

Portsmouth City Council

Public Art Policy

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy document is to formalise the city's approach to the creation and management of public art. The Public Art Policy provides the guidelines on which Portsmouth City Council's public art commissioning will be based.

1.1 The Role of Public Art

The contemporary concept of public art is much broader than it once was. It can be something to view, listen to, experience, contemplate, interact with, or participate in. Public art can be temporary or permanent. It includes visual arts (such as sculpture, murals, street art), as well as performance, music, video and digital media. It can be a soundscape, a light installation, a piece of street furniture or an architectural statement. It can be a full-scale festival or a one-to-one interaction. In essence, it is a creative work sited in the public realm.

Public art has the power to:

- Enhance the built environment creating vibrant, attractive places where people want to spend their time.
- Strengthen a location's identity by celebrating its heritage and distinct character.
- Engage and empower communities, encouraging a sense of ownership and civic pride.
- Improve outdoor spaces for leisure and relaxation, which has great benefits to physical and mental wellbeing.
- Raise the profile of a destination, providing a boost to the local economy through increased tourism.
- Stimulate growth in the creative industries by providing opportunities, employment and skills development.

In this document the term 'public art' will still refer in large part to permanent outdoor sculpture but may include any or all the various forms listed above.

1.2 Background

Portsmouth City Council has a long-standing commitment to the commissioning of public art. To date this has been achieved without an agreed policy to guide

decision-making or a strategy in place to outline how aspirations for public art in the city can be achieved.

Culture is a key focus for the city, as highlighted in The City Vision which brought together feedback from thousands of residents, private and third sector agencies to communicate what kind of city Portsmouth wants to be by 2040. The City Vision laid out six aspirations, one of which is 'A city rich in culture and creativity'. Arts Council England has identified Portsmouth as a 'priority place' and among other projects in the city committed to £62,000 of funding towards public art on Southsea Seafront

The redevelopment of Southsea Seafront through the Southsea Coastal Scheme has created new promenades and public spaces, providing an exciting opportunity to incorporate sculpture and artistic interventions into the area, which is the largest leisure space in the city and a major draw for visitors. Portsmouth City Council created the post of Seafront Art Programme Officer and allocated capital funds to the project, illustrating its commitment to bringing high quality public art to the city. Developing a public art programme for the Southsea Coastal Scheme highlighted the need for the council to have a robust policy in place. The work so far on the Seafront Arts Programme, which has involved consultation with numerous artists and stakeholders, has helped inform the guidance laid out in this policy.

Arts Council England and Aspex Visual Arts Trust were consulted on the writing of this policy. Both parties have endorsed this document.

1.3 Policy objectives

- To outline the process for the selection and commissioning of public art.
- To outline the processes for monitoring and maintaining the city's collection of public art.
- To provide a mechanism to ensure public art in the city is good quality, suitable and relevant.

2. Delivery

2.1 Governance

Establishing a steering group for the Seafront Arts Programme has been key in the development of public art projects to enhance the Southsea Coastal Scheme. Having a steering group ensures transparency in the process of developing and selecting new work. It brings together stakeholders with a wealth of relevant experience who guide decision-making and bring their own points view to the

discussion. The Seafront Arts Programme Steering Group is made up of individuals from the city's arts organisations - Aspex Visual Arts Trust, Portsmouth Creates, Hotwalls Studios, Portsmouth Museum & Gallery and the University of Portsmouth (School of Architecture).

Going forward, the role of the Seafront Arts Programme Steering Group will be broadened to become the Public Art Steering Group, with a remit for guiding decisions related to public art across the city. The group membership could be expanded to include a wider range of voices including representatives from conservation, planning and residents groups.

The role of the Public Art Steering Group:

- The group shall meet at least three times a year. Meetings will be minuted to ensure transparency.
- The group will consider all new proposals for public art projects in the city against the criteria outlined below.
- The group will monitor and review the condition of the city's existing public art collection.
- The group will submit relevant findings and recommendations to the portfolio holder for consideration.

2.2 Existing Public Art Audit

To date the council does not hold a comprehensive record of public art in the city. A public art audit will allow council officers to:

- Take stock of what public art assets the council holds.
- Assess the condition of each asset and plan for future maintenance as required, funding permitting.
- Identify areas of the city which have low or no provision of public art.
- Gather data which will inform future public art projects.

In order to get a full picture of the city the audit should also take into account privately owned art in public spaces such as train stations and places of worship as well as key public sites such as Gunwharf Quays, Portsmouth Historic Dockyard and Court X.

The audit will then become a live document which is reviewed by the steering group and updated when new artworks are commissioned or decommissioned.

3 Commissioning

3.1 Commissioning Process

Portsmouth City Council does not allocate an annual budget for commissioning public art. Commissioning is project-based and occurs as when appropriate funds and opportunities arise.

There are three main ways that Portsmouth City Council will use to identify and appoint an artist. These are:

- Open competition
- Limited competition
- Direct invitation

Open Competition

Advertise commission through national/regional press and through local partners and arts organisations. A downloadable competition pack will be made available from the PCC website. Artists are requested to submit a statement of interest and images of relevant prior work. Artists are not requested to provide design ideas for the public art commission at this stage. From this submission, a shortlist is drawn up, with shortlisted artists asked to submit proposals for an agreed fee and/or attend an interview. Copyright of these proposals will rest with the artists.

Limited Competition

A suitable list of artists is drawn up, and all or a selection of these artists will be asked to submit either a proposal or a statement of interest, with final selection process followed as above.

Open and Limited Competition routes are preferred.

Direct Invitation

A single artist is identified and approached to deliver the project, within the constraints of the artist's brief. A direct invitation will take place if the particular artist has previously delivered an exceptional artwork/project and/or has a specific link to the location, theme or style of the project.

3.2 Criteria

Public art commissioning criteria:

Essential

- The artwork must help create a sense of place.
- The artwork must be relevant to the city and its people.
- The artwork must be achievable within the proposed budget and timescale.
- The artwork must be appropriate, safe and robust.
- The lifespan, responsibility and future maintenance for the artwork must be considered.

Points to consider

- Does the artwork celebrate a local theme or tell a local story?
- Does the artwork inspire wonder or spark joy?
- Will the process and/or final artwork engage with the community?
- Is the artwork by a local artist, an artist with links to the city, or an artist of note?
- Would the artwork attract visitors from outside the city?
- Has sustainability been factored into the process and/or final artwork?

3.3 Artist Briefs

Artist briefs should include:

- Aims and objectives of the commission.
- A timeline of selection process, key milestones and deadlines.
- Appointment method - open competition, limited competition, direct invitation.
- Criteria for selection, who is part of project group, who is key contact person
- Context of the site/location - history, maps, drawings, photos
- Practical issues around site - access, health and safety, insurance
- Role and responsibility of the artist
- Type of art envisaged - scale/materials
- What pre-preparation is needed
- Budget
- Public consultation - how much, what form and who is involved
- Permissions, copyright, clarification of ownership of work
- Maintenance and decommissioning
- Launch/celebration

3.4 Public Consultation

Art is subjective and public art can be a divisive topic, particularly when paid for with public money. It is essential that plans for public art projects are well communicated to ensure the public have understanding, appreciation and ultimately support for a project.

Each project will have different aims and objectives. Artists have different approaches to creating work. There are a number of ways that the public can be consulted or engaged in the creation of public art:

- Early engagement using public ideas to inform the initial artists brief.
- Community engagement between the artist and the public as part of the process for creating the artwork.
- Competition-based artwork selection by the public from a shortlist of proposals.

For public art commissions with a larger budget, a competition-based public selection is favoured as it puts the ultimate decision in the hands of local people. Selection will be from a shortlist of artists selected by the Public Art Steering Group.

3.5 Gifts, Acquisitions and Proposals

From time to time the council will receive proposals for new public artwork to be created in the city or for an artwork to be purchased by or gifted to the city. Proposals may come direct from an artist or could come via an arts organisation, arts producer, a resident or a council member. While enhancing the public realm and adding to the city's collection of public art is of course encouraged, it is essential that any proposal is carefully considered against the city's commissioning criteria outlined in this document and against the objectives of the Public Art Policy. It is the role of the Public Art Steering Group to rigorously review any proposals and to advise the relevant portfolio holder on their recommendations.

4. Management

4.1 Fair Pay

Portsmouth City Council is committed to paying artists fairly for their time. Artist briefs should be costed appropriately against the industry standard pay outlined by the 'a-n' artists' network (see appendix 1).

4.2 Maintenance

Art in the public realm is vulnerable to damage from general wear, exposure to the elements and vandalism.

The Public Art Audit should record the condition of all council owned artworks. It is important that this is reviewed and updated regularly to allow for any changes in condition to be monitored.

Work should be as durable and as low maintenance as possible to minimise the future cost to the council and materials used must reflect the environment.

Commissions should include a costed maintenance schedule from artists, along with specified finishes, coatings, and fixings. It is the responsibility of each brief

and commission to ensure that any special maintenance requirements are detailed and can be met before commissioning goes ahead. It is important to determine the eventual owner of the work when determining maintenance and who's responsibility it will be to carry out maintenance for the lifespan of the work.

5. Decommissioning

Portsmouth City Council has a responsibility to ensure that the artworks on display in the public realm are well presented, appropriately maintained and safe. The decommissioning (removal) of an artwork may be necessary for a variety of reasons:

- The artwork is intended to be temporary and has reached the end of its lifespan, which will have been agreed at the point of commission.
- The artwork is damaged or has degraded and the cost of repair is prohibitive.
- The artwork is no longer relevant to the location or audience.

Decisions to decommission artworks will be made by Members, following review and advice from the Public Art Steering Group. Decisions will not be made with the principal aim of generating funds. Any monies received by Portsmouth City Council from the decommissioning of artworks will be ringfenced for the maintenance of existing artworks or the commissioning of new public art.

5.1 Decommissioning Process

It must first be established if Portsmouth City Council is legally able to decommission the artwork. If the artwork was acquired with the aid of external funding it must be established if any conditions attached to the grant will impact on decommissioning. Unless contractually required, the council is under no obligation to replace decommissioned artworks. Replacement is unlikely to be a preferred option.

Public art has an important place in the memories and social history of the city. The city museum must be consulted in the case of any artwork due for potential decommissioning which could be accessioned into the city's museum collection.

Full records will be kept of all such decisions on decommissioning in accordance with Portsmouth City Council's document retention policy.

Options for decommissioning artwork in order of preference:

- Relocation within the city
- Accession into the city museum's art or local history collection.

- Gift or sale back to the artist
- Gift, sale or exchange with another local authority or public body
- Sale to a private buyer
- Destruction (only in the case of an item too badly damaged, deteriorated, or can't be removed intact from location, and cannot be decommissioned by any other means).

Where possible, prior to removal, Portsmouth City Council will notify the artist and discuss plans with them. Local ward councillors and relevant service staff will also be communicated with. In some instances, there will be additional costs to make good the site where the piece was sited. These costs, and budgets to cover them, must be agreed prior to decommissioning, unless pressing health and safety issues require urgent removal.

In the case of an artwork which is incorporated into the fabric of a building, this will be the responsibility of the landlord and is likely to be required if a building is to be remodelled, replaced, or removed. This is to be managed through the planning process. The preservation of public artwork incorporated in buildings that are to be remodelled, replaced, or removed is not covered by this process. Please refer to the Maintenance provision and any appropriate planning or conservation requirements.

5.2 Decommissioning for new Artworks

As referenced above (point 3.3), decommissioning must be reflected in all future artists' briefs and contracts so that artists are aware that their work may be subject to decommissioning after an appropriate period of time.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1. a-n Artists Network. Guidance on fees and day rates for visual artists