

<b>Committee(s):</b> Streets and Walkways Sub - Committee	<b>Dated:</b> 07 November 2023
<b>Subject:</b> City Public Realm Guidance – Public Realm Design Toolkit - Adoption	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation’s Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1,2,3,4,9,10,11,12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>N</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>S106</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain’s Department?</b>	<b>NA</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Interim Director Environment Department	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Maria Herrera, Environment Department	

### Summary

This report provides an update on the review of the public realm design guidance and technical information, alongside the proposed adoption of the ***Public Realm Design Toolkit*** (included in Appendix 2) which is an update of and, if adopted, will replace the Public Realm Technical Manual (2016).

The work completed to date includes:

- Completion of the draft *Public Realm Vision* document: This work included a review of the public realm Supplementary Planning Document (2016) in the context of changing policy and competing demands on the public realm in the City. It identifies a number of themes and City-wide ‘transformational moves’ that are informing relevant sections of the updated Transport Strategy and the emerging Local Plan.
- A *Public Realm Design Toolkit* (Attached in Appendix 2): This work has been completed and the document is recommended for adoption as the City’s design guidance to inform changes to the public realm in the City.

### Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Agree to adopt the City Public Realm Design Toolkit as design guidance for the City’s public realm.

### Main Report

## Background

1. People's experience the City's built environment is in a large part influenced by the relationship between buildings and the spaces between them. In order to create a high quality City environment, it is essential to proactively manage our streets and spaces and provide a framework for the public realm to thrive. There are numerous transformative changes planned over the coming years stemming from a range of recently adopted and emerging strategies, documents, and studies, including the Climate Action Strategy (2020), the Destination City initiative, the emerging City Plan 2040, and the review of the Transport Strategy.
2. Providing a high quality and inclusive public realm where people enjoy spending time in is essential to the City's future as a global destination. There is clear demand for more vibrant and engaging spaces to attract people and businesses and offer opportunities to socialise beyond the working day. The City's community is also calling for a greener and more pleasant streets and spaces as well as action to tackle climate change.
3. This Committee agreed a report in December 2020 to initiate the review and update of public realm guidance and technical information, in order to take a proactive approach to the future design of our streets and spaces. The outputs of this initial stage included the following:
  - Drafting of the Public Space and Placemaking Vision and Outcomes
  - A review of the Public Space and Placemaking Supplementary Planning Document (2016).
  - A review and update of the Technical Manual (2016); now promoted as "City Public Realm Toolkit".
4. A further report was approved by this Committee in July 2021 that provided a progress update including the agreement of a number of themes to be used to inform the completion of the documents. The work was structured in two stages to undertake a thorough review of the existing policy guidance and international best practice to ensure the City remains at the forefront of design standards. An outline brief was then agreed to develop stage two of the outputs, which included the development of the City Public Realm Vision and the Design Toolkit.
5. The development of the guidance document has undergone a rigorous review involving collaborations with various City teams within the Environment Department, including Highways, City Gardens and Cleansing, and Planning divisions. The work completed to date reflects a collaborative approach adopted at the outset of the process, to ensure corporate priorities are met and stakeholders have buy-in. A series of workshops were organised throughout the scoping phase and during the development stage which helped to shape the final document.

## The Purpose of the Design Toolkit

6. The purpose of the Toolkit is to provide a coordinated approach to the design and management of the public realm in the City. The Toolkit promotes high quality design and sets the standards for public realm features that contribute to the experience of using the City's streets, public spaces and private but publicly accessible spaces. It provides advice for professionals and officers with a role to play in the design, construction and management of the City's streets and spaces. The design toolkit has been developed in close collaboration with Highways, City Gardens and Cleansing, Transport & Public Realm and Planning Divisions through a series of design workshops and individual meetings.
7. By applying the Toolkit, we will:
  - Ensure that the City's public realm adapts to the challenges that face high density urban environments, including by creating a high quality, accessible and resilient streetscape for people walking and wheeling, that enables people to choose to cycle and that contributes to climate change mitigation strategies.
  - Protect, maintain and enhance the quality of the City's built environment in order to make it an inclusive and attractive place in which to live, work and visit.
  - Support the City's position as a leading business and leisure destination, continually improving the street environment in order to accommodate future growth and activation.
  - Support delivery of the City Corporation's Transport Strategy, Climate Action Strategy, Destination City initiative and Sport's Strategy.

## **Current Position**

8. A consultant was appointed to aid the development of the Public Realm Vision and Design Toolkit. An internal officers' working group was also established to guide the work and ensure cross-departmental support for the approach was established.
9. Work completed to date includes:
  - A literature review, including various corporate strategies, policy documents and external guidance in relation to public realm and its contribution to placemaking;
  - Mapping of corporate strategies and policies where they impact on the built environment design and public realm;
  - Cross-departmental workshops on key topics;
  - Identification of the key challenges and impacts of recent strategy and policy on public space;

- The consideration of design principles in response to climate change challenges.
- A thorough assessment of the carbon footprint of paving material selection and specification, see link below:  
[<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/assets/Services-Environment/city-of-london-materials-review-design-notes.pdf> ]
- A review of street furniture specification
- Establishment of a series of themes and an outline of the City Public Realm Vision and Objectives (as reported to this committee in 2021) and a series of City-wide transformational moves to inform change;
- Incorporation of elements of the draft Public Realm Vision into the revised Transport Strategy.
- A Public Realm Toolkit (Attached in Appendix 2); An update on the previously adopted Technical Manual (2016) which reflects changes to materials specification, approach to projects, and recent corporate guidance such as the Climate Action Strategy, the Sports Strategy, Destination City and the Transport Strategy.

### **The Public Realm Design Toolkit**

10. This Public Realm Design Toolkit is included in Appendix 2 and sets out the design and technical approach to both the delivery and management of change in the public realm. It is an update of the Technical Manual (2016) and includes recent guidance on the use of materials, street furniture and the City's design approach. It is also informed by the lessons learned at recently completed projects such as Bartholomew Close public realm, Cursitor Street enhancement, Middlesex Street – Petticoat Lane improvements, Fleet Street area, Globe View Walkway and Bevis Marks Sustainable Urban Drainage scheme.
11. The following summary highlights the key additions and changes to the Toolkit, which expand on the previous document from 2016 and reflect on recently adopted policy guidance. Please refer to Appendix 1 for a comparative list of contents which outlines the new items included in the revised Toolkit.

### **Surface Materials:**

12. The section on surface materials outlines the various material finishes and how they are combined to ensure a distinctive identity and robust palette is established that future-proofs the City now and into the future. The update includes the consideration of:
  - Ethical sourcing principles,
  - Climate resilience measures,
  - Dimension and depth of paving materials
  - Consideration of circular economy principles
  - Bespoke paving solutions, including permeable paving and rubber crumb for areas suitable for play, recreating and exercise.

- Maintenance requirements

### Street Furniture:

13. A set of guiding principles for street furniture selection and placement has been expanded to recognise the different qualities of City streets, needs and diverse user groups. The provision of street furniture within the public realm provides the opportunity to reinforce the sense of place and also to offer moments to pause and participate in City life. Selection and placement of street furniture greatly influences the perception visitors have of the City. The update includes:
- Consideration of a wider range of street furniture typologies, which promote places to enjoy, meet and play.
  - A requirement for street furniture to be built in robust materials.
  - Consideration of sustainable sources and environmental credentials.
  - Movable street furniture and free-standing planters
  - Consideration of integrated security measures where feasible to avoid street clutter.
  - Lighting in the public realm and general guidance.
  - A new section on “Play and Exercise” in response to the recently adopted Sports Strategy and Destination City initiative. Officers will work alongside the Sports Engagement Manager to identify exercise equipment and street furniture that can facilitate leisure and sport activities which are appropriate for the City’s context. The Toolkit will be updated in due course to reflect additional elements of street furniture which are required to be considered for street enhancement projects.

### Trees and Planting:

14. This section reflects the objectives of the Climate Action Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan, with a focus on climate change resilience measures, the importance of green infrastructure, including tree planting, planters and inground planting beds. The updated Toolkit includes:
- An “urban greening hierarchy” to be taken into consideration for all street enhancement projects.
  - A consideration for projects to increase natural biodiversity and improve environmental conditions such as air quality.
  - A consideration of a resilient planting palette with less maintenance and watering requirements.
  - The introduction of sustainable urban drainage and rain gardens as greening elements in the streets and public spaces.
  - A consideration of materials for raised planters
  - Guidance on contemporary and bespoke free-standing planters
15. The Toolkit is included in Appendix 2 for adoption. Please note that some of the photographs in the document are to be replaced with more recent examples before publication on the City’s website.

## Corporate & Strategic Implications

### Strategic Implications

16. An update of design principles and technical information in relation to the public realm will support the effective implementation of the key corporate priorities, including the updated Transport Strategy, Climate Action Strategy and Destination City initiative and objectives. This review also supports and aligns with the forthcoming draft Local Plan 2040.

### Financial implications

17. This work was funded from S106 receipts. Spend to date is shown in table 1 below. Any further work is subject to additional funds being secured.

Table 1: Spend to date

Description	Approved Budget (£)	Expenditure (£)	Balance (£)*
Staff Costs	57,495	51,504	5,991
Fees	45,000	45,000	0
	<b>102,495</b>	<b>96,504</b>	<b>5,991</b>

### Resource implications

18. Refer to financial implications for resourcing of this project.

### Equalities implications

19. It is expected that the proposals in this report will improve the experience of the City's public spaces for all users, by setting out design standards for ensuring the accessibility and well-being benefits of public spaces.

### Climate implications

20. The document aligns with the adopted Climate Action Strategy, the following actions will be embedded into the document to ensure deliverables contribute with City's Net Zero Vision.
- Action Area 2: Resilient Streets and Greening
  - Action Area 6: Transport
  - Action Area 7: Square Mile Built Environment

## Conclusion

21. This work supports the coordination and effective implementation of adopted corporate strategies and priorities where these impact on the public realm. Best practice across international cities suggests a robust strategy, presented visually, and delivered using a design-led and place-making approach creates clarity, encourages private investment, and fosters community ownership.

## Appendices

Appendix 1. List of contents

Appendix 2. Public Realm Design Toolkit

## Background Papers

- City Public Realm Guidance Review – progress report; 8 July 2021 - Streets and Walkways Sub committee  
[City Public Realm Guidance Review.pdf](#)
- City Placemaking and Public Space Review; 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020 – Streets and Walkways Sub committee  
[City Placemaking and Public Space Review.pdf](#)

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### Appendix 1: City Public Realm Toolkit: List of contents

(Note: updated and new content is highlighted in italics in the table below).

Introduction

*About this Toolkit*

#### 1. Surface Materials

- *Considerations for material selection*
- *Principles for streetscape composition*
- York stone paving
- Granite setts
- *Bespoke paving alternatives*
- *Resin bound surfacing*
- Asphalt
- *Kerbs & kerb upstands*
- Dropped kerbs
- Loading bays
- Courtesy crossings

- Hazard warning paving
- Inspection covers
- Drainage furniture
- Road markings
- Historic lanes

## **2. Street Furniture**

- *Considerations for furniture selection*
- *Principles for furniture placement*
- *Bollards*
- Cycle stands
- Litterbins and recycling bins
- Drinking fountains
- *Wayfinding signs*
- Steps & handrails
- Boundary demarcation studs
- *Seating*
- *Flexible furniture*
- *Integrated security measures*
- *Lighting*
- *Play and exercise*
- Historic markers
- Heritage features

## **3. Trees and Planting**

- *Consideration for tree and plant selection*
- *Principles for planting*
- *Trees*
- Tree grilles and surrounds
- Tree pits
- *Planting and planter beds*
- Inground planting beds
- *SUDs and rain gardens*
- *Raised fixed planters*
- Protective measures
- Mobile planters
- *Contemporary freestanding planters*
- Trellising
- *Watering & Irrigation*