

Report of survey of city centre seating 2019

INTRODUCTION

In the first half of 2019 the Norwich Society's Civic Environment Committee conducted a survey of public seating in Norwich city centre. Our findings are presented in this report: we have also produced an atlas (available on the Society's website) which shows the location, nature and capacity of the seating.

For the purposes of our survey, the city centre was taken to be approximately the area of the Business Improvement District. Seats were recorded if they were in areas that appeared to the surveyor to be open to the public some or all of the time. Seats in shopping malls, bus shelters, etc were not included.

WHAT WE SURVEYED AND RECORDED

Following some pilot surveys, we decided to survey and record the following information for each seat:

- Its location
- Its estimated capacity - how many people the seat could reasonably accommodate
- Whether it had a back
- Whether it had armrests
- Whether in the opinion of the surveyor it needed cleaning
- Whether in the opinion of the surveyor it needed repair

Surveying whether the seat had a back and/or armrests was intended to ascertain what proportion of seats had these features, as they were thought likely to make it easier for anyone with mobility problems to get onto and off a seat.

WHAT WE FOUND

The following statistics represent the position at the time of survey. Seats assessed as needing cleaning or repair may have received attention subsequently: equally the condition of other seats may have deteriorated. Other changes may have occurred since the time of survey, as for example with the Prince of Wales Road roadworks which appear to be likely to give rise to changes.

Statistics

- We found 412 seats with a capacity of 1582 places.
- 22 seats had a capacity of more than 9 places.
- 234 seats (57%) had a back.
- 122 seats (30%) had armrests.
- 112 seats (27%) both back and armrests.
- 68 seats (17%) were assessed as needing cleaning.
- 37 seats (9%) were assessed as needing repair.
- 88 seats (21%) were assessed as needing cleaning or repair or both, meaning 326 seats (79%) needed neither cleaning nor repair.

A map showing the location of the seats assessed as needing cleaning or repair or both is on page 4.

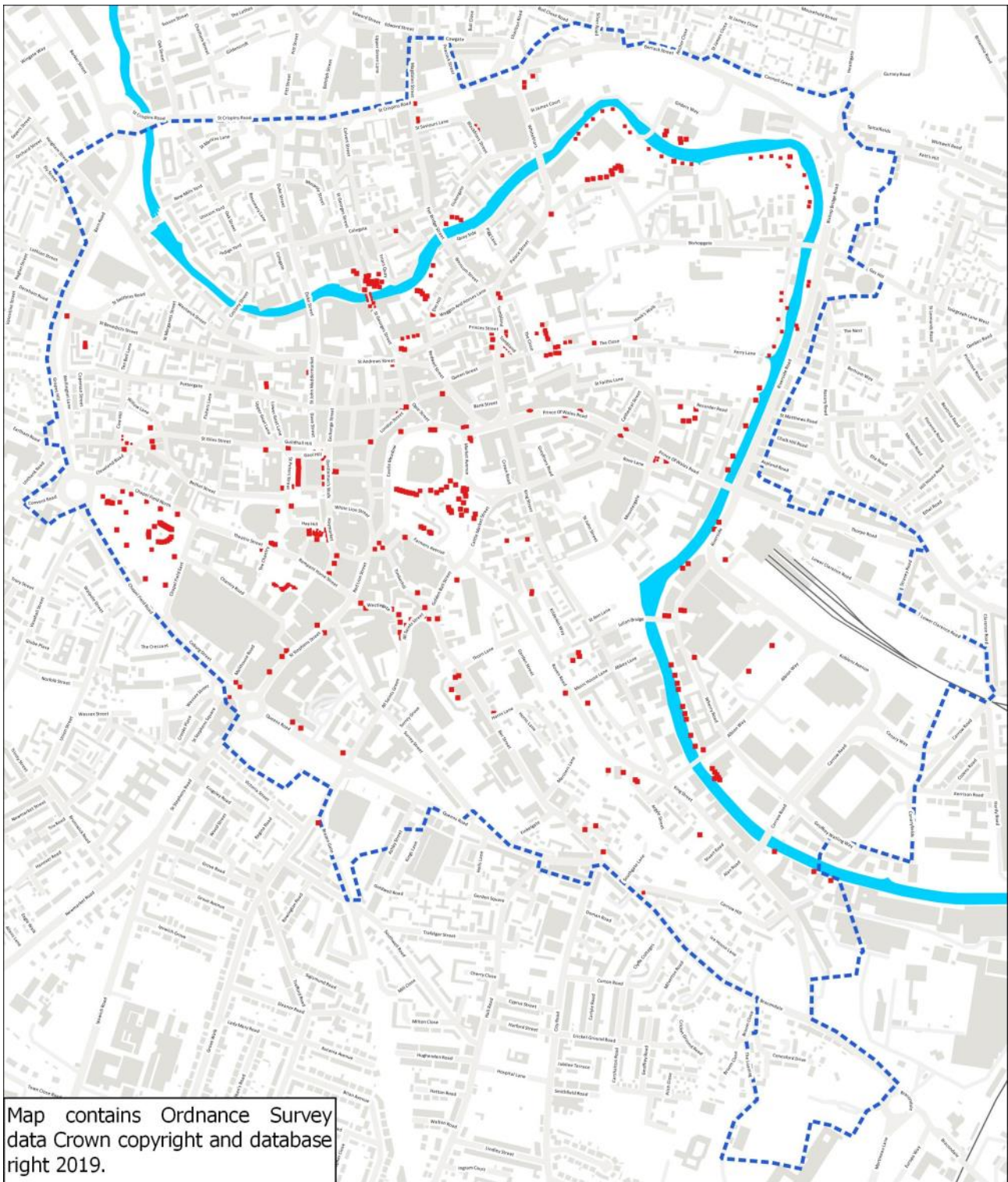
Other findings

There was a greater variety of seating designs and styles than we had previously appreciated : a selection of images is shown at the end of this report.

We also found that the distribution of seating is more uneven than might have been expected, as the overall map on the next page shows. There are, for example, no seats beside the river upstream of St. George's Bridge.

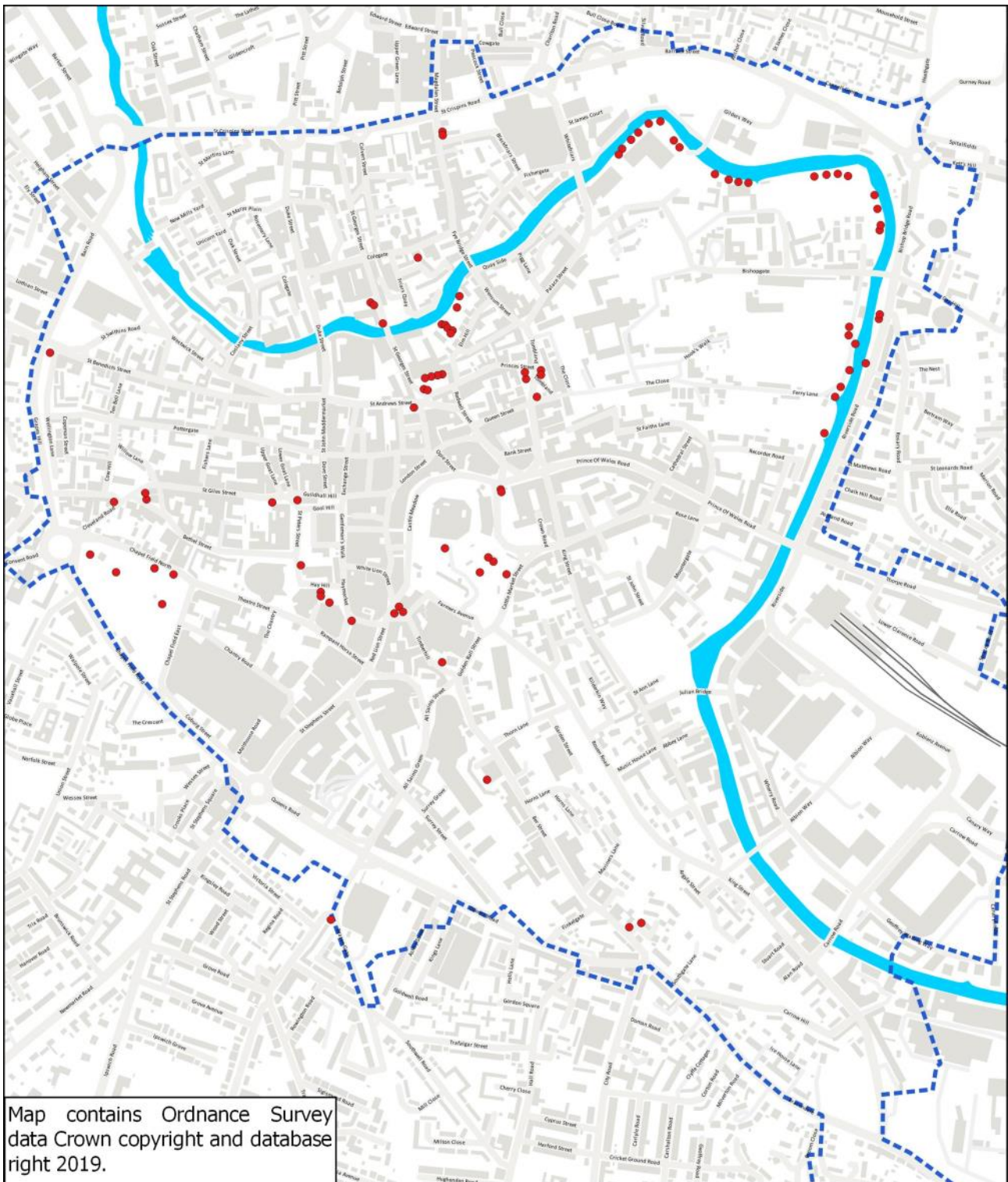
Although we found that around one-fifth of all seats needed some attention by way of either cleaning or repair to make them likely to be used by the public, we also found that there were many seats which, although usable (and not assessed by us and needing either cleaning or repair), were not particularly welcoming. They gave the appearance of not having been maintained since they were installed.

Distribution of seating in Norwich City Centre



Seat locations shown in red, the boundary of the surveyed area with a dashed blue line.

Distribution of seats considered to need repair or cleaning



Seat locations shown in red, the boundary of the surveyed area with a dashed blue line.

Variety of seating types

