



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMISSION  
16 September 2008**

# ITEM 9a

Report of the Corporate Director of  
Regeneration and Community

## Derby's Public Art Strategy and Priorities

### SUMMARY

- 1.1 The City Council last published a Public Art Strategy in 2002. This marked an awakening of interest in public art installations across the city and significant progress has been made since that time, both in the city centre and in the neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 Since 2002 the pace of change in the city has quickened significantly and a large number of major development projects have either been completed or are coming on stream. The fast changing environment rendered our existing Public Art Strategy out of date in three important respects:
  - There is a new sense of ambition in the city about what public art can deliver in terms of the celebration of Derby's culture, heritage, landscapes and habitats.
  - Private developers are beginning to realise that the inclusion of public art in major projects can greatly improve the public acceptability of their development and can improve the saleability of their finished product
  - Work is well advanced on a Supplementary Planning Document which will clarify obligations within Section 106 Agreements

### RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the Public Art Strategy 2008.
- 2.2 To accept that private and public sector developers will be encouraged in future to consider public art as part of the design process, with particular reference to the five themes outlined in our Strategy.
- 2.3 To approve a new drive to ensure the public art obligations are introduced in all relevant negotiations with developers.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Strategy embodies a new sense of ambition for the articulation of Derby's character and identity through major pieces of public art.
- 3.2 The themes chosen in the Strategy are broad enough to allow for artistic licence and interpretation, but are thoroughly grounded in the identity and special heritage of Derby and its region.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Everyone understands that sculpture in public spaces is a form of public art. But public art goes far beyond this in fulfilling its brief to bring the arts into everyone's lives. Public art essentially is the presentation of art outside the traditional environments of art galleries and exhibition spaces. It can take the form of architecture, lighting, public performances, moving images, photography, sound and craft.
- 4.2 Public art can take an ordinary environment and make it stimulating and interesting. The Council's Environment Overview and Scrutiny Commission discovered examples in Cardiff, Birmingham and Manchester during the work on its Topic Review in 2007. Public art can interpret the history and identity of a city, and stimulate visitors, as it has done in Morecambe.
- 4.3 Public art can be challenging, but sometimes the boldest statements, for instance the Angel of the North, have been the most successful in the long run. Art is always the expression of an individual artist's vision: it can take courage to back that vision against some initial public hostility.
- 4.4 Since 2002 the City Council has set up a mechanism for planning and monitoring major public art installations across the city. This is summarised in the attached Action Plan. A new officer working group, calling itself the Public Art Coordination Group brings together specialists in art, planning, culture, urban design, heritage and finance in order to identify and follow up on every opportunity for productive work in this field. The Cabinet has appointed a champion for public art, Councillor Joe Naitta, Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture. He is supported by a Public Art Steering Group which draws its members from both the academic and entrepreneurial communities.
- 4.5 A significant presence has been authored on the City Council's website for Public Art in order to illustrate the range of high quality product already in place in Derby and to stimulate public interest in this aspect of our public realm.
- 4.6 The Public Art Coordination Group maintains a Public Art Action Plan which attempts to track and to prioritise all of the public art projects which are currently in the preparation or implementation stages.
- 4.7 The publication of the City Council's new Public Art Strategy and priorities will greatly assist the discussions which are held with developers in order to persuade them to adopt Best Practice in design.

- 4.8 The Strategy has been designed so that it will stand for many years as a statement of our approach to public art. The Action Plan will be updated continually.
- 4.9 The Public Art Strategy and Priorities documents have been closely scrutinised and consulted in the Public Art Coordination Group and the Public Art Steering Group. Further consultation on public art in Derby is planned in autumn 2008 on the basis of the Wayfinding and Public Art Masterplan, which is intended to move the strategic principles towards actual installations.
- 4.10 Consultation on public art can take place at many points along a wide spectrum: some installations are designed with very active involvement of local people. Others, often the more challenging pieces, have to be the product of one imagination. Our proposed strategy accepts this, but places that artist's work within a framework which helps to give it meaning and relevance.

#### OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 Leave the existing Public Art Strategy in place: developers and officers and Members of the City Council will lack focus in their thinking about the role and nature of public art in our public open spaces, and miss the opportunities offered by the regeneration of the city.

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**Background papers:** Environment Overview and Scrutiny Topic Report on Public Art at:  
<http://cmis.derby.gov.uk/CMISWebPublic/Binary.ashx?Document=8664>  
**List of appendices:** Appendix 1 – Implications  
Appendix 2 – Derby's Public Art Strategy  
Appendix 3 – Public Art Action Plan

<b>IMPLICATIONS</b>
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**Financial**

- 1.1 None flowing from this report. An average cost of involving an artist in the design work for a significant piece of public art starts at £30,000. In many cases this expenditure can be covered by a Section 106 Agreement between the City Council and a private developer. In those cases where a public sector developer is concerned the additional costs need to be absorbed within the total project cost.
- 1.2 The forthcoming Wayfinding and Public Art Masterplan will postulate a programme of 25 installations over the next five years. The total cost including artists' fees, fabrication, installation and interpretation is estimated at £1.9m. The fulfilment of such a programme will depend on the availability of public and private funding.

**Legal**

- 2.1 The City Council has a well established practice for negotiating Section 106 Agreements with developers. This framework is in process of being clarified with the adoption of a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

**Personnel**

- 3.1 The personnel necessary to create and monitor the Public Art Strategy and Priorities are already in place. Major public art initiatives will need additional project management inputs, and these will be identified as schemes emerge.

**Equalities Impact**

- 4.1 Aspects of public art can have an important impact on the legibility of our public spaces with particular reference to people who are visually impaired or deaf.

**Corporate objectives and priorities for change**

- 5.1
  - Making us proud of our neighbourhoods
  - Creating a 21<sup>st</sup> century city centre
  - Support everyone in learning and achieving