

Item

Developing a Public Art Strategy for Cambridge

To:

Councillor Anna Smith, Executive Councillor for Communities,
Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee

28/01/2021

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 In June 2018, Environment and Community Services Scrutiny Committee considered a report that set out the future aspirations for public art in the City, and the need to update the Public Art Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), in light of changes to the national planning system and planning regulations, and to support the new Local Plan. The report included the requirement to undertake an evaluation process and have a 'Big conversation'¹ about public art to inform future Policy work.
- 1.2 Following a process of evaluation through 2019/20, this report sets the direction of travel to develop a Public Art Strategy (Strategy) for Cambridge and makes recommendations on the process and methodology required to ensure that Cambridge continues to be at the forefront of public art commissioning and delivery.
- 1.3 The report sets out the work that has been undertaken so far, and the work to be completed to secure the Strategy and future policy for public

¹ Proposed for February to March 2021

art provision in Cambridge. It builds upon an independent and Officer-led evaluation of public art policy and processes. This evaluation work will be set out in an Issues and Options Paper developed with the help of the Shared Planning Service (SPS) and this will be used to assist with policy development allocated to the proposed Working Group (WG).

1.4 The Strategy will comprise of several parts, including:

- i. A strategic Vision² including policies and processes, which will be developed using the WG.
- ii. A recommended Commissioning Strategy for the City; this will guide decision making by the Council to deliver high quality public art proposals using commuted S106 contributions, which comply with the existing Public Art SPD and national Planning Policy.

1.5 The report recommends the use of a draft Manifesto as an engagement tool to allow Officers to test and validate a draft vision including policies.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to

- a. Support the use of the draft Manifesto for public art in Cambridge and the process set out in the report for researching and developing new public art policy.
- b. Approve
 - i. The process for taking the work forward, including the formation of a cross departmental Working Group.
 - ii. The Terms of Reference for the Working Group set out at 4.2.
 - iii. The use of consultation and research through events and a public survey, to test the draft manifesto and support the development of Policy.

² The WG will include staff from the Shared Planning Service and in partnership they will determine the best way forward to ensure current issues are resolved and any future public art policy has weight; this may include how public art is delivered in the emerging Greater Cambridgeshire Local Plan.

3. Context

- 3.1 The Council's Public Art Policy is currently in the form of a Supplementary Planning Document and has been very successful in delivering public art through the planning process, putting Cambridge at the forefront of public art development and delivery on both a national and international stage. Many local authorities have used the Cambridge Public Art SPD as a model for introducing or reinforcing existing public art policies. Since the Adoption of the Council's Public Art SPD there have been changes in the planning system, which require the document to be reviewed.
- 3.2 The Council consulted between October 2018 and December 2019 with developers, art consultants and artists to assess the impact of public art and evaluate policy, delivered projects, budgets and processes; including how public art is secured through the planning process, using a range of methods, including the appointment of independent expertise.
- 3.3 The Council commissioned an independent Evaluation Report in pursuance of the aims and objectives as set out in the Executive Councillors decisions of 18th January and 28th June 2018.
- 3.4 The evaluation included conversations with developers, art consultants and artists; individuals or organisations directly involved in the delivery of public art through the planning process. The evaluation covered the quality, impact, process and budgets in public art delivery. It also included the evaluation of temporary public art projects to help understand and promote the benefits for different types, forms and timespans of art in the public realm.
- 3.5 The evaluation has influenced the draft Manifesto, and therefore it is proposed the consultation will consider and test the main outcomes of the evaluation as follows:
- Public art commissioning in Cambridge has been influenced significantly by two key factors: (1) A clear public art policy enshrined in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) with a clear process and (2) aided by the existence of the Public art Officer post.

- That there is national and regional variation in securing, and the application of, Public Art Policy in the planning process.
- The merits in having clear methods of budget setting and the process of securing Public Art either with S106 or planning conditions.
- The importance of temporary or socially engaged public art³. Such findings reinforce the need for strategies to be submitted for new developments that include temporary and socially engaged practice as a key component to place making and as a mitigating force during and after development.

3.6 Through 2019, the Council has itself evaluated the delivery of public art projects secured using the SPD. The evaluation has focused on processes, the use of Planning Conditions, quality of outcomes and budget setting. These issues directly relate to process, which reinforces the conclusions in the independent Evaluation Report, that something has changed in terms of the implementation of a process to support public art delivery, and this is more than likely the influence of National Planning Policy.

4 Developing Public Art Policy

4.1 A proposed draft manifesto⁴ with a vision for public art in Cambridge is attached at Appendix A. This section and its paragraphs set out areas of work and outputs that will test and validate this manifesto. The research and learning will allow Officers to make modifications and changes that reflect current best practice. This final manifesto will be present to Scrutiny Committee for approval in Autumn 2021 supported by the findings of the work completed.

4.2 The draft Manifesto and future Policy will be developed through the formation of a cross departmental WG. It will be informed through the evaluations and the creation of an Issues and Options Paper. The WG will include the Public Art Officer and representatives from Planning and

³ Temporary projects often allow for greater public engagement in projects and with it, a richer experience for those involved including communities and the public.

⁴ Making Public Artwork – A Manifesto the Cambridge Perspective

Art and Culture. Members of the Public Art Panel or other independent representatives may be co-opted where and when required (dependent to subject matters). The WG will have the following Terms of Reference.

- a) Identify the most appropriate from of policy to support the delivery of public art.
- b) Work with SPS to consider how best to integrate public art into the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. To seek to influence the development of evidence base work, emerging policies, and topic papers for the Local Plan to ensure that Public Art is an embedded common thread, included consistently where appropriate.
- c) To address and consider the content of the Issues and Options Paper; in particular how to secure public art, budget setting and Officer fees by applying the agreed policy and assess the processes of how public art is developed and delivered via planning applications and make recommendations on how processes may be improved.

5 Commissioning Strategy

- 5.1 A Commissioning Strategy is paramount to help guide decision making by the City Council particularly for S106 monies already collected. It is vital to ensure we achieve the vision set out in the Manifesto and that of strategic led and placed high quality public art proposals, especially when using available S106 contributions collected for this purpose. It will be a corporate document that will assist Members and officers in their discussions and negotiations to ensure high quality public art commissions are developed that reflect best practice and comply with funding criteria.
- 5.2 It is understood that commissioning public art funded through S106 agreements/ contributions must be transparent, legally sound and follow best practice in commissioning processes.
- 5.3 A city-wide mapping exercise will be undertaken to determine what future opportunities exist for the provision of new public art in Cambridge in terms of commissioning themes or the identification of specific projects.

It will consider any linkages that new public art commissions could have with other projects and will prioritise opportunities. The following information will form part of this spatial analysis process:

- a) the value and location of individual, existing S106 contributions.
- b) community assets.
- c) community needs and opportunities;
- d) City and County Council led initiatives and projects; and
- e) existing public art.

- 5.4 The mapping exercise itself is not enough to propose future public art commissions. This can only be achieved by developing a Vision for public art. The Vision will inform future proposals.
- 5.5 All future proposals will be required to meet the criteria for s106 funding, which includes complying with the current Public Art Supplementary Planning Document.
- 5.6 The consultation events to be developed in Spring 2021 and the public survey will also feed into the process to develop the Commissioning Strategy. At this stage, the Report seeks to agree the Manifesto for Public Art in Cambridge. The final Commissioning Strategy will be reported to Committee in June 2021.

6. Research and learning

- 6.1 It is proposed to hold a series of events in Spring 2021, which will celebrate public art in Cambridge, promote the process to successful public art delivery and explore how the Council could improve how it supports and delivers public art and which will link to the Cambridge Arts Network. To support events and aide discussion and to facilitate meaningful feedback the Council will be developing a suite of media resources; video, audio and downloadable documents (PDF) that convey the programme of public art delivered in the last few years through the Artists, Consultants and Developers involved, including insights on how projects are conceived and realised and, most importantly, how they benefit the community and contribute to the city's arts and cultural

offering. The media documents will then link to a series of Panel discussions.

- 6.2 The Council will commission a short film, which will be an introduction to public art in Cambridge. It will showcase different public artworks around the City and promote the benefits to community and potentially the process involved. The film will be used to launch the events and to promote public art in the City; why are we supporting public art and what are the benefits?
- 6.3 A public survey will be launched in Spring 2021. The survey seeks to understand who constitutes the general audience for Public Art in Cambridge; to gauge their level of experience and awareness of it and understand their perceptions of the role of Public Art.
- 6.4 Feedback from the events and public survey will be considered in the future development of the draft Manifesto, future Public Art Policy and the Commissioning Strategy.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial implications:

- a. There are no financial implications identified at this time.

7.2 Staffing implications:

The development of the Strategy will be resourced from within existing staffing resources.

7.3 Equality and poverty implications: The equality implications for policy proposals will be considered at the development stage of this Strategy.

7.4 Other implications: Climate change, community safety and other considerations will form part of the Working Groups Terms of Reference and will form part of the key findings reported back to Scrutiny Committee.

8. Consultation and communication considerations

- 8.1 The work includes public events and a public survey. The survey will adopt the following methodology:
- The questionnaire/research will be online for 6 weeks.
 - Hard copies will be distributed to certain groups.
 - Follow up communications will be made to ensure buy-in.
 - The research will be supported by a communication plan (twitter, Newspapers, staff email),
- 8.2 A consultation process may be required for the emerging policy once a way forward is determined.

9. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public-art-spd>

Cambridge Evaluation Report – Aldo Rinaldi

10. Appendices

Appendix A – Making Public Artwork – A Manifesto
The Cambridge Perspective - Art, Artists, Community, Place, and Change

11. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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