

THE ALAN TUR
LAN TURING THE
PUBLIC ART CO
RT COMMISSION
MILTON KEYNE

BACKGROUND

Milton Keynes City Council and partners are working collaboratively to commission a new public artwork as a tribute to Alan Turing in Bletchley. ● Alan Mathison Turing OBE FRS was a mathematician, computer scientist, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher and theoretical biologist. Based at Bletchley Park during WWII, he played a significant part in code breaking and was influential in the development of the Turing machine, which can be considered a model of a general-purpose computer. In addition, Turing is widely considered to be the father of theoretical computer science and artificial intelligence; Turing first considered the question 'Can machines think?' in his seminal paper 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', published in 1950. ● Following a public campaign led by then British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Turing was given an official public apology on behalf of the British government in 2009, acknowledging the treatment Turing was personally subjected to, including his prosecution in 1952 for homosexual acts and subsequent hormone treatment resulting in chemical castration – which was offered as an alternative to a prison sentence. The terms 'Alan Turing law' is now used to informally refer to a UK law passed in 2017, which

retrospectively pardoned men cautioned or convicted under historical legislation that outlawed homosexual acts. ● The ambition to create a new public artwork as a tribute to Alan Turing has been adopted within the 2022/23 Milton Keynes City Council Plan. ● Aspirations and ambitions for this commission have been informed by feedback and observations made during consultation for the successful Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Towns Deal application MK Bletchley Fenny Stratford TIP Section ([Appendix 1 ↗](#)) and additional community consultation, which gathered together a cohort of representatives from the local community to explore aspects of Turing's story – full report and recommendations ([Appendix 2 ↗](#)). ● A Steering Group of stakeholders and partners has been established to develop and deliver the commission, which includes the Chair of the Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Towns Deal Board, Chief Executive of Bletchley Park, Clerk of West Bletchley Council, Clerk of Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council, and a representative from MKCC Urban Design. Additional support, guidance and expertise from Cllr Ed Hume, representatives from Q Alliance, Kay Watson, Head of Arts Technologies, Serpentine Gallery and Executive Producer and Curator, Tony Guillan form part of a commission Advisory Board. ●

CONTEXT - MILTON KEYNES

Conceived in 1967, Milton Keynes is the most ambitious social project ever to be realised in the UK. Guided by a set of founding utopian principles: the very best place to live; freedom of choice; ease of movement; everyone welcome; and jobs for all – the city is one of the world’s most successful new towns. Milton Keynes has a current population of 267,000 and by 2050 the population of the city and surrounding areas will be at least 400,000. ● Milton Keynes was awarded city status as part of Her Late Majesty’s Platinum Jubilee Celebrations. This city has one of the fastest growing economies in the UK, with an exceptionally high number of business start-ups, particularly within the digital and high-tech arenas. The city is a major centre of the UK’s high-tech manufacturing and research industries. Other major industries include agriculture, tourism, construction, entertainment, education, retail and finance. ● Milton Keynes’ has a vibrant, innovative and pioneering cultural offer where public art plays an important role. Public art became an important part of the city’s formation and communities were given the opportunity to work hand-in-hand with artists, creating artworks that would define MK’s identity and sense of place. The city now boasts

over 250 artworks within the public realm and is committed to an ongoing programme of new commissions, where artists and creative practitioners are invited to respond to people, place and context. ●

CONTEXT - BLETCHLEY AND FENNY STRATFORD

Bletchley known as the ‘home of the codebreakers’ and is first recorded as Blechelai back in the 12th century. The area is now served by two parish Councils – West Bletchley Council, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council and has a rich heritage. ● The heart of Bletchley is its shopping area of Queensway, named after Queen Elizabeth II, when she visited Bletchley in 1966. ● Bletchley and Fenny Stratford are connected by Watling Street, an old Roman Road, one of the most important travelling routes from London to the north and the Grand Union Canal passes to the south, Fenny Lock in Fenny Stratford is the smallest canal lock in the country. ● Bletchley and Fenny Stratford was recently awarded £22.7 million Government investment as part of the Governments Towns Deal ([Groundbreaking Bletchley and Fenny Town Deal ↗](#)). ● This investment will result in the regeneration of Queensway, creating improved Redway links to the town centre (off-road walking and cycling

network), and the delivery of a new Institute of Technology based at Milton Keynes College. Other projects include improvements at Bletchley Park, including a new auditorium and the full rollout of fibre connectivity. ●

CONTEXT - BLETCHLEY PARK

Once a top-secret home to the WWII codebreakers, Bletchley Park is now a world class museum and heritage attraction open daily, managed by the Bletchley Park Trust. Funded by ticket income and charitable donations, Bletchley Park welcomes over 250,000 visitors a year. Its mission is to attract, engage and educate people from all over the world in order to inspire them with Bletchley Park's crucial role in WWII. ● In November 2023, Bletchley Park will host a global AI summit bringing together world leaders, government officials, AI companies and researchers to consider the risks and development of AI technologies. ●

www.bletchleypark.com ↗

ALAN TURING

(23 JUNE 1912 - 7 JUNE 1954)

During WWII, Alan Turing was a leading participant in the breaking of German ciphers at Bletchley Park. The historian and wartime codebreaker Asa Briggs has said, "You needed exceptional talent, you needed genius at Bletchley and Turing was that genius" Alan Mathison. Turing OBE FRS was a mathematician, computer scientist, logician, cryptanalyst, philosopher and theoretical biologist. Based at Bletchley Park during WWII, he played a significant part in code breaking and was influential in the development of the Turing machine, which can be considered a model of a general-purpose computer. In addition, Turing is widely considered to be the father of theoretical computer science and artificial intelligence; Turing first considered the question "Can machines think?" in his seminal paper 'Computing Machinery and Intelligence', published in 1950. ● Following a public campaign led by then British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Turing was given an official public apology on behalf of the British government in 2009, acknowledging the treatment Turing was personally subjected to, including his prosecution in 1952 for homosexual acts and subsequent hormone treatment - which was offered as

an alternative to a prison sentence. The terms ‘Alan Turing law’ is now used to informally to refer to a UK law passed in 2017, which retrospectively pardoned men cautioned or convicted under historical legislation that outlawed homosexual acts. ●

[Find out more ↗](#)

THE COMMISSION

Milton Keynes City Council (MKCC) are looking to appoint an experienced artist, creative practitioner or collaborative practice to develop and deliver a new public art commission in Bletchley, Milton Keynes.

● Through this commission, it is essential that the appointed practitioner explores, reveals and spotlights the various aspects of Alan Turing’s story; creatively and innovatively responding to different facets with sensitivity, integrity and empathy, in order to reach and engage a wide variety of audiences. ● Through this commissioning process, MKCC are keen to demonstrate the value that artists and creative practitioners can bring to public spaces, and evidence how creative interventions can enhance the lived experience through the meaningful engagement of communities with local stories. ●

Aims for this commission can be summarised as:

- To develop and deliver a permanent public art commission, which tells the story of Alan Turing and is specific to Bletchley as a place and its community. ●
- To work closely with commissioning partners and community in the development of commission ideas, being sensitive to the diversity and geography of the local community and other target audience groups. ●
- To build upon the first stage of community consultation (Community Codebreakers – [Appendix 2 ↗](#)) and continue to develop and build relationships with the project partners, Community Codebreakers, schools and businesses in Bletchley. ●
- Respond to the ideas, themes, suggestions and aspirations from the first stage of community consultation (full report in [Appendix 2 ↗](#)). ●
- To invest time and resource in engaging the community in the process and ensure this informs the commission’s development and delivery. ●

To work collaboratively and respectfully within the existing public realm, taking into consideration any existing constraints, sensitivities and longer-term

development plans, as part of the Towns Deal programme of public realm improvements. ● Consideration should be given to environmental impact of the commission.

ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

In November 2022, a community consultation and engagement project was undertaken to explore Alan Turing's story and what this means to the community in Bletchley. This work was led by external facilitators, who developed a process which included:

- OUTREACH: Extensive connections across the community to ensure a broad range of people who live, work, study and play in Bletchley & Fenny Stratford felt engaged in the process. ●
- ENIGMA DAY: An in person gathering with cultural practitioners and the community to develop ideas around the brief. This was followed by a further online feedback session. ●
- REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS: A summary of the outcomes of all the sessions with the local community to support the creation of a commission brief, and to act as a resource for the selected artist/creative practitioner (Appendix 2 ↗). ●

Selected ideas, themes and comments from the report include:

- Acknowledge Turing's work as a foundation for current technological advancements. ●
- The collective contribution & teamwork made by all the workers at Bletchley Park and the surrounding community. ●
- It is important to represent the diversity & changing communities of Bletchley – reflecting Turing's personal story. ●
- Silence and secrets – echoing Turing and other workers at Bletchley Park who signed the Official Secrets Act and Turing personal life. ●
- An artwork that is 'clever', challenging and interactive mirroring, in some form, the work of Turing at Bletchley Park. ●

It is essential that this work is built upon and that the relationships and connections made through the initial consultation are maintained and developed in the next stage of the commissioning process. The selected artist/practice will be required to put forward an approach within their application on how they believe they

can include and embrace community involvement in the development and delivery of the final work. ●

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- The appointed applicant will be expected to work closely with the Public Art Commission Project Manager to oversee all aspects of production and delivery. ●
- Sufficient time and resource should be allocated to community engagement from the outset and consideration should also be given to marketing and publicity throughout the commission development and delivery. ●
- Consideration must be given to health and safety implications of the commission. ●
- Consideration should be given to the future care and maintenance needs – particularly if the proposal includes digital media. ●
- The appointed applicant will be required to support any planning applications or other permissions required for commission delivery. ●
- Evaluation mechanisms must be considered and fed into the overarching evaluation strategy. ●

STAKEHOLDERS AND LOCAL PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

There are many creative practitioners, programmers, makers and fabricators in Milton Keynes, as well as a rich variety of cultural organisations. It is important that applicants are aware and if possible make use of these resources if appropriate. Additionally, Milton Keynes has an exceptionally strong third sector with many local community groups, clubs and societies. ●

SELECTION PROCESS : STAGE 1

Artists/creative practices should understand the context and aspirations of the commission and then submit a first stage outline proposal via culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk ●

SELECTION PROCESS : STAGE 2

- Up to three artists/creative practices will be shortlisted and given a research and development fee of £2000, to undertake a site visit, speak with partners/stakeholders and further develop their ideas. ●
- The shortlisted artists/creative practices will submit a second-stage proposal and undertake an in-person presentation to the Steering Group and Advisors. ●
- A final proposal will be selected and awarded the

commission. The successful applicant will be expected to further develop their proposal working in close collaboration with MKCC, the Steering Group and other local community groups. This process may require revisions to the original concept and potential locations. ●

→ To make a submission please submit the information outlined below under How to Apply. ●

BUDGET

The commission is being delivered in three stages – stage-one general application; stage-two shortlisting with up to three proposals selected for design development with a fee of £2,000; stage-three – final selection and appointment. ● The overall commission budget is to be agreed and will be informed by the final selected proposal. MKCC will lead on securing and raising funds to deliver the final agreed proposal. ●

MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

The appointed creative practitioner/practice will be required to work with Milton Keynes City Council Marketing and Communications teams to co-ordinate the delivery of a marketing and

communications campaign. Additionally, a specialist PR will be appointed to support the delivery of a wider communications campaign. ●

EVALUATION

Qualitative and quantitative evaluation methodologies will be developed by MKCC to ensure that feedback and data is captured from the outset and throughout commission delivery. ●

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

A dedicated Project Manager (MKCC) will be assigned to support the delivery. Additional support will be provided by the Steering Group, Advisors and stakeholders and partners as required. ●

EXCLUSIONS

We will not accept proposals for existing artworks; projects that do not meet the timescales/budget or approaches that do not respond to the requirements of the brief as outlined. ●

HOW TO APPLY

If you are interested in this opportunity please submit the following information:

- An outline of your approach to this commission brief - max 2 sides of A4.
- Provide up to 3 examples of previous relevant commissions (pdf or jpg file types only) with information about each project - max 5 sides of A4. Please include indicative budget spend for each example and images.
- Current Curriculum Vitae or practice profile.
- Letter confirming your availability and contact details for 2 referees (email and telephone) - note: preferably from recent commissioners.
- Evidence of insurance cover at required levels.
- Please do not exceed 6MB in file size.

Submissions will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- APPROACH - Respond to identified themes, aims and objectives, with the ability to research and respond creatively to the Brief

- QUALITY OF PREVIOUS PROJECTS - A proven track record of high-quality delivery, working in collaboration with communities and partners to develop and deliver exceptional, innovative, and engaging artworks within the public realm
- EXPERIENCE - Successful delivery of projects of similar scale and budget, demonstrable experience of working collaboratively with communities, partners and stakeholders, excellent communication skills with the ability to articulate ideas and processes

DEADLINE

- STAGE 1 : Deadline for Expressions of Interest - 12 noon, Monday 16 October 2023
- STAGE 2 : Shortlist of artists announced - by 1 November 2023
- STAGE 3 : Presentation of ideas by shortlisted artists - w/c 4 December 2023

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 [Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Towns Deal](#)

Appendix 2 [Community Codebreakers - Report and Recommendations](#)

