



City of Westminster

Publica

Westminster City Council appoints Publica as Design Guardian of the Oxford Street District project

Westminster City Council has appointed urban design consultancy Publica as Design Guardian for the public realm of the Oxford Street District. This new specialist advisory role will provide strategic oversight to shape the holistic design and delivery of the Council's £235m plan to strengthen the district's iconic status as one of the world's leading places to live, visit, shop and work.

In 2019 the Council approved a Place Strategy and Delivery Plan for the district which sets out an ambitious plan to improve the whole of the district around Oxford Street. The Council's strategy, produced by Publica and developed with local stakeholders, identifies streets and spaces for improvement and district-wide strategies for delivery – including flagship public realm schemes at Oxford Circus and Marble Arch.

The appointment of Publica as Design Guardian will ensure a consistent design approach across the programme, and the integration of innovative, sustainable and inclusive design-led approaches to support the Council's objectives for the district. This work is ongoing and always adapting to consider the impact of Covid-19 on central London and the issues and potential possibilities that it has raised.

As such, in this new role, Publica will work closely with the everyone involved, including stakeholders, to support a joined-up approach to:

- Create a district that is liveable and inclusive through the delivery of a diverse range of high-quality streetscapes to support all aspects of public life
- Support economic vitality through creative and innovative new uses and technologies
- Deliver a cleaner, healthier district with less traffic congestion, more active travel routes, cleaner building emissions and improved air quality
- Work towards a fully accessible and walkable district which is welcoming, inclusive and safe for all, at all times of the day, evening and night-time
- Revitalise the district through a programme of culture and public art

Westminster City Council Leader Rachael Robathan said:

"This project has only grown in importance in the wake of the pandemic which has left many of the country's businesses struggling. The ambitious plans we are developing will see the Oxford Street District revitalised for residents and our city's millions of visitors and secure its global reputation as the place to enjoy London's finest retail, leisure and culture. We will incorporate innovative smart city ideas and aim to boost air quality by being one of the greenest schemes worldwide.

"Publica share our vision, understand the challenges we face and the delicate balance that must be struck to ensure our ambitious plans works for residents, businesses and visitors alike. We look forward to continuing our work with them during the next steps of this scheme."

Founding Director of Publica Lucy Musgrave said:

"We are proud to have been appointed as Design Guardian for the Oxford Street District and to continue our work with Westminster City Council to deliver a holistic, multi-layered approach to urban change. This is London's most important project, and we are fully committed and passionate about delivering a long-term, innovative, sustainable and ambitious future for Oxford Street and the wider district."



City of Westminster

Publica

CONTACT

Charlotte Lord
charlotte@publica.co.uk
+44 (0)7938 376628

communications@publica.co.uk
+44 (0)20 7490 3986

NOTES TO EDITORS

About Publica:

Publica is a London-based public realm and urban design consultancy providing intelligence, advice and design services to Local Authorities, Great Estates, major landowners, Business Improvement Districts and communities. Publica operates at the heart of the debate about urbanism and cities. Its work is part of an international conversation about how to make cities more efficient, integrated, vibrant, humane and safe, and how to preserve the vitality of urban neighbourhoods in the midst of rapid growth and development. All of its work is value-driven and underpinned by thorough research.

Publica has restored and creatively reimagined some of London's most significant streets and civic spaces, such as Bond Street and Hanover Square, and set the vision for the future of Marble Arch for the Portman Estate and Oxford Circus for the Crown Estate. Publica recently worked for the Mayor of London to write the policy on Making London Child-Friendly – Designing Places and Streets for Children and Young People and is currently working on a night-time policy toolkit for London boroughs, including strategies for the COVID response to support the night-time economy. The design guardian role builds upon Publica's previous work with Westminster City Council in 2019 for the Oxford Street District Place Shaping Strategy and Delivery Plan, and the Soho Public Realm Study in 2014.

www.publica.co.uk
Instagram: @publica_studio
Twitter: @publica_office