



Overview and Scrutiny Committee Briefing Paper

Subject: Public Art

Director: Executive Director: Graeme Kane - Chief Operating Officer

Officer Responsible: Nicola Riley - Assistant Director: Wellbeing

Background and Reason for Briefing Note	To inform members of the role of the district council in relation to public art
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From the introduction of 'Percent for Art' policies in the mid 1990's, councils have sought to make public art a requirement of new developments. Cherwell District Council has good track record of securing developer contributions towards the installation of public art across the area. The imminent local plan review will provide an opportunity to update the Public art policy and strategy from 2007.

Public Art need not be too formal, monumental or object-based.

- It can be permanent or temporary.
- It can extend the fine arts of drawing, painting and sculpture into new formats and new locations.
- It can incorporate text, craft, applied art and design, photography, print, moving image, computer generated images, projection, live art, installation and performance, light, sound and music.
- It can be integral to landscape design. It can make places more legible and accessible. It can offer opportunities for play.
- It may refer to our heritage or celebrate the future, highlight specific areas and issues or be conceptual.
- In whatever form, public art has one consistent quality: it is site-specific and relates to the context or use of a site or location within the public realm.

Public Art is recognised as important to developing the cultural identity of Cherwell and creating distinction and character in the built environment.

It can also offer an opportunity to engage with local communities and enabling an increased sense of ownership.

For developers, public art can enrich and support high quality design, develop identity and uniqueness for new developments and offer marketing opportunities.



Rodney Harris brick chesterfields and wallpaper Pioneer square, Bicester



Rob Turner mosaic panels inserted in pavement at Kingsmere, Bicester



Diane Gorvin and Phil Bews – 'Settlement' sculpture Southham Road, Banbury (Bellway)



Bews and Gorvin have also made artwork for Pioneer square based on the Crow



Tony Davies - Rosie the Elephant Kidlington



Paul Margetts - The Dancer Hanwell fields



Developers can choose to commission an artist directly and in these instances Cherwell arts team will have the approval prerogatives for the installation in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing.

More frequently, once the contribution is secured, the district councils arts team follow a well tried and tested route to identify the opportunity, engage an artist, with the sign off from the Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, and see the project through to completion.

The Council encourages community involvement in the development of public art programmes to encourage a sense of ownership of the scheme. Again, the nature of such involvement will vary from site to site, commission to commission.

It need not be formal consultation, but it should at a minimum, seek to uncover the local community's relationship to the site and its significance. Ideally, it should be a dialogue that informs the development of the commission and informs the local community about it.

This is a challenge for new housing developments as the community is yet to be established and so the timing of public art schemes in the life of the planning and delivery of a development must also be considered.

The current process can be summed up with the diagram below



Engaging local communities

A public art panel can be a useful addition to the process, especially where the community has yet to move on site and the sum established for public art is over £50k ; the composition of the panel changes from commission to commission but membership would always include the Portfolio Holder, ward member representation, and local stakeholders.



The next iteration of the Local Plan will necessitate a further iteration of the public art policy and strategy to ensure that the council continues to achieve public art contributions from developers.

Completed by: Nicola Riley

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