

# Public Art

## Planning Guidance Note

### Introduction

Public art is a means of improving the quality of the public realm through design of buildings, landscape and environment. It is complementary to good urban design.

The term 'public art' refers to artists working within the natural, built, urban or rural environment. Public art aims to integrate artists ideas and vision into the process of creating new and regenerated spaces and buildings. Good public art is site-specific. It can help to define public space.

Public art best practice requires an integral approach whereby skilled and experienced artists are involved from the conception of a project through to completion. Public art best practice also involves working closely with local communities in order to ensure ownership and pride in the built environment. The success of any public art policy depends on partnership working between the Council and a broad range of players.

Public art can:

- help to attract investment from the public and private sectors;
- strengthen a place's identity making it a more appealing place in which to live and do business;
- encourage tourism;
- reduce crime and vandalism by creating a sense of place, local ownership and civic pride; and,
- introduce innovation into the process of developing public spaces.

This Guidance Note provides advice for the development of public art within East Dunbartonshire through the planning system, and aims to:

- promote an integrated approach that naturally incorporates public art practice into the development of architecture, landscape design and public realm improvement; and,
- develop and enhance the cultural identity of East Dunbartonshire's places and communities in order to encourage greater civic pride and distinctiveness.

The Public Art Guidance has the following vision and principles:

### ***Vision***

To use the principles of public art practice to support the development of public spaces that engage and inspire the communities who live within them and encourage the development of local economic and creative activity, and civic pride.

## **Principles**

- Artists should be appointed as early as possible in the development process.
- A clear brief for the project should be identified and agreed.
- Every effort should be made to ensure that public art projects are properly resourced and funded.
- The appointed artist(s) will work on equal terms with other designers/architects and project managers.
- Appropriate maintenance and, where necessary, decommissioning regimes will be identified.

## **Format of Guidance**

This guidance is one of a suite of design guidance on design, including residential layout and redevelopment and urban design.

All planning guidance notes are material considerations in the assessment of planning applications and shall be afforded significant weight in the decision making process. Failure to comply with Guidance Notes may be a reason for refusal of planning consent.

## **Planning Framework**

This section sets out the policy context and background and examines how this document fits in with national and local policies.

Scottish Planning Policy (SPP) and Designing Places: A Policy Statement for Scotland set out the Scottish Government's policy goals for achieving higher design standards. These documents emphasise that design is a material consideration in determining planning applications and proposals.

The purpose of SPP is to avoid poor design, which has an adverse effect on the quality of life for residents and the erosion of sense of place, loss of identity and the fragmentation of community. It is recognised that poorly designed developments, and the long-term consequences of such development, is unsustainable.

There have been a number of Scottish Government policies and advice notes published relating to public art and the improvement to local character and quality of spaces as a result of public art. For example, A Policy on Architecture for Scotland (2001), A Policy Statement for Scotland Designing Places (2001), Planning Advice Note (PAN) 65: Planning And Open Space (2003), PAN 68; Design Statements (2003) and the Design Snapshot (2007) all support well designed places and the integration of art and architecture.

Local Plan and associated guidance notes place emphasis on high quality urban design and public art. East Dunbartonshire Local Plan 2, Policy DQ1 – Assessing Proposed Uses states that *“developments should enhance and certainly not reduce the amenity and character of the surrounding area”*. Policy DQ2 – Design Quality reiterates this, stating that the provision of art and design in the public realm will be promoted. By placing urban design and public art at the heart of proposals, developers and applicants can ensure

compliance with these policies and enhance the visual quality of buildings and public spaces and fostering civic pride.

## **Policy Guidance**

The incorporation of art and design in the public realm as part of development proposals will be promoted. In determining relevant applications, consideration will be given to the integral status of public art within high quality design and community engagement. The Council may require a scheme of public art to be produced with any planning application submitted for consideration.

Art in the public realm – in public spaces, and on or next to public buildings – has a long and distinguished history. Encouragement of public art enriches the sense of place, enhances the visual quality of buildings and public spaces and fosters civic pride. This guidance note will be applied to increase the provision of art and design in the public realm throughout East Dunbartonshire.

In terms of the physical environment, public art applies to the creation of permanent art, incorporation of artistic designs in the public realm and to the creation of public spaces where temporary works of art or performances can take place. The approach adopted to public art will vary from scheme to scheme depending on its nature, design, scale and end use. Public Art can, for example, include sculptures, paintings and integrated or functional design elements such as lighting, landscape, fencing, floor designs and signage. It is important that the choice of public art is appropriate to the scheme and its location, both in terms of public usage and design context. This can most successfully be achieved by integrating proposals for art and craft works at the design stage in the development process.

Developers need to consider several criteria when making provision for public art in the design process especially with regard to location, safety, materials and maintenance. Any provision for public art should be visible and accessible to the public and obviously should not obstruct the footway or cause a hazard. Public safety should be protected through design and choice of materials. Consideration should be given to the use of recycled or sustainable materials that are durable and require minimum maintenance. Maintenance arrangements of public art works should also be integrated into any schemes and they should be designed in such a manner as to avoid placing future resource burdens on public bodies.

In all cases, public art should be viewed an integral part of the project and should be developed by an appointed artist from the outset, working on equal terms as part of the project planning team. The artist should seek to develop and enhance the aesthetic quality of the project giving emphasis to local distinctiveness to help bring a sense of ownership.

Identification of a percentage of project costs for the development of public art should be made at the earliest possible opportunity when initial costs are being estimated and should be understood to be an integral part of the project costs which cannot be veered into other areas of the project or used as additional contingency.

The provision of public art will be a consideration in the assessment and determination of any planning application and Section 69 Legal Agreements (to confirm direct payments) or Section 75 Planning Agreements may be used to ensure the delivery of Public Art.