

BRIEFING NOTE

Subject: Guildford Borough Council's Public Art Strategy

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1. Introduction and background

The Council requires a new Public Art Strategy to be produced which is able to respond to the Council's overall objectives and the National Planning Policy Framework, in the provision of public art projects by considering:

- a) a review of the current Public Art Strategy and the preparation of a new strategy, including developing key priorities for public art
- b) exploring the opportunities available for funding public art, particularly through the Council's planning system
- c) a review of the Council's Public Art Advisory Group to ensure it is able to support the delivery and achieve the objectives of the Public Art Strategy

What is public art?

There is no single definition of public art but the Council's previous Public Art Strategy uses the definition set out below:

'Public art involves artists and craftspeople in the design of artworks in the public realm, which is any open space or public building that is free to access. The best public art is designed for its location, with the input of local people and with the artist involved at the earliest possible stage of the process.'

Some of the ways that artists can work in the public realm include:

- a) artist in residence schemes to develop permanent artworks
- b) artists working as members of design teams to create landscape or building schemes
- c) artists creating temporary installations or performance based artworks to develop or launch major public art schemes

It is useful to consider that Ixia (the UK's public art think tank) uses the following explanation:

'The spectrum of artistic practice represented by the term 'public art' encompasses art commissioned as a response to the notion of place, art commissioned as part of the designed environment and process-based artistic practice that does not rely on the production of an art object. When searching for a definition, it is helpful to regard public art as the process of artists responding to the public realm.'

The Council's Public Art Advisory Group:

The Public Art Advisory Group (PAAG) was set up to assist with making decisions on public art schemes in the borough, following the production of the Public Art Strategy of 2008. The main purpose of the group is to represent the wider arts community and residents of the borough in gaining the most benefit from public art initiatives led by the Council and other commissioners. The group aims to provide general guidance on Council policy and on the planning and delivery of public art. Officers, councillors, an independent artist and

representatives of the local arts community including Guildford Arts and the University of Surrey represent the group.

Overall aim of the strategy

To produce a five year strategy which will assist the Council and its partners to enhance the Council's arts and cultural programme and the local environment by identifying key priorities for the provision of public art in the borough. Producing a strategy for public art will allow the Council and its partners to identify and secure resources for public art in the future and develop a framework in which a programme of projects can be developed and delivered. The strategy will highlight the importance of the provision of public art in contributing to the local environment, economy and society, as outlined below.

A mapping exercise of current public art will help identify clusters and gaps in provision and increase opportunities for public art by identifying links with other development plans such as the Local Plan, the Council's capital projects and the Arts Development Strategy.

A review of the processes involved in developing provision for public art will ensure that the design and delivery is aligned with corporate policy and procedures and will improve the efficiency and transparency of project management practices.

The Strategy will identify and evaluate the potential opportunities for funding public art and the processes for securing funding both within and outside of the planning system. Within this, the strategy will address the implications of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) on public art.

This strategy will review the role of the Public Art Advisory Group by evaluating its function to support the delivery of the strategic priorities identified. Once produced, the strategy will inform the work of the Public Art Advisory Group.

Our vision for public art:

Guildford Borough Council seeks opportunities for innovative and dynamic public art that has residents and artists at its core whilst celebrating and enhancing its rich heritage of architecture, landscape and public art.

The benefits of public art to the borough

The Arts Development Strategy will aid the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2020 themes of Our Environment, Our Society and Our Economy.

Our Environment

Public art lends itself to the creation of attractive and high quality surroundings where people want to live, work, shop and play. Public Art can foster civic pride, a sense of place and local ownership and identity. Public art can have a significant role in creating, developing and sustaining ambience and uniqueness, making a place distinctive.

Our Society

High quality public art initiatives can enchant, excite and provoke discussion for local participants and audiences. Imaginative and thoughtful workshops outside conventional arts settings can engage communities who feel isolated and in doing so help to build vibrant, active neighbourhoods. Groups that come together as part of such projects often continue to engage in local issues and initiatives, contributing to the delivery of key policy areas such as local community consultation. Public art initiatives such as lighting schemes and artworks in underpasses increase a sense of safety, as people know the area is cared for.

Our Economy

Good public art contributes to the local economy both by raising the profile of Guildford as a vibrant cultural centre and also by introducing new skills to the area through the artists and community involved. Public art initiatives can help support economic growth by providing work for artists, creating stimulating and attractive environments in which to live and work and sustaining interest from visitors and investors alike.

2. Public art and the planning process

Currently, most of the Council's public art projects are funded through Section 106 contributions, which can either take the form of on-site projects that are managed and delivered by the developer with support from the Council or off-site contributions, which are managed and delivered by the Council.

When the Council adopts the CIL process, the funding for public art will change. There are two options for funding public art through the planning process. For onsite provision, planning obligations can be used to ensure the developer creates public art within the development. Another option is for the Council to identify and cost appropriate public art schemes, such as a location specific piece in the town centre or an iconic landmark piece, which could be funded through CIL. This might be appropriate where there are a cluster of new developments that would affect the overall character of an area.

Ixia, the UK's public art think tank, has obtained legal advice on public art provision within the CIL process and has concluded that it is allowable. Other local authorities have started using CIL for public art projects. Council officers in Planning and Parks and Leisure Services will need to make recommendations for future delivery of public art in Guildford within the CIL process.

3. Approach

Under the direction of a cross party project board, an experienced public art consultant will be commissioned to research, write and consult internally on a draft strategy. The draft strategy will consider internal policy and relevant existing strategies to align the Public Art Strategy with the Council's objectives. It will also address the impact of CIL on funding for public art projects within the Council, look at other opportunities for funding, review the function of the PAAG and set out key priorities for public art in the borough.

We will then take this draft strategy document to public consultation and subsequently produce a final strategy, alongside a development plan that will guide the work of the Arts Officers and the PAAG. An annual update on progress will be published on the Council's website and a review will be carried out after five years.

Consultation and communications

In order to produce the draft strategy, an internal consultation with Planning Services (including colleagues in Planning Policy, Major Projects, Planning Development and the Projects and Conservation Team); Legal Services (including Procurement) and Parks and Leisure Services will be undertaken

This will be followed by a public consultation on the draft strategy and will include: commercial developers; other public art commissioners such as schools, charities and the NHS; local artists and practitioners; community groups; local arts venues; residents; visitors;

Surrey Arts and Surrey Hills Arts; Arts Council England and further and higher education institutions.

Public consultation on the draft strategy will open for four to six weeks. The consultation process will include:

- two focus groups with key stakeholders
- a draft copy of the strategy available to view online accompanied by a public questionnaire targeting local residents, artists, practitioners, community groups, arts groups, current and potential partners, as well as less advantaged groups

Alongside this, a social media campaign will communicate the open consultation to all Council staff and public.

Objectives and outputs of the strategy:

- to set out the Council's commitment to high quality public art that encompasses both challenging and accessible art
- to explore and agree on the best process for funding public art projects in the future through the planning system, for example, through the existing process of Section 106 or via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or a combination of both
- Continue to review and improve the process of securing funding through the planning system from pre-application stage to project management including, reviewing the process of agreeing the wording of section 106 agreements and planning obligations
- to raise the profile of public art and the wider benefits to the community and economy
- place public art at the heart of community life, promoting a positive image of the borough to residents and visitors
- engage and excite Guildford borough residents and visitors through imaginative public art that creates a dialogue between community and artists
- to create a clear and robust procedure for managing public art projects
- to review the function of the Public Art Advisory Group their role in the process of selecting artists and public art projects in the borough
- to review the way we consult and engage with the community as part of delivering public art projects
- to ensure that public art policy is aligned with the arts development service, particularly promoting the benefits of community involvement in the process of creating public art
- to identify gaps in provision and opportunities to create public art in areas which could benefit from regeneration
- to address the lack of a dedicated public art maintenance and decommissioning budget in the borough
- to continue to review and improve health and safety procedures for the installation of public art projects
- identify, map and where possible cost opportunities for major public art opportunities in the borough, particularly linked with the Town Centre Masterplan and as part of larger public realm improvement schemes
- to share best practice with everyone involved in public art projects, whether as commissioners, artists or stakeholders in the best process for creating high quality public art around the borough that is embedded in the local community

How this strategy works with other Council strategies:

The Council's Public Art Strategy will sit under the Council's Corporate Plan 2015-2020 and sits alongside the Council's Arts Development Strategy. Both the Arts Development Strategy

and the Public Art Strategy will inform the development of a work programme for the Arts Officers. The Public Art Strategy also sits under the Local Plan and links with the Council's Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document, which includes a public art section.

Scope of project

This project will include commissioning the first draft of a five year Public Art Strategy, which we will take to public consultation and subsequently produce and launch a final strategy, alongside a public art development plan.

Included within the scope of the strategy:

- commissioning the first draft of a five year Public Art Strategy
- undertaking a public consultation with key stakeholders and subsequently producing a final strategy, alongside the development plan
- identifying priorities for public art
- identifying potential funding for public art
- promoting community involvement in public art
- updating the Council's public art audit to identify gaps in provision
- mapping development sites and future Council capital projects in order to identify opportunities for future public art schemes
- deciding whether the Council will allow CIL to fund public art projects and if so identifying and costing appropriate projects
- launching the strategy

Outside of scope:

- the strategy will not focus on or lead other areas of Parks and Leisure Services
- the strategy will not focus on or lead Council owned or other cultural venues
- the strategy will not lead on or deliver public art outside of the borough of Guildford

4. Resource implications

The development of this strategy will be funded through existing revenue budgets. There will be an impact on other departments within the Council including: the PR and Marketing Team who will advise on the consultation, design and analysis of results; Legal, Financial and Planning Services will advise on the impact of any policy, procedural and funding changes; the Leisure Development Team may be required to assist with public consultation events and the Web Development team will be required to assist with the online consultation design.

5. Timescales

Attend EAB – 14 November 2016

Finalise PID by end November 2016

Set up Project Board and hold first meeting – December 2016

Consultant and officers complete draft strategy and internal consultation – by end of February 2017

Public consultation (6 weeks) – March - April 2017

Collate public consultation feedback – May 2017

Final copy of strategy produced – June 2017

Project Board agree final strategy – June 2017

Report to CMT – July 2017

Approved by Executive – July 2017

Public Art Strategy launched – September 2017

6. Considerations for the EAB

- consideration of the outline process and consultation
- groups/ individuals to include in consultation
- consideration of the membership and skill set of the public art advisory group
- opportunities for promoting current and future public art and raising the profile of the wider benefits of public art

7. Further references

Society, Environment and Council Development [EAB 14 July 2016- Guildford Borough Council's Arts Development Strategy](#)

Ixia, the UK's public art think tank: www.ixia-info.com

Public art online: www.publicartonline.org.uk