

The Quality of the Public Realm for Residents and Visitors

Short briefing paper on “ Space to move and find way about in the centre (management of spaces)”.

1. Overview

What is the quality of the ‘welcome’ to the City centre like to residents and visitors?

This topic covers for the City centre only signage, information points, promotional clutter, pedestrian routes, public squares and implies (probably) space to sit and space to rest as well as to move around. Therefore the topic flows on into the area of urban design.

2. What is already happening?

- New public squares – e.g. Bonn Square, and 4 new spaces in the West End (Area Action Plan)
- And Western Gateway including remodelled Frideswide Square
- New urban streets – Design Code in the West End (Area Action Plan)
- Public realm manual – will set principles for design and location of signage. Will also present a wide range of other guidance on materials and street furniture.
- De-clutter of street furniture – e.g. High St maintenance ph1, 2, and 3.
- New public spaces through Transform Oxford - e.g. Magdalen Street/St Giles
- Generation of ideas and initiatives – e.g. OPT Broad Street with Kim Wilkie. And Berman Guedes Stretton Exhibition at OVADA of Dreaming Spires, Dreaming Spaces (1st Jul)
- University/College project – Signage to Colleges?
- Some Information boards provided in most historic part of city centre – eg. Radcliffe Square. (when provided?)
- And some Managed Poster Board sites (when provided?)
- Stalled initiative around poster boards for the cultural sector

3. Who are the key players?

- County Council as Highway Authority
- City Council as Planning Authority
- City Centre Management partners – two Councils
- Land and building owners, including the two Councils, the University and Colleges
- Major Developers, such as Westgate and St Aldates Scheme where also providing new and remodelling existing streets
- Oxford Preservation Trust – facilitating initiatives and dialogue

4. Are there obvious gaps?

- Calls for a signage strategy or plan for the City Centre; to cover finger posts, further information boards (Welcome to Oxford with a map, Bonn Square) and more cultural poster board sites.
- Action against propped-up boards and other promotional clutter
- Joined up thinking to new ideas and initiatives emerging for specific spaces; Broad St, Magdalen St, George St, St Giles
- No one partner able to resource on their own.