

Public Art Strategy 2006 – 2011

1.0 Public Art in Milton Keynes

Public Art engages people in different ways and contributes significantly to making Milton Keynes distinctive, design focused and desirable. Public Art adds soul, energy and dynamism, making Milton Keynes an emotionally and visually stimulating place to live, work and visit.

Public Art can be described as any work of visual art, craft or design produced by an artist, designer or maker and sited in a location that is freely accessible to the public. The term Public Art incorporates artist involvement in a wide range of architectural, urban design, environmental, social and cultural projects.

2.0 Research informing the Public Art Strategy

The Public Art Strategy for Milton Keynes provides direction from 2006 – 2012. The Strategy includes a 5-year plan.

The strategy has been directly informed by recent primary research commissioned by Central Milton Keynes Project Team and Milton Keynes Council. This research is:

- Public Art Strategy Review by Working P'Arts, 2005
- Public Art Street Survey in Milton Keynes by amh, 2006

Research has identified three main drivers for the development of the Public Art Strategy. These are:

- Reputation
- Public Opinion
- Growth

Public engagement in the public art projects and programmes has emerged in the primary research as an important element of the strategy.

3.0 Public Art Statement and Objectives

Public Art Development is about inviting *“the vision, creativity and skills of artists, to engage people freely with place in a well considered way”*. This is demonstrated through the projects outlined in the Strategy.

The projects address the following objectives:

Objective 1 Artists- To create opportunities to attract the best artists

Objective 2 Collection - To interpret and care for Public Art and build on success

Objective 3 Community - To create places that reflect pride and develop identity

Objective 4 Engagement - To develop creative interactions between art, place and people

Objective 5 Guidance - To provide advice guidance and inspiration for Public Art

4.0 Delivery of the Projects

The strategy recommends best practise and common approach to Public Art Development across the Borough. It also provides guidance on how communities can creatively engage in existing and future Public Art. The delivery of the Public Art Strategy will be the responsibility of the Public Art Unit, a partnership funded resource that forms part of the Culture Team.

5.0 Process

Stage 1: October 2005 – July 2006

The Public Art Strategy has been developed with the support of a steering group of key stakeholders and partners.

Stage 2: Public Consultation 12 July – 19 September 2006

A 10-week period of consultation for the Public Art Strategy. The Public Art Unit are leading this process and during this time comments and feedback have been invited through workshops, presentations, one to one meetings and remotely via the website.

Additionally participants have been invited to:

- Access the strategy on line and from all local libraries
- Comment directly on the strategy document via an e-mail response form.
- View a specifically commissioned short artist film which visualises the Public Art Strategy

Stage 3 – Responding to feedback:

Feedback has informed the final draft of the strategy this includes:

Support for:

- Ways in which the public art strategy has responded to public opinion
- Creative approaches to public engagement and consultation
- Public Art film and activity workshops as a form of engagement and interest.
- Public ambition for large-scale, high impact public artworks
- Public art being more interactive and ambitious
- Doing something to that people will be proud of and to shout about.
- Funding from growth going into something which will be of interest and of benefit to the people of Milton Keynes short and long-term (particularly in CMK which is seen to benefit all).
- Artist and organisation support for the content of the strategy and opportunities for them to deliver it.
- Partner 'buy-in' to process and recommended best practice
- The projects – particularly Station Square annual commissions which was used as a case study

Need for:

- More opportunities for artists interested in developing skills in public art, but lacking in experience (possible mentorship programme).
- Developing a database of artists who are experienced in public art for selection and recruitment purposes, one that can be a shared resource.
- Identifying opportunities for communities who will not benefit directly from the funding received through growth.
- Clarity on how other art-forms can be integrated with the 'visual art' defined in the strategy as being the main art form for public art.
- Funding for small-scale artists initiatives.
- Further clarity on the collections policy and management
- More affordable artists studios within a creative environment that will encourage creative collaboration, cross-over and 'cool-mk'.
- Further clarity is required on the distribution of developer funding to projects (mainly Tariff).
- Demonstrating by doing! – to satisfy public expectation, interest and ambition.

- More information in the introduction to the strategy on how to use the content e.g. from an artists or developers point of view
- Clarity on how new and independent projects which emerge over the next 5 years can be supported by the Public Art Unit

6.0 More information:

The Public Art Strategy and full Public Art Street Survey is available on;
www.culturemk.org and www.mkweb.co.uk