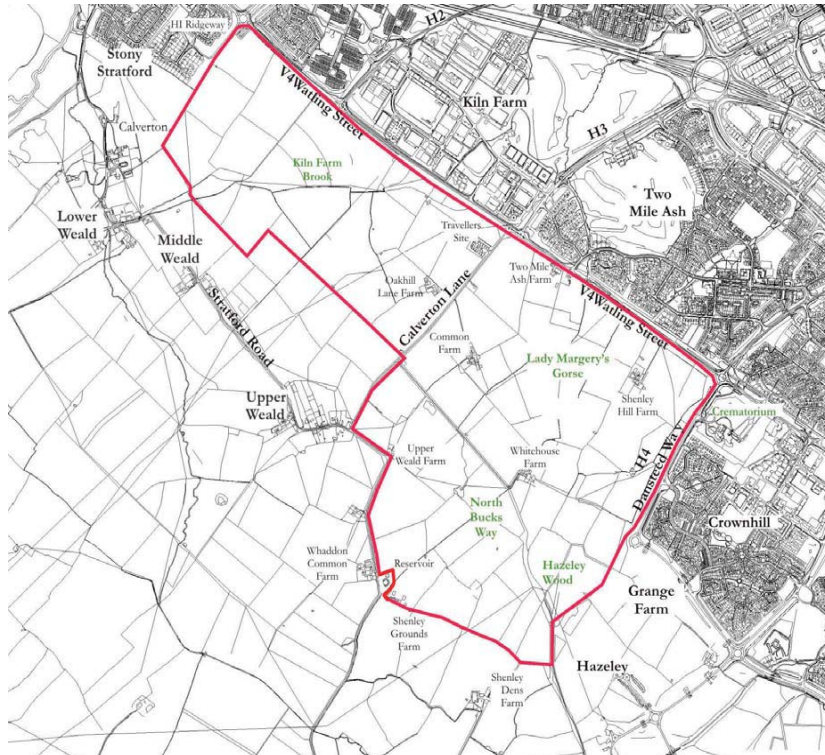


Western Expansion Area Public Art Plan



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1. Introduction

This Public Art Plan (PAP) has been written to support the practical delivery and development of public art for the Western Expansion Area of Milton Keynes.

Art Plan Methodology

This plan will inform the process for developing a full public art commissioning plan. Initial consultations and design meetings have informed the type of scheme which may be suitable but this now needs to be fully explored with wider stakeholders and made relevant to the development and community.

Definition of Public Art

In line with the Public Art Strategy for Milton Keynes 2010 -14, 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.

Most importantly the Public Art Strategy for Milton Keynes recommends that new commissions should be:

- *Artist specific*
- *Place specific*
- *People specific*

Artists are commissioned to respond to an artists brief; they are asked to develop design ideas/concepts which consider how people will engage with particular places and spaces. Upon approval of concept designs, artists are commissioned to make/install the works. Public Art projects may include temporary or permanent commissions.

Public Art in Milton Keynes engages people in different ways and contributes significantly to making different areas distinctive and

desirable. Public Art can add soul, energy and dynamism, helping to make Milton Keynes an emotionally and visually stimulating place to live, work and visit.

The term Public Art incorporates artist involvement in a wide range of architectural, urban design, environmental, social and cultural projects. This may include playground design, signage, street furniture, lighting schemes and landscape designs as well as the internal detailing of a building, its furniture, flooring or glasswork (though this is not an exclusive list). Public art can be a creative process as much as a physical artwork, however all projects and programmes should be place specific, people specific and freely accessible.

It is useful to acknowledge that the definition of public art proposed by IXIA (Public Art Think Tank / 2007) is simply:

‘a process of engaging artists’ creative ideas in the public realm.’

Art Project Mandate

In the Western Expansion Area development framework it states:

Public Art

5.13.2 The design of the scheme will be expected to incorporate public art. All too often the work of the artist is presented as an add-on rather than an integral part of the development's design. Therefore the involvement of artists at an early stage in the design process is considered important.

5.13.3 The form of the public art can be varied, and the opportunities for public art can be included into signage, street furniture, paving, building facades, lighting and sculpture. Particular emphasis will be placed on the interaction between public art, lighting and water and public art set within the key open spaces identified in the Development Framework Plan.

5.13.4 Public art will perform a critical role in the WEA community creating identity, focus, a link with the history of the site and area as well as adding to the cultural experience.

The Western Expansion Area is covered by the Milton Keynes Tariff, which secures and specifies the amount of contributions to be made by the developer for such items as Education, Health, Transport and Leisure and Community facilities, including a provision for Public Art, by way of a legally binding Section 106 Agreement.

Adhering to principles of best practice from CABI and IXIA Milton Keynes Council Public Art team have initiated the project to enable artists involvement at the early stage of the process so that they can contribute conceptually and offer a creative direction for public art development across the site.

2. Location

Milton Keynes

Milton Keynes was designated as a new town in 1967. It provides a unique urban environment with a strong sense of design and innovation, based on a grid road system mixed with large areas of green space.

Milton Keynes offers a rich mixture of popular culture and good access to the arts through its nationally recognised theatre and gallery programmes. Amongst its buildings and parks it houses the UK's largest collection of contemporary sculpture, with over 200 works of art in public places.

Western Expansion Area

The intention is to create a sustainable community comprising of approximately 6,000 houses, plus 17 hectares of employment land, primary and secondary schools, community facilities and public open space. It will have a high quality living environment for its residents, with a strong identity, activity and a sense of place. A mix of housing sizes and types will provide choice and variety.

A network of open space and high quality landscaping will create an attractive and safe environment in which to live and work. A clear and sustainable interface will be created between the urban development and the surrounding countryside.

Development will accord with the principles of high quality design and best practice to create a townscape that is rich, varied and sympathetic to its environment.

Gallagher Estates

Gallagher Estates has taken on the role of Master Developer for the Western expansion Area, providing a high level of direction and control of the development process to ensure that this new sustainable urban development delivers the 'Vision' set out in the Fairfield Development Brief. The design of the townscape, landscape, streetscape and buildings will enrich the lives of those that live in and visit the development. They are one of the largest developers in the UK promoting and developing residential and mixed use schemes, achieving the highest standards of Sustainable Urban Regeneration whilst overseeing every aspect of the process with commitment care and consistency.



Aerial photo of Western Expansion Area

3. Site features and key areas

Archaeology

Extensive archaeology has been undertaken across the development site which has revealed an interesting and rich history including evidence of Saxon, Roman and Iron Age activity. These finds offer an interesting opportunity to share the sites past with the new community. Using these finds as inspiration will help achieve the development framework statement to use public art as a way of creating identity and link people with the history of the site. Information from the archaeological investigations can be found in Appendix 1



*Excavated Iron Age Log
Ladder from Area 10*

High Street, local centres and schools

Within the new development will be schools for both primary and secondary age children, these will offer amenities for the community alongside the 2 local centres and a high street of shops. These areas are important to the development and are some of the places where the community will meet and gather on a day to day basis. These areas are near to the open spaces and offer the opportunity to explore and highlight linkages from the open to the urban with public art interventions, creating interesting and legible routes and spaces.

Open Spaces

Throughout the development there are many open spaces and play areas. The spaces are being designed to be distinctive to each other, to provide the local community with amenities such as allotments and play spaces as well as to respect and conserve existing features such as hedges and trees.

Public art can add value to these spaces and create key features within them that add to their distinctiveness but also link them through to other areas and each other.

For example in area 11 the Western Landscape Buffer has been designed to provide a viewing point across towards Calverton Church to celebrate the developments relationship with the neighbouring area.

Some of the open space areas are being funded through the tariff, including:

Area 10

- The play area only of Lady Margery's Gorse
- Wetlands Area Play
- Whitehouse Park
- Local Park 1 and 3
- Orchard Play Area
- District Park, including playing pitches and community facilities
- The Meadows Play Area

Area 11

- Local Park 4 and 5
- Western Landscape Buffer
- All Hallows Place Play Area
- District park, including playing pitches and community facilities
- Ash Hill Place Play Area

The remainder are non tariff and in addition to delivering the landscaping the landowner has also indicated a desire to commission art features in these spaces.

- Central Balancing pond
- District Park balancing pond
- North Bucks Way
- Southern Landscape Buffer
- Kiln Brook Crescent
- Brick Kiln Square
- Southern balancing pond.

Neighbouring areas

The neighbouring areas of Stony Stratford and Calverton have a rich heritage and history. There are also newer areas such as Fullers Slade, Two Mile Ash and Crownhill all with their own identity and character. The WEA will also bring new amenities to these existing communities including employment, schools and shops and so the need to link to nearby communities is important in developing the public art scheme.

4. Concept development and process

Through design meetings for open spaces and other key areas such as the high street it has been identified that public art can play a significant part in adding value, identity and uniqueness to these areas of public realm.

To establish the role and scale of these creative interventions across the site it is proposed that the following process is developed to ensure that the public art responds to people and place.

- Establish a project group of key stakeholders
- Appoint a creative facilitator and undertake a series of creative workshop to explore the themes and approach in the public art plan to inform a commissioning plan
- Draft a commissioning plan outlining the phases of delivery and associated budget allocations.
- Gain agreement and approval for the plan from the project group and implement the plan

From initial research undertaken during public consultations by Gallagher Estates there has been a preference from the public for a public art scheme which focuses on landscape and green areas, with features which are sympathetic to this. (Appendix 2) However there is also a need to consider the more urban spaces to create interest across the development.

During design meetings there has been a focus on open spaces and retail areas, using public art to make them distinctive. Celebrating and highlighting some of the original features being retained in the area such as trees, hedgerows and views, but also to relate this to the more built up and urban areas within the development.



Existing significant trees to be retained



North Bucks Way – sections will be retained within the development

4. Commissioning Plan

The workshops with stakeholders will explore the potential that the public art scheme could offer the development and new community.

The resulting commissioning plan will set out the commissioning opportunities with potential artist to deliver the commissions.

To ensure that the scheme has the best impact across the development several themes will be explored and developed, their will be early stage interventions and commissions but also events and further commissions as the new community emerges.

Themes that will be explored are:

Pre development investigations – the potential to engage an artist to map and document the landscape pre development or as the development starts to emerge from the landscape. Archaeology may form an important part of this phase and there have been extensive excavations and some significant finds that could be interesting starting points for artists including a Saxon cemetery and Iron Age log ladder.

An output of this phase could be a small multiple artwork which could be gifted to each new dwelling, or a trail engaging them with the area and its heritage.



With the Worms by John Dilnot



Limited edition products for Celebrate Swindon
by Grennan and Sperandio

Integrated artworks within the design process – there are opportunities to engage artists in the design teams and integrate artworks and design features within the open spaces and public realm. This approach can ensure that spaces are unique and have their own identity; they may offer way finding and focal points for the community. Features could draw attention to an interesting view or highlight a route through the development. There is an opportunity to make connections between open spaces and key areas such as the high street by developing themes and strands which link the areas and give legibility to spaces. The community could be encouraged to explore and see the landscape within which they live in new and different ways, discovering areas, their connections with each other and neighbouring estates.

Gallagher Estates are committed to adding value to the open spaces and in addition have indicated a desire to commission art features for non tariff funded open spaces.



Carbon Sink by Chris Drury



Finger Maze by Chris Drury



Subterranean amphitheatre by Tim Norris



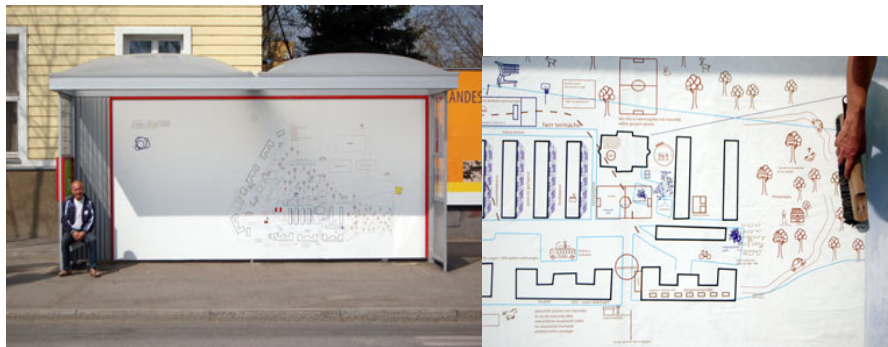
Arise by Tim Norris



Diecase matrices – town square paving scheme for Fakenham by Simon Watkinson

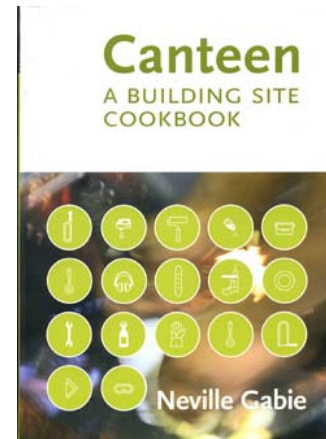


Rodney Harris, Upholstered column



Bus Stop 73a, Vienna, Austria by Michael Pinsky

Engagement and animation - interactions between artists and the emerging community is an important part of the public art process, it can help to support community development and bring people together in creative ways to explore and celebrate identity and sense of place. Artist residencies may take place with artists working in the area and leading on events and interventions, outputs will often be more ephemeral or temporary such as a publication or event but these outputs can have lasting outcomes and help to establish more regular community celebrations and interactions.



CANTEEN –by Neville Gabie
A Building Site Recipe Book was developed as part of Neville Gabie's residency during the building of Cabot Circus, Bristol. All builder onsite were invited to submit recipes which were then cooked by chefs around Bristol and served on site as an alternative lunch. The book is intended to reflect the multi-cultural team involved in a building project of this scale.

The existing Two Mile Ash Farmhouse has been identified as a potential community resource, a place where the community can come together whilst the development is being built. This offers the opportunity for artists in residence to occupy and work from the farmhouse, creating deeper and more in depth interaction with the community. The farmhouse could become a creative hub, a place where the community can engage with artist and explore in a creative way the opportunities that the new area can offer. Alongside the artist there is the potential for the community mobiliser to collaborate with and work from the farmhouse adding value to the community development

work taking place in the area. An example of a creative community house is the Blue House in Amsterdam.



*The Blue House, Ijburg, Amsterdam
Artist Jeanne van Heeswijk*

The Blue House was taken off the private housing market and designated as a space for community research, artistic production and cultural activities. Over a four year period artists, creative thinkers, architects and writers were invited to live and work in the Blue House for periods of up to six months. Invitees were commissioned to explore

one of three themes and they conducted research, produced artworks, films and publications about their activities. These outputs are a record of the project and a resource about a place and community in construction.



The Blue House Cinema

Smallest Cinema in the World by ANNIKA ERIKSSON'S and part of the portavillions project



5. Budget and timescales

The Western Expansion Area Public Art Project is funded through the Tariff, the fund for which, together with proposed art features within non tariff open space areas which are to be delivered by the developer, totals some £565,000. This collaborative approach demonstrates a commitment from the developer and Project Board Team to creating interesting spaces within this distinctive development.

The public art budget will be managed by the Project Board Team with tariff elements delivered as works in kind Gallagher Estates. Further match funding may be required as the project progresses and as such, additional funds may be sought to broaden impact and further commissioning opportunities as the project progresses.

The budget table indicates the currently suggested allocations for the commissioning themes. The budgets will need to include all associated costs in delivering the commissions comprising, project management, ongoing care and maintenance and any associated fees relating to planning approval and the like. The budget will be reviewed by the Project Boards Team on a regular basis throughout the life of the project to ensure best value is achieved.

Commissioning theme	Budget
Pre development site investigations	£75,000
Integrated artworks within the design of spaces including non tariff funded elements	£400,000
Engagement and animation	£90,000

6. Process and management

Project Management

The complete art plan will be project managed by Gallagher Estates and carried out in a manner as detailed in the Milton Keynes Public Art Strategy. Gallagher Estates may appoint a project manager to oversee the public art project.

Project Evaluation

This process is significant across each phase, and it is important that the artists in each theme collaborate fully with an evaluator. It is recommended that this takes place at the outset of each phase and is not undertaken once the project is completed.

Compliance

All artwork and design proposals have to be DDA (disability) compliant and any artist or person involved in participatory activities as part of the project must be Criminal Records Bureau checked. Due to the timescales of the overall scheme the artist will also need to respond to changes in legislation to ensure they meet current requirements. Each artwork commissioned will be required to have supporting documentation from the artist, such as structural reports, risk assessment and method statements for installation. The project group may wish to have these independently reviewed and checked before installation.

Maintenance:

For each commission a contribution for maintenance and care will be set aside and where applicable transferred to the owner or custodian of the art works. This allocation will need to be reviewed as the project ideas and artwork designs are presented to make sure it is an appropriate sum. The works will have a defined minimum life expectancy and the artists will provide care and maintenance plans for each artwork and scheme. It is important that artworks are able to be maintained easily and at low cost

Planning

The planning requirements are yet to be determined as it will be based on location, scale and the design of each artwork proposed. Planning officers will be consulted throughout to ensure the correct process is in place.

Report devised and written by:
Milton Keynes Council & Gallagher Estates

Documents Consulted:

CABE Creating Excellent Buildings – A Guide for Clients (2003)
CABE/DETR, By Design – Urban Design and the Planning System
Shaping Places: built environment design education
Milton Keynes Public Art Strategy
CABE - website
Milton Keynes Partnership - Website

All images credited to artists