubs that are to be located within the public realm must be appropriately protected and supported during their establishment however should not be surrounded by tree grilles. Surrounds should be a porous resin bound material to allow air and water to the root.**
- 5. Trees that are to be planted within the public realm should be of an appropriate maturity (minimum 18-20cm in girth); to have a greater immediate visual impact as well as being less susceptible to vandalism.**
- 6. The use of appropriate trees, bedding, formal planters and green 'living walls' will be supported in all public areas where pedestrians are encouraged to sit and dwell, for example public squares or urban green spaces.**
- 7. When planting trees within the public realm, consideration should be given to underground services. Appropriate mitigation should protect underground services from root damage. If ground planting cannot be accommodated, appropriate large tree planters could be utilised.**
- 8. All tree and planting schemes should aim to achieve a net-gain for biodiversity and reduce the risk of flooding at source or elsewhere.**

Towpaths

12.39 The canal network is an important national asset and over time has evolved from a purely industrial network to one that provides important recreational and utility routes. Towpaths remain essential for boating and other water-based activities such as angling, canoeing and rowing. They all need to use the towpaths for access to the water, including for mooring up, or the operation of structures like locks and moveable bridges. Others enjoy the towpaths themselves – for walking, running and cycling, or simply to experience the calm, tranquil environment away from the bustle of everyday life.



The sign at the end of the Thames Path by the Thames Barrier.

12.40 Changes to, upgrades of and maintenance of, the towpaths are essential to provide for the expectations and needs of current and future users whilst safely managing the increasing numbers of people using them and to sustain the canal environment for the future. Improving the public realm on our towpaths can help to encourage a diverse range of people to use and enjoy this valuable part of our national heritage and enhances the network of motor-free traffic routes for commuting, recreation and other purposes. Additionally, opportunities to integrate the canal towpath with the surrounding urban environment should be sought. A joint project is to commence with the Canal and River Trust to consider improvements to the canal towpath, linkages to it from principal urban areas and consideration of linkages to wider walking and cycling networks. This can be achieved through providing more on and off points and the promotion of 'green routes'. Where improvement works are carried out it, a net-gain to bio-diversity should be sought and consideration should also be given to the creation of dedicated nature areas (for example the addition of beehives or creation of wildflower meadows) at the sides of the towpath,



Towpath improvements, The Grand Union Canal and Towpath, Ealing.

Towpaths Key Principles

- 1. Towpaths should be maintained and/or redeveloped in accordance with the Canal and River Trust Towpath Design Guide.**
- 2. Where a change in surfacing material of the towpath is proposed careful consideration regarding the appropriateness of the new material is vital. Inappropriate choice of material can severely damage the character of the canal corridor. However, a changed surface can also bring new feel and tone to a canal corridor enabling positive new uses. In some instances multiple design solutions within one project may be appropriate, i.e. allowing different materials or designs to be used at heritage or ecologically sensitive locations or to allow transitions between urban/rural areas. However, where different approaches are taken they should be cohesive, for example through the colour or type of material used etc.**
- 3. Towpath verges, trees and shrubs should be sympathetically managed to ensure improved linkage to adjoining habitats and ecological features.**
- 4. Consideration should be given to the provision of signage at towpath access points to allow users to make informed choices when planning a journey.**

Local Centres

- 12.41 Local Centres provide an important resource to local residents with the primary role being the provision of locally accessible convenience goods. In addition to this, local centres often provide services to the local community. In spite of the importance of Local Centres to the communities that they serve, the public realm is often tired and in need of improvement. High quality Public Realm can help to create a sense of place and can be used to help support and achieve diverse and healthy local centres, which are at the hearts of their communities.
- 12.42 The Local Centres within the Borough are diverse and varied. Each area should have a public realm scheme that reflects the character of the area in which it is situated and reflect design features distinct to the locale. Local Centres within Conservation Areas should reflect the rich historical character of the area and should abide by the Conservation Area guidance below.
- 12.43 Street furniture should be in keeping with that used in the Boroughs Town and District Centres so that there is consistency in design and identity is created across the Borough. It should be of high quality and as maintenance free as possible.

Local Centre Key Principles

- 1. Any street furniture that is to be placed within a public space should be of high quality and innovative design, whilst still being functional and comfortable. All street furniture should be made of the highest quality materials, be robust and be as maintenance free as possible.**
- 2. Street furniture should reflect the existing character of an area as well as its future aspirations.**

Conservation Areas

12.44 The Borough of Oadby and Wigston has nine locally designated conservation areas which are *'areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance.'* All public realm improvements, should therefore reflect the individual historic character of each Conservation Area.



The use of granite setts and curbs.



The use of bonded gravel to 'soften' tarmacadam.

- 12.45 When roads and pavements are to be resurfaced, particular care should be given to the choice of surfacing materials used. The materials chosen, whilst needing to meet the needs of the local population, must also reflect the setting of the conservation area. Materials such as stone paving or a bonded gravel surface to 'soften' tarmacadam may be appropriate. Where they are currently in place, original York Stone Paving, York Stone or Granite curb edging stones and cobbles should be reused. Paving setts should be reused where practical or at least made a feature of, for instance as paving edging, where it is not possible for them all to remain. An example of where this has been carried out is the Bell Street Jitty where two rows of cobble have been retained at either edge of a tarmacadam path to retain the historic link. Where York Stone curb edging stones or paving setts have previously been removed, consideration should be given to replacing them during public realm works.
- 12.45 Street furniture through the Borough's Conservation Areas must be of heritage design and in keeping with the Conservation Area in which they are situated. All works should take account of the Council's Conservation Areas SPD.



Examples of high quality Heritage Street furniture.

Conservation Area Key Principles

- 1. When roads and pavements are resurfaced, particular care must be given to ensure that the materials chosen reflect the special historic qualities of the area.**
- 2. Street furniture should reflect the existing historical character of each Conservation Area. Street furniture to be placed within a Conservation Area should be of the highest quality materials, of a heritage design and as maintenance free as possible.**
- 3. Should additional or replacement lighting be required throughout The Lanes Conservation Area or any other Conservation where this style of lighting would be suitable then the mould cast held by the Council should be used.**

Wider Borough

- 12.46 Public realm in the wider Borough is used to connect places. The public realm needs to be well connected, modern and well maintained to help encourage active travel through walking and cycling. Cycling infrastructure should be planned into new public realm where it is possible and safe to do so. Pavements should be well lit and wide enough to cater for wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs. Surfacing materials used within any public realm scheme should be consistent and will need to be in keeping with any places of interest that it joins. It must be useable and safe in all weather conditions and at all times of the day or night. Any surfacing material that increases the likelihood of slipping or falling will not be deemed appropriate.
- 12.47 To ensure that pavements remain uncluttered, street furniture and signage should only be used where necessary. Where street furniture is used, it must be of the highest quality. Where pavements join places of interest, for example a park, town centre or conservation area, street furniture should be consistent with or complement street furniture used in the area.
- 12.48 To soften the urban environment and add colour and interest, planting schemes in the form of grass verges, street trees, shrubs and planters should be used where practical. These measures can improve character and appearance and make places more appealing for local communities. They can also help to tackle pollution, provide a soak away for precipitation and increase bio-diversity across the borough through

the creation of wildlife corridors. It should be noted that any implementation of grass verges or street trees etc, should not be implemented if the benefits of their provision are outweighed by other potentially detrimental aspects of their provision, for example it will significantly increase maintenance costs. For the avoidance of doubt, the below principles are relevant to all areas of the Borough.



An example of high quality street tree planting on grass verges.



An example of high quality planters.



An example of high quality barrier basket planters.

Wider Borough Public Realm Key Principles

1. **Public realm needs to be well connected, modern and well maintained to help encourage active travel through walking and cycling throughout the borough.**
2. **Pavements should be well lit and wide enough to cater for wheelchairs, prams and pushchairs.**
3. **Surfacing materials used should be consistent and must be useable and safe in all weather conditions and at all times of the day or night.**
4. **To keep the streets uncluttered, street furniture and signage should only be used where necessary.**
5. **Street furniture must be of the highest quality and should be consistent with any place of interest it joins. For example, a park, town centre or conservation area.**
6. **Grass verges, street trees, shrubs and planters should be used where practical and sustainable.**
7. **All public realm proposals should be of the highest quality, accessible to all and be as maintenance free as possible.**
8. **Where relevant, public realm proposals should retain natural features and proposed habitats should be well connected to existing habitats.**

Shared Spaces Concept

- 12.49 Shared spaces is a term that has become increasingly used within Town Planning and Urban Design. The key objective of the concept is integration. Ever since the publication of the Buchanan Report (Traffic in Towns) in 1963, highway and public realm design has had segregation at its core, with the theory being that keeping all users separate from one another reduces the risk of accidents.
- 12.50 Shared Spaces, however, turn this theory on its head, and according to Hans Monderman *'when you don't know exactly who has right of way, you tend to seek eye contact with other road users; you automatically reduce your speed, you have contact with other people, and you take greater care'*. At the time of writing, there is currently a Government moratorium on Shared Space schemes. This is to remain in place until new Government policy is issued to address safety concerns raised regarding Shared Space and visually impaired users. This new national policy will supersede any guidance contained within this document regarding Shared Spaces.

- 12.51 According to the Department for Transport (Inclusive Transport Strategy (2018), *'shared space is a design approach that seeks to change the way streets operate by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles, primarily through lower speeds and encouraging drivers to behave more accommodatingly towards pedestrians'*. Shared Spaces are a way for streets to be shared equally and safely between people and vehicles. Shared spaces should make the motorist feel like they are a guest in a pedestrian environment and they should drive accordingly. Shared Spaces is a concept that Oadby and Wigston Borough Council would support where safe to do so.



An example of a high quality shared space/street, Brighton.

- 12.52 As well as vehicular traffic and pedestrians, shared spaces need to accommodate cyclists. The Borough Council will promote the use of shared spaces between cyclists, mobility scooters and pedestrians providing that it is safe to do so. Any scheme that proposes shared spaces between the pedestrian, mobility scooters and cyclist will need to ensure it is appropriate for the area, there are no overriding safety issues or and that the area is wide enough to prevent conflicts. Where shared spaces are promoted by developers, the Borough Council will work with them to ensure a safe, appropriate scheme is devised. In principle, shared spaces would not normally be supported on main routes, however could be utilised in more cul-de-sac or no through route locations.



An example of a high quality shared space/street, Poynton.

Shared Spaces Key Principles

1. **The Shared space principal should be integrated into residential development schemes where it is safe and appropriate to do so.**
2. **It should be ensured that pedestrians have priority over all other vehicle types.**
3. **The Borough Council will encourage and support the use of shared surfacing where relevant and safe to do so, and in appropriate locations only.**

Design and Traffic Flow Speeds

12.53 The design of any public realm or space scheme (for example, shared surfacing) that mixes the pedestrian with the motor vehicle has to decrease traffic flow speeds. Evidence suggests that vehicular speed has a significant influence on the pedestrian's willingness to share a space with others (motor vehicles), and that as vehicle speeds decrease, the vehicles willingness to give way and give the pedestrian priority increases. So a scheme's 'design speed' is vitally important. According to the Department for Transport, design speed is '*a target speed that designers intend most vehicles not to exceed and is dictated primarily by the geometry of tracked vehicle path within a street*'. Again, according to the Department for Transport, for a shared surface the maximum vehicular speed should not exceed 20 miles per hour, preferably 15 miles per hour. These speed limits are used in these areas as they are legally enforceable to help prevent conflicts between users. It must be noted, that 'design speeds' can differ from national speed limits, as national speed limits are not necessarily safe speeds, they are speeds that a driver cannot legally exceed.

Design Speed Key Principles

1. **Any surface that mixes the pedestrian with motorised vehicles should have a design speed of no more than the Department of Transport's prescribed maximum speed for shared spaces.**

13. Public Realm Best Practice

Public Realm Scheme New Road in Brighton

- 13.1 The following examples of public realm best practice have been implemented with the involvement of local authorities and have been commended for their design and outputs.
- 13.2 New Road in Brighton is an award winning shared surface scheme coordinated by Brighton and Hove City Council. The overall concept for the scheme was to return priority to the pedestrian, whilst still allowing vehicular access. Full pedestrianisation of the street was deemed inappropriate due to the need of its businesses and its use as an emergency vehicle route.

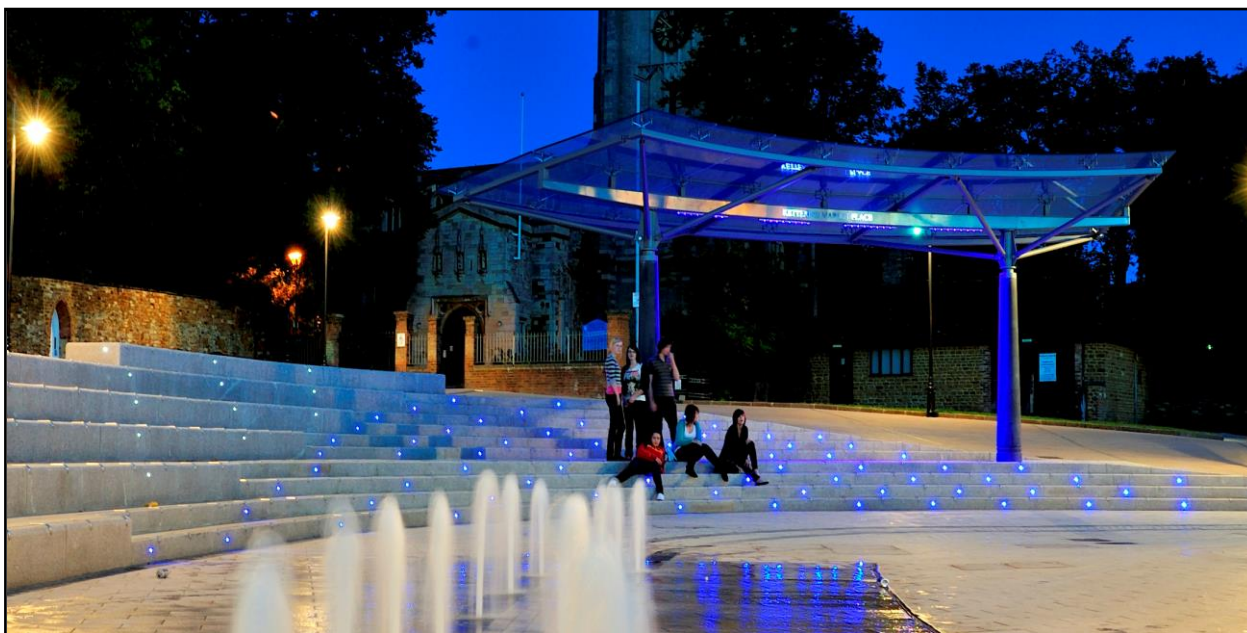


Photographs of the award winning shared scheme in New Road, Brighton

- 13.3 Materials for the scheme were chosen for their quality, durability (value for money) and relationship with the surrounding locale. They were chosen, as to provide a subtle background to New Roads fine buildings, rather than a 'design statement'. According to Local Government News, since the schemes completion '*traffic levels have dropped by 93 per cent and pedestrian numbers has increased by 162 per cent*'. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (now The Design Council) hailed the scheme as a '*benchmark for our country's streets*'.

Public Realm Scheme Market Place in Kettering

- 13.4 The Market Place in Kettering won the Local Government News' Street Design Award for Pedestrian Environment 2010. The scheme originated from the Market Place's decline in economic activity. The areas huge decline in pedestrian footfall resulted in the loss of the weekly market.



Photograph of Kettering's developed restaurant quarter.

- 13.5 As part of the redevelopment process, the area was re-branded a 'restaurant quarter'. The overall aim of the scheme was to radically enhance the Market Place itself and make it act as a catalyst for further economic regeneration of the town as a whole.

Public Realm Scheme, Derry City Centre



Photograph of a public square in Derry City centre.

- 13.7 The North West Development Office coordinated a public realm regeneration scheme in Derry Centre and was commended for design and outputs.



Photograph of shared public realm in Derry City Centre.

- 13.8 Prior to the completion of the scheme, the quality of the centres' built environment was fading, negative perceptions were increasing and pedestrians were choosing out of town shopping centres, rather than Derry's centre.
- 13.9 Through the redevelopment, many new elements were introduced including; water fountains; illuminated water features; and high quality innovative lighting, creating a 'European' feel. According to Local Government News', since the schemes completion, businesses within the area have reported a 30 per cent increase in turnover, and it has become a location for regular markets and spontaneous public events.

Public Realm Scheme Jubilee Square, Leicester City Centre

- 13.10 The redevelopment of the public realm within the city centre of Leicester is an excellent local example of high quality public realm improvements. Since the adoption of its Public Realm Strategy the city has implemented a number of large scale public realm schemes.
- 13.11 Many of the city's streets are shared in nature and prioritise the pedestrian over the motor vehicle.
- 13.13 The majority of the schemes were undertaken as part of the ambitious 'Streets + Spaces Initiative' and were completed within its three year programme. Hard wearing materials such as granite were used to ensure all the schemes had a long lasting life and were relatively maintenance free.



Photographs of Jubilee Square in Leicester City Centre.

- 13.14 An example of this is Jubilee Square where a new civic space was created to transform the St Nicholas Place area into an attractive public space with enough space to be used for events and festivals. This is a shared space which connects important heritage and retail areas and creates a gateway into the city centre. Seating and lighting have been added to show off features of the buildings fronting the new square, including Wygston's House, the oldest complete timber-framed building in the city.

Public Realm Scheme, Garden of Reflection, Derry

- 13.15 The Garden of Reflection project created a new shared space in the centre of Derry through a partnership that included the Inner City Trust, Derry City Council and the Diverse City Community Partnership. It created an attractive venue for small civic events and was created by amalgamating the spaces behind city-centre buildings.

- 13.16 The garden design incorporates a central courtyard with hard and soft landscaping and seated performance space with an extendable canopy, a variety of public artwork installations and landscape features.
- 13.17 One of the central features of the design is the blue paving which winds its way through the garden. This represents a river and a 'journey' through the garden which is symbolic of life's journey.
- 13.18 The main garden space is a meeting, mingling and viewing area. Existing craft units have had shop fronts re-imaged. An existing entrance archway has been refurbished with a new artwork gateway incorporating signage and lighting, leading visitors along the walkway past contemporary plant containers. Another entrance to the garden is accessed through an existing attractive Georgian doorway which has been sympathetically refurbished. Disabled access will be through an existing shop front, with a new access-way made for wheelchair access into the Courtyard of Reflection; this will ensure that the garden is completely accessible to all users.



Photographs of public realm improvements in Derry's Garden of Reflection.

14. Monitoring and Management

- 14.1 Regular monitoring and maintenance of public spaces and public realm should be undertaken. Neglect of maintenance leads directly to degradation of spaces. As a general rule, any project that is likely to have an impact upon a public space or public realm will need to illustrate from the outset that adequate revenue provision has been made for subsequent management and maintenance. Further relevant information can be found in the Council's latest Developer Contribution Supplementary Planning Document.
- 14.2 Maintenance of the Borough's public realm and spaces can be broken down into two distinct areas; cleansing; and general maintenance and repairs. Cleansing would be the 'everyday' street cleaning of public spaces and street furniture and maintenance; would include repairs, for example, reinstatement or replacement of damaged or stolen street furniture.
- 14.3 Any repairs or reinstatement of public realm should be undertaken by competent professionals and should be finished to the highest quality possible. Any repair or reinstatement works to the public realm surfaces should effectively restore original surfacing as soon as possible, to cause minimal impact. Any repair or reinstatement works that use differing materials from existing will not be acceptable.
- 14.4 Through the initial design and costing process, projects that impact upon the public realm, whether it be from creation of new public squares to general repairs and maintenance should take into account intensity of use and material longevity. Choice of materials is extremely important in any scheme. Aesthetically they have to be pleasing to the eye and make a statement or impact, but structurally they need to be durable and stand up to consistent wear and tear. Cost effectiveness of materials is integral to good design and efficient maintenance. High quality materials, such as a natural stone or a stainless steel may be more expensive to purchase and implement, but have very little cost relating to ongoing maintenance.
- 14.5 As well as on-going maintenance, street cleansing, is also an important factor when designing spaces and choosing materials. For example, in many instances the removal of chewing gum or graffiti is achieved with the aid of high pressure mechanical cleaners, which do not mix well with surfaces that are bedded on and/or pointed with cement mortar or brushed sand.
- 14.6 Key to any successful public realm scheme is the cooperation and coordination of all parties involved. Any project that is to affect public realm or public spaces within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston is required to involve at least the following: Leicestershire County Council Highways Department, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Corporate Assets Section, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Grounds Maintenance Officer (where relevant), and Oadby and Wigston Borough Council's Planning and Regeneration Teams.

15. Glossary of Terms

Conservation Area: an area of special architectural or historic interest identified by the Local Planning Authority under the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990. There is a statutory duty to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of such areas.

Development Plan: Includes adopted local plans, neighbourhood plans that have been made and published spatial development strategies, together with any regional strategy policies that remain in force.

Greenway: a corridor of protected open space that is maintained for conservation, recreation, and non-motorized transportation.

Leicester Principal Urban Area: The Leicester Principal Urban Area encompasses all the administrative area of Leicester City and parts of Blaby, Charnwood, Harborough, Hinckley and Bosworth and Oadby and Wigston districts.

Local Plan: A plan for the future development of a local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. A local plan can consist of either strategic or non-strategic policies, or a combination of the two.

Place Making: The process of creating quality places that people want to live, work, play and learn in.

Supplementary Planning Documents: cover a wide range of issues on which the planning authority wishes to provide policy guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in development plan documents. They are not subject to independent examination.

Street Clutter: refers to streets or public spaces that have an over supply of, either, street furniture, signage or road markings making the space or street look cluttered.

Target Hardening: for the purpose of this document can be defined as making a place or something within a place more difficult to damage, thus discouraging those trying to damage it.