

Cheltenham Borough Council
Cabinet – 5th December
Public Art strategy

Accountable member	Councillor Flo Clucas, Cabinet Member Healthy Lifestyles
Accountable officer	Director Planning
Ward(s) affected	All
Key Decision	Yes
Executive summary	The Draft Cheltenham Public Art Strategy has been produced to support the delivery of the Corporate Strategy 2017-18 and Place Making. Current resources and skills are not available in the council to deliver the action plan set out in the Public Art Strategy. A public space curator is essential to enable the strategy to be realised.
Recommendations	To support the action plan set out in the Public Art Strategy including investigations into the creation of a public space curator post, working with Cheltenham Trust to consider options for funding of that post.

Financial implications	Investigations into funding a public space curator can be carried out within existing resources. Other elements of the strategy depend on this post and are to be funded from S106 support and match funding so there are no financial implications at this stage Contact officer: keith.saunders@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 264124.
Legal implications	The Public Art Strategy Action Plan presumes a collaborative approach between the council and the Cheltenham Trust; in this respect the management agreement between the council and the Trust describes the role the Trust is expected to play in ‘developing and implementing strategies in leisure, culture and tourism’ which include the implementation of CBC led town strategies and taking a ‘significant and active role appropriate to the activity concerned, potentially taking ownership of subsidiary activities’. The investigations in to the creation of a public space curator post will need to consider the employment aspects including how the respective obligations of the post holder to the council and the Trust will be structured and implemented. Contact officer: peter.lewis@tewkesbury.gov.uk,

HR implications (including learning and organisational development)	<p>There are no current direct HR implications identified in the report, however, the need to investigate appointing a Public Space Curator to deliver the action plan is detailed and will have HR implications going forward if approved as the post holder would be accountable to Cheltenham Borough Council in governance terms.</p> <p>Contact officer: carmel.togher@cheltenham.gov.uk, 01242 775215</p>
Key risks	<p>Please see Appendix 1.</p>
Corporate and community plan Implications	<p>Should Cabinet endorse this approach to public art it will support a wide range of the corporate outcomes, in particular improving Cheltenham's environmental quality and heritage is protected, maintained and enhanced and sustaining and growing Cheltenham's economic and cultural vitality</p>
Environmental and climate change implications	<p>The environmental and climate change implication will be considered as part of individual commissions</p>
Property/Asset Implications	<p>There is currently no proposal that will impact on properties under CBC's direct control. Any future requirement for space will need to be balanced against commercial opportunities.</p> <p>Contact officer: David Roberts@cheltenham.gov.uk</p>

1. Background

- 1.1 In March 2016 a Cabinet Member Decision was made to commission a specialist consultant to produce a Public Art Strategy. This decision was informed by a review of the existing strategy by the Public Art Panel who concluded that strategy review was essential in order to deliver public art satisfactorily and effectively within the borough. Commissioning a specialist consultant was considered essential because expert knowledge was required in order to understand the optimum methods of strategic delivery, fund raising and best practice.
- 1.2 Ginkgo Projects Ltd, a specialist consultant was commissioned and a series of stakeholder engagements took place with Councillors, planners, Gloucestershire County Highways, Civic Society, Public art panel, The Cheltenham Trust, community groups and other organisations.
- 1.3 Cheltenham has a strong asset base of traditional public art and a good quality of public realm that attracts residents and visitors alike. Equally there is a solid input from the arts and culture sector in engaging artists to work with people in public spaces and creating interest for tourism and residents through its exciting festivals and other cultural facilities, galleries, theatres and venues.
- 1.4 The majority of public art commissions are currently secured through developer contributions via Section 106 agreements or through planning conditions. This means funding is generally ad hoc and does not easily enable a coherent strategy to be developed, leading to opportunistic commissioning which has tended to lean towards a traditional range of styles and media. Alongside the type and style of public art the maintenance and therefore quality of public art assets is currently variable. Cheltenham is not unusual and other places across the UK face the same issue.
- 1.5 Public art is a driver of economic and cultural success – currently it appears only as a backdrop to the contemporary culture that Cheltenham is well known for: it should be positively enhancing the offer of our high quality museums, galleries, theatres, festivals and historic environment at an international level.
- 1.6 There is a real opportunity, taking the lead from the Cheltenham Place Strategy to reflect the historical context of the town, but use public art to deliver messages that are relevant to today's societal issues. Public art can be used to reach out to all sectors of the community, supporting well-being, sense of place, aspiration and ambition and community cohesion. The action plan supporting the public art strategy identifies 5 research strands that demonstrate the potential public art for Cheltenham's future. These are;
 1. Health and wellbeing
 2. Women and Young People
 3. Homes and housing
 4. 21st century cultural tourist
 5. Creative campus
- 1.7 All of these priorities are relevant both to the core values of Cheltenham, but also to the changing dynamics brought about through growth of the town, changes in demographics and the populations, impacts of deprivation, social justice, pressures and opportunities for young people and the need for key messages to engage and inspire success and confidence in young women. There are opportunities to heighten the visibility of these issues and public art with links to forthcoming local, national and international events, for example 100 year since women were able

to vote in 2018.

2. Reasons for recommendations

2.1 To support the action plan set out in the Public Art Strategy

2.1.1 The current Public Art Strategy is no longer fit for purpose and is not in line with best practice. Cheltenham is already a fascinating and attractive place whose well-known stories are told through some of its great art in public places. However there is so much more that could be achieved for the benefit of residents and visitors, culturally, socially, environmentally and economically through a joined up strategic approach that brings together culture, planning, education, health, environment, economic development and communities. Public art development is a critical component of providing cultural density and identity

2.1.2 Strategic priorities for public art development have been identified through interviews and workshops with a wide range of stakeholders. These priorities include:

- Strengthening identity and a sense of place – making people see Cheltenham differently and developing health and education as a key part of this identity. It was considered that the public art strategy should reinforce the history of the town and that health and education is part of the DNA of Cheltenham.
- Supporting local creativity – creating a culture of allowing artists and creatives to experiment and do new things without unnecessary obstruction.
- Community engagement – there needs to be more input from the grassroots and more projects that engage with social and economic deprivation such as engagement in developing briefs, ideas and selecting artists.

2.1.3 The workshops also identified that art in public spaces in Cheltenham is created through two main routes,

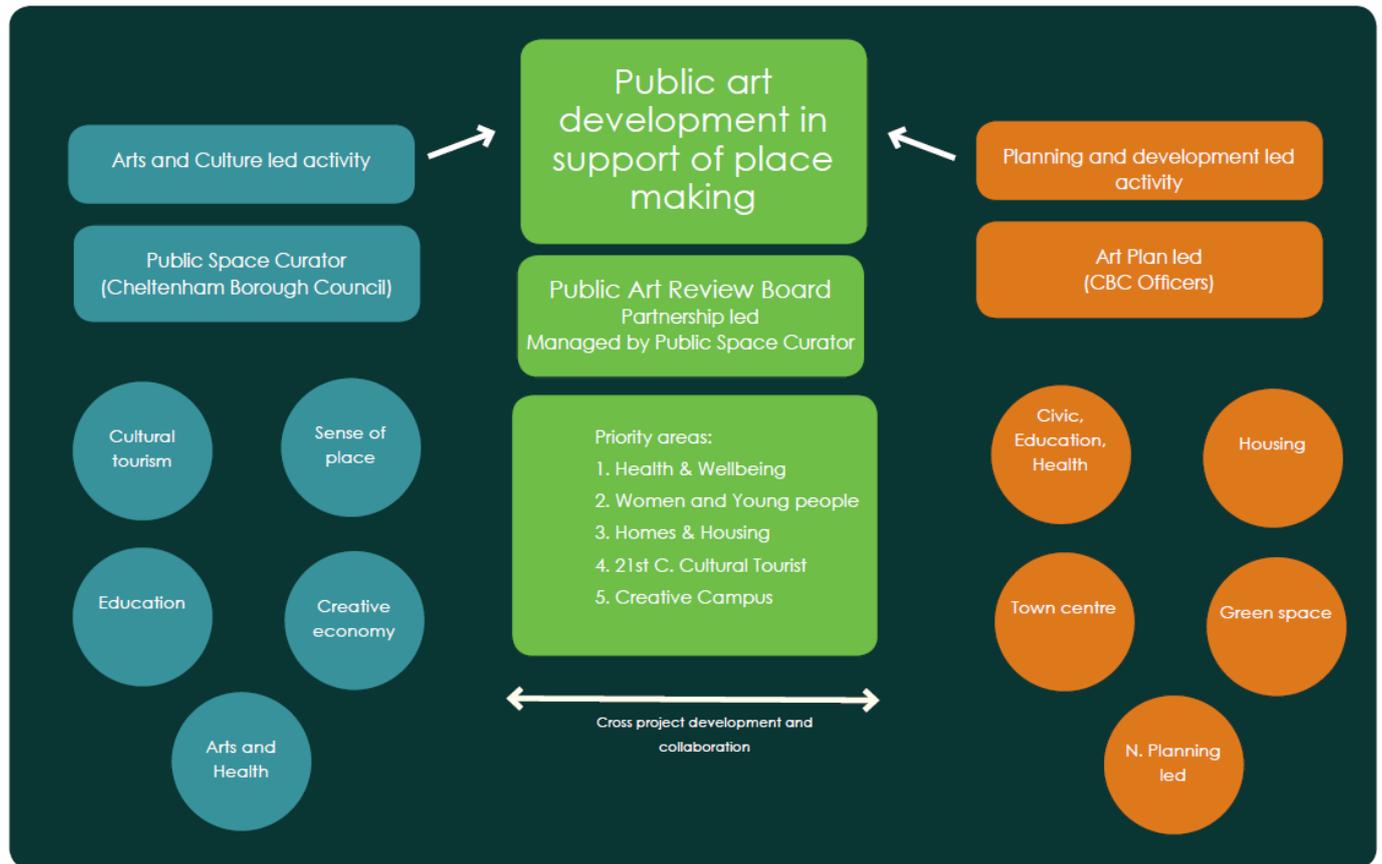
1. the planning process (development led) and
2. through cultural agencies (arts-led).

2.1.4 When created by the planning process and funded by developers public art is usually created in an organic way, as investment becomes available and sites start to be developed. Public art in Cheltenham has therefore resulted in a series of isolated projects with little or no strategic relationship between them. Equally culturally led art in public space is created in response to the objectives of cultural organisations, such as audience development or creative education, with little reference to wider social, economic or environmental goals.

2.1.5 The thrust of the action plan set out in the Public Art Strategy is to join up planning-led and arts-led approaches that address the strategic priorities of identity and place, local creativity and community engagement. This can be achieved by:

- setting out best practice for the commissioning of public art, not to restrict artistic vision but to enhance its transformative power.
- improving the infrastructure for public art delivery- opportunities for exchange, collaboration and communication between development-led and arts-led partners.
- taking a pro-active approach to demonstrating potential benefits through innovative exemplar projects and action research which target strategic areas – health, education, new housing, neighbourhood planning, town centre improvement (retail and leisure), cultural tourism and enhancing green space.

2.1.6 The action plan recommends a programme led approach formed by a public space curator to develop a coherent programme of commissioning that links arts led and planning led initiatives as below:



2.2 To support investigations into a public space curator post

2.2.1 Current resources and skills are not available in the council to deliver the action plan set out in the public art strategy. This post is essential to enable the strategy to be realised.

2.2.2 The proposed Public Space Curator post is proposed as a 3 year part time role (3 days a week £18,000 p.a pro rata). The Arts Council England has expressed interest in receiving a 50% or greater match funding bid to support post. This role will be key in delivering the recommendations highlighted in these development strands: Public Art Panel, support for planners & developers, neighbourhood planning, planning led projects, arts-led public art programme. For the role to be successful there will need to be close collaboration between the Council and Cheltenham Trust, enabling the exchange of knowledge and skills across the relevant teams and building in more robust engagement on a coherent approach to the delivery of public art.

3. Alternative options considered

3.1 No other options have been considered for this recommendation

4. Consultation and feedback

4.1 This strategy was developed following workshops with Councillors, planners, Gloucestershire County Highways, Civic Society, Public Art panel, The Cheltenham Trust, community groups and other organisations.

5. Performance management –monitoring and review

5.1 Performance monitoring and review is imbedded in the role of the Public Space Curator and the Public Art Review Board.

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Appendices	1. Risk Assessment
Background information	1. Public Art Strategy

The risk				Original risk score (impact x likelihood)			Managing risk				
Risk ref.	Risk description	Risk Owner	Date raised	Impact 1-5	Likelihood 1-6	Score	Control	Action	Deadline	Responsible officer	Transferred to risk register
1	If a Public art curator post is not investigated there is potential capacity risk in terms of the delivery of existing S.106 and future contributions and conditions	TC	Sept 2017	3	3	9	Reduce	To support investigations into a Public space curator post	March 2018	TC	divisional
2	If the Public art strategy is not endorsed there is potential reputational risk of poor quality place making	TC	Sept 2017	3	3	9	Reduce	To support the approach set out in the Public art strategy	2018	TC	divisional
<p>Explanatory notes</p> <p>Impact – an assessment of the impact if the risk occurs on a scale of 1-5 (1 being least impact and 5 being major or critical)</p> <p>Likelihood – how likely is it that the risk will occur on a scale of 1-6 (1 being almost impossible, 2 is very low, 3 is low, 4 significant, 5 high and 6 a very high probability)</p> <p>Control - Either: Reduce / Accept / Transfer to 3rd party / Close</p>											