



<b>Full Council</b>	<b>Tuesday, 30 March 2021</b>	<b>Matter for Information and Decision</b>
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**Report Title:**

**Adoption of Public Realm Strategy  
Supplementary Planning Document (2021)**

**Report Author(s):**

**Jamie Carr (Planning Policy Manager)**

<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	This report is seeking Member approval to adopt the Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
<b>Report Summary:</b>	<p>On 23 September 2020, a report was taken to Place Shaping Working Group (to which all Members were invited) to introduce the revised Public Realm Strategy SPD to Members. In addition to introducing the draft document, Members were asked for their initial feedback and comment.</p> <p>Comments were received by the Planning Policy team from Members prior to the Member consultation deadline of the 9 October 2020 and all comments received were taken account of within the redrafting of the consultation draft.</p> <p>On Tuesday 15 December 2020 a report was taken to Full Council to seek Member approval on the draft Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation. Members approved the document for consultation.</p> <p>At Midday on Friday 18 December 2020 the 8 week public consultation period commenced. The consultation closed at Midday Friday 12 February 2020. A good number of comments were received and the draft SPD has been amended accordingly.</p> <p>All comments received during the consultation and subsequent amendments to the SPD are set out within the attached 'Statement of Consultation 2021'.</p>
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>That the Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (as set out at Appendix 1) be adopted.</b>
<b>Senior Leadership, Head of Service, Manager, Officer and Other Contact(s):</b>	<p>Adrian Thorpe (Head of Built Environment) (0116) 257 2645 <a href="mailto:adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">adrian.thorpe@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Jamie Carr (Planning Policy Manager) (0116) 257 2652 <a href="mailto:jamie.carr@oadby-wigston.gov.uk">jamie.carr@oadby-wigston.gov.uk</a></p>
<b>Corporate Objectives:</b>	<p>Building, Protecting and Empowering Communities (CO1)</p> <p>Growing the Borough Economically (CO2)</p> <p>Providing Excellent Services (CO3)</p>
<b>Vision and Values:</b>	<p>"A Stronger Borough Together" (Vision)</p> <p>Accountability (V1)</p>

	Teamwork (V3) Innovation (V4) Customer Focus (V5)
<b>Report Implications:-</b>	
Legal:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Financial:	There are no implications directly arising from this report.
Corporate Risk Management:	Effective Utilisation of Assets / Buildings (CR5) Regulatory Governance (CR6) Economy / Regeneration (CR9)
Equalities and Equalities Assessment (EA):	There are no implications arising from this report. EA not applicable
Human Rights:	There are no implications arising from this report.
Health and Safety:	There are no implications arising from this report.
<b>Statutory Officers' Comments:-</b>	
Head of Paid Service:	The report is satisfactory.
Chief Finance Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
Monitoring Officer:	The report is satisfactory.
<b>Consultees:</b>	None.
<b>Background Papers:</b>	None.
<b>Appendices:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Public Realm Strategy SPD (2021)</li> <li>2. Statement of Consultation (2021)</li> </ol>

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Supplementary Planning Document's (SPD's) are documents which add further detail to the policies set out within the Council's adopted Local Plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design or changes of use. SPD's do not form part of the Council's development plan, however they are a material consideration in the planning decision making process. They are equally important documents for both the proposer of development and the decision maker (in this case the Council).
- 1.2 The Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) Consultation Document is an update to the existing Public Realm Strategy SPD that was adopted by the Council in September 2012.
- 1.3 The SPD takes account of updated local planning policy set out in the Council's adopted Local Plan (2019), updated evidence base underpinning the Local Plan and national planning policy and guidance set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance.
- 1.4 The SPD is a planning policy document that focuses on 'all things' public realm within the

Borough of Oadby and Wigston. The document seeks to supplement the related policies set out within the Council's adopted Local Plan, as well as offering advice and guidance to any prospective development proposal that has an impact on public realm, as to how the requirements of the Local Plan can be met. Alongside the Local Plan, this SPD will help the Council approach all planning decisions in a positive, consistent and robust way.

- 1.5 In addition, the SPD seeks to help deliver the vision and objectives of the Council's Local Plan and Corporate Plan as well as its Economic Development objectives. The Council is committed to achieving these objectives and seeks to actively encourage development proposals that improve existing and / or create new areas of high quality public realm.
- 1.6 It is important to note that the intention of the SPD is to supplement the Council's adopted policy position. The SPD is not adding any additional local planning policy requirements; it is seeking to provide guidance for applicants as to how they can provide high quality areas of public realm that contribute towards improving the Borough's communities health, wellbeing and everyday life.
- 1.7 On 23 September 2020, a report was taken to Place Shaping Working Group (to which all Members were invited) to introduce the revised Public Realm Strategy SPD Members. In addition to introducing the draft document, Members were asked for their initial feedback and comment. Comments were received by the Planning Policy team from Members prior to the Member consultation deadline of the 9 October 2020 and all comments received were taken account of within the redrafting of the consultation draft.
- 1.8 On Tuesday 15 December 2020 a report was taken to Full Council to seek Member approval on the draft Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation. Members approved the document for consultation.
- 1.9 At Midday on Friday 18 December 2020 the 8 week public consultation period commenced. The consultation closed at Midday Friday 12 February 2020. During the consultation. A good number of comments were received and the draft SPD has been amended accordingly.
- 1.10 In cooperation with the Council's communications team and in line with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement, notice of the consultation was;
  - sent to every Council Member;
  - sent to every statutory consultee;
  - sent to every stakeholder on the Council's Local Plan database;
  - advertised on the Council's website;
  - advertised on the Council's social media outlets; and
  - sent to the Council's Citizen Panel.
- 1.11 All comments received during the consultation and subsequent amendments to the SPD are set out within the attached 'Statement of Consultation 2021'.

## **2. Summary of Comments Received**

- 2.1 During the consultation a total of 16 persons / bodies submitted representations to the Council relating to the Public Realm Strategy SPD. Representations were received from;
  - 6 Local residents
  - Severn Trent
  - The Rotary Club of Oadby Launde
  - Sport England
  - Oadby Civic Society
  - The Environment Agency
  - Wigston Civic Society

- Natural England
- The Rotary Club of Oadby
- Historic England
- Leicestershire County Council (one response but many departments)

2.2 Of the persons / bodies that submitted representations, nine did not suggest any changes to the Public Realm Strategy SPD as drafted, although of the nine, some standing advice was given that should be taken account of during the planning application process. It should be noted, that the vast majority (if not all) of the representations outlined support for the document and what the Council was trying to achieve with the SPD.

2.3 A summary of the comments received relevant to the SPD are outlined below. However a full set out comments received is set out within **Appendix 2** (Statement of Consultation 2021).

- The Council should be commended on its forward thinking with the content of the SPD, with particular support for the objectives and principles set out within the document.
- Public spaces should be places that people engage with one another and should be capable of a variety of activities.
- As much tree and shrub planting as possible should be installed in the borough's town and district centres.
- All public spaces should be accessible for all.
- If possible, the Borough Council needs a strategy for preventing parking on grass verges and the provision of street planters. Parking on pavements and grass verges should not be permitted. Maintenance of grass verges needs to improve.
- Development of the public realm should look to incorporate measures that can improve flood resilience at source and reduce the potential for surface water flooding, for example SUD's (Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems), permeable surfacing, tree pits and rain gardens.
- The priority should be to protect and enhance green spaces.
- All pavements and cycle ways should be adequate in size and quality and more crossing points should be created on the busier roads.
- A number of potential new public realm areas / footpaths / walking routes / cycleway / connections were suggested.
- A number of improvements to existing public realm areas / footpaths / walking routes / cycleway / connections were suggested.
- Sculptures and public art can be controversial.
- More trees should be planted throughout the Borough area.
- Reservations about the use of shared spaces.
- Peaceful and high quality green spaces and walking routes should be created to improve communities' health and wellbeing.
- East Street car park in Oadby needs to be refurbished.
- Reference should be made to Sport England's new strategy – Uniting the Movement.
- Urban green spaces should provide multifunctional benefits.
- High quality urban green spaces are recognised as one of the most effective tools for managing environmental risks such as flooding and heat waves.
- The SPD has the ability to enhance the character and local distinctiveness of the

surrounding natural and built environment.

- Where appropriate, species of trees should be used that grow to heights above that of the nearby buildings.
- Pedestrians need to feel safe and relaxed when out and about. Pedestrians shouldn't be made to feel 'second class'.
- There should be an increase in more informal pockets of planting throughout the Borough area.
- An Action Plan should follow adoption of the SPD that sets out potential projects and how they will be funded from both a capital and maintenance view point.
- Street audits should be regularly undertaken throughout the Borough area.
- Local signage for pedestrians and cyclists should be improved.
- Agreed that street clutter should be reduced and that signage audits are essential.
- If 'non-standard' street furniture is used within schemes, appropriate maintenance sums should be sought.
- Care needs to be taken with the language used within the SPD as the Borough Council is not the local highway authority.
- The concept of Home Zones is to be removed from the Leicestershire Highway Design Guide, therefore its reference in this SPD should also.
- Additional reference needs to be made to Utility Companies carrying out works in the public realm.
- Reference needs to be made to the 'Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways, Fourth Edition'.
- Bell Street in Wigston and The Parade in Oadby are referenced as examples of high quality. It should be stated in the SPD that public realm schemes adjacent to these, should be of similar quality and should complement.
- There should be less modular paving used in public realm schemes...asphalt should be used wherever possible.
- It is suggested that the vision should include support for long term maintenance.
- Public realm should retain natural features wherever possible and should consider opportunities for connecting existing and proposed habitats to the wider area.
- The user hierarchy set out in the SPD giving the pedestrian priority is to be commended.
- There should be a section within the SPD that mentions maintenance.
- Assets should be easy to maintain and replace, not bespoke expensive 'gold plated' designs.
- Consideration must be given to long term maintenance with limited budgets. Also materials that are likely to become a trip hazard should not be used.
- It is suggested that permeable materials should not be used as they crack and expand due to freeze thaw.
- Utility reinstatement work is not the responsibility of the local highway authority, it is the responsibility of the company undertaking the works. Reinstatements should be in accordance with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways.
- Whilst the use of high quality design and materials is welcomed, it is important to consider long term maintenance.

- Lighting should be functional and not bespoke.
- Public art can be pose a road safety hazard / distraction.
- The implementation of grass verges should be a priority.
- Reference to long term maintenance is welcomed in the document.
- If the highways authority agree to adopt a 'non-standard' material a commuted sum would be required.

2.4 Where appropriate, amendments were made to the Public Realm Strategy SPD in response to the comments received. A summary of the amendments are set out below, however a fuller set of amendments are illustrated within the attached 'Statement of Consultation 2021'.

### **3. Summary of Amendments Made**

3.1 Taking account of the comments received during the public consultation, amendments have been made to the SPD document. It should be noted that a number of the main topic / issues illustrated in the summary above, are already considered within the SPD document and therefore it was considered that no amendments were needed stemming from these.

3.2 However, there were a number of minor wording amendments along with some more significant changes. The more significant changes are summarised below.

- Reference to utility companies has been made in the bullet points under paragraph 4.1.
- An additional paragraph has been added (5.20) to make reference to Sport England's new strategy 'Uniting the Movement'.
- An additional paragraph has been added (5.21) to make reference to the public realm works that have been achieved since the first Public Realm Strategy was published.
- Paragraph 7.7 has been reworded to remove reference to the local highways authority being responsible for utility reinstatements. The paragraph now suggests that reinstatement works will be managed appropriately.
- Reference to Mere Walk being a green pathway has been made in the bullet points under paragraph 8.59.
- Reference to 'Home Zones' has been removed throughout the SPD. Where relevant this has been amended to 'Shared Spaces'.
- Paragraph 9.11 has been reworded to add clarity in what it is suggesting; also to make reference to improving flood resilience where possible.
- Wigston Northern Periphery Key Principles bullet 1 has been reworded to say 'supported' rather than 'permitted'.
- An additional sentence has been added to Wigston Northern Periphery Key Principles bullet 3, Wigston Core Key Principles bullet 1, and Wigston Southern Periphery Key Principles bullet 1 stating that 'In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along Bell Street'.
- Additional wording has been added to the Surfacing section (at bullet 3) of Table 1 and the Street Furniture section and Surfacing section of Table 2 to suggest that materials etc should require minimal or no maintenance.
- Oadby Northern Periphery Key Principles bullet 1, and Oadby Core Key Principles bullet 2 has been reworded to say 'supported' rather than 'permitted'.
- An additional sentence has been added to Oadby Northern Periphery Key Principles

bullet 3, Oadby Core Key Principles bullet 1, and Oadby Southern Periphery Key Principles bullet 1 stating that 'In addition, proposals should complement works already achieved along The Parade'.

- 'where safe to do so' has been added to South Wigston Northern Periphery Key Principles bullet 3 and South Wigston Southern Periphery Key Principles bullet 3.
- Paragraph 12.2 has been amended to suggest the need for any proposed discharge of surface water to be in accordance with Severn Trent's drainage hierarchy.
- Paragraph 12.4 has been reworded to mention that all reinstatement works should be in conformity with the Specification for the Reinstatement of Openings in Highways.
- An additional bullet (4) has been added to Surfacing Materials Key Principles to state – 'As far as possible, proposals should incorporate the use of permeable surfacing and flood source control'.
- An additional sentence has been added to bullet 1 of Public Art Key Principles stating that 'Public art should be sited as to not pose a road safety distraction'.
- 'or open space' has been added into bullet 11 of the Parks and Open Spaces Key Principles.
- Bullet 8 of the Trees and Planting Key Principles has been reworded to be specific to tree and planting schemes and make reference to reducing the risk of flooding.
- Paragraph 12.48 has been reworded to suggest that the measures can improve character and appearance and that the measures will only be put in place should their benefit outweigh any detrimental impact of their provision.
- Two new bullets (7 and 8) have been added to Wider Borough Public Realm Key Principles – '7. All public realm proposals should be of the highest quality, accessible to all and be as maintenance free as possible' and 'Where relevant, public realm proposals should retain natural features and proposed habitats should be well connected to existing habitats'.
- Bullet 3 of the Shared Spaces Key Principles has been amended to suggest that shared spaces will only be supported where relevant and safe to do so.

#### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 The Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document has been amended to take account of comments received during the public consultation. All of the amendments made have benefitted the document as they seek to make the guidance contained within the document simpler and more effective.
- 4.2 It is recommended that the Public Realm Strategy Supplementary Planning Document as currently drafted is adopted by Members. Upon adoption, the SPD document will supersede the existing Public Realm Strategy SPD that was published in September 2012.