

Subject:	Welcome Signage – Gateway Public Art Commissions		
Date of Meeting:	16 September, 2021		
Report of:	Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Synthia Griffin Donna Chisholm	Tel: 07704314821
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

1.1 In February 2021 Full Council allocated funds to Welcome signage at key entry points in the city. The locations identified for signage were:

- Patcham Roundabout
- Brighton Station
- Hove Station
- Portslade Station

1.2 The purpose of this report is to layout proposals for the use of the funds allocated and to provide a timeline for the signage project to be completed.

1.3 Public art has a unique opportunity to play a role in the city's recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic. It is proposed that the welcome signage is offered as a series of art commissions to be positioned at key entry points to the city during 2022. These commissions will play a part in welcoming visitors to Brighton & Hove, reflecting the creative and eclectic reputation of the city.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 That the Committee supports the development of four welcome signage art commissions located in or close to Brighton, Hove and Portslade Stations and the Patcham Roundabout on the A23.

2.2 That the brief in terms of 'Welcome Signage' is broadened to respond to the site restrictions outlined by Southern - Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) and Highways England.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Public Art Strategy Context

- 3.1 The Public Art Strategy, which will be presented to the TECC Committee in November 2021, will lay out a governance and management model required to deliver the long-term commitment of Brighton and Hove as a 'city of creativity'. The Visitor Economy Strategy 2018 - 2023 recognises the value of tourism to the city and continues to focus on improvements to the visitor experience. The welcome signage will help to further establish the city's identity as a creative place and will play a role in improving the visitor experience of the city.
- 3.2 The city's cultural and creative sector is acknowledged for its quality, range and reach and attracts many visitors. Over the course of 2019 (pre-pandemic) the value of the visitor economy to Brighton & Hove was estimated at £976 million. The city attracted over 12m visitors and supporting in excess of 24,000 jobs, which equated to 17.5% of all employment. Many people arrive by rail, with over 17 million coming through Brighton Station annually. Hove Station sees just over 2 million users each year (source: GTR) and many more people arrive by car via the A23.
- 3.3 The commissioning of welcome signage will form the beginning of a portfolio of projects developed over the course of the next ten years, as part of the aspirations laid out in the upcoming public art strategy. The opportunities will be highlighted to local artists and aligns with the priorities of the Culture Recovery Plan approved by the TECC Committee in January 2021.

Collaboration with University of Brighton

- 3.4 Brighton's Centre for Contemporary Art (CCA) at the University of Brighton will help to recruit artist/s, develop a shortlisting panel involving two councillors, selected by their groups according to interest and knowledge, combined with local artists and art experts drawn from the city. Following that process, a lead artist/s will be appointed to create the commissions, ensuring that the maximum amount of value can be drawn from the available budget.
- 3.4 As part of the partnership with CCA, a public programme of talks and events discussing public art will be developed to nurture academic expertise across the city. These events will involve key stakeholders in a dialogue about the role of public art in the city and how art can 'welcome' residents and tourists. The intention is that this could be part of the public programme plans for the Brighton Festival in May 2022.
- 3.6 Given the technical nature of the installations, a specialist project manager will be appointed to work specifically with the artist awarded the contract. They will work specifically with GTR and transport officers to develop the technical aspects of the artworks with fabricators. They will also lead on the installation of the artwork.

Timeline and Process

- 1.1 The process to commission the welcome signage will involve working with the council's procurement team to identify a compliant method for recruiting a lead artist/s, writing and agreeing the brief, convening a selection panel with key stakeholders and request outline proposals from the shortlisted artists which will be complete by March 2022.
- 1.2 Following the selection of the lead artist/s and agreement of their outline proposal, the project manager will begin the process of working with the artists to agree a production timetable.
- 1.3 There will be an opportunity to announce the commissions as part of a public programme and symposium led by the CCA as part of the Brighton Festival in May 2022.
- 1.4 The welcome signage will be in place by late Autumn 2022.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The development of these gateway public art commissions contributes to the council's commitment to the arts and culture and to creative placemaking. This is an opportunity to appoint a recognised artist or group of artists to create a series of exemplar artworks to raise the ambition and quality of public art produced in the city. In recent years the majority of public artworks have been developer-led commissions that have often been restricted in their aims and aspirations.
- 4.4 In relation to railway station locations, GTR restrictions include advocating less signage, due to the listed nature of the stations, and printed material having to follow their brand guidelines. For these reasons, the locations are likely to be on council owned land. The artist/s brief will be broad to allow them to submit an expansive, compelling proposal for artworks that are varied e.g. sculptural, installation, digital or image based.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The development of the welcome signage commissions will respond directly to ideas identified through the community consultation process carried out as part of the development of the public art strategy. That is to be high quality, aspirational and ambitious in their intent.
- 5.2 The shortlisting process to identify lead artist/s will involve a panel of local people, Brighton CCA, tourism colleagues and councillors. An associated programme led by Brighton CCA will ensure that key stakeholders are involved in an ongoing narrative about the role of public art across the city.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The commissioning of welcome signage as public art has the potential to activate the city in new and exciting ways, contributing towards boosting the economy, drawing in specialist audiences and adding to the visitor experience.
- 6.2 The opportunity to collaborate with Brighton CCA will offer the opportunity to root the public art commissions in a wider discourse with the city's stakeholder

organisations and communities. Many of whom have been involved through the development of the public art strategy in creating a future narrative for the city's creative identity and ambitions to be the place to experience outstanding art in public places.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 Budget Council in February 2021 allocated £0.150m to support the delivery of the commissions based on the following allocations: -

£0.040m Hove Station,
£0.040m Brighton Station,
£0.050m Patcham Roundabout,
£0.020m Portslade Station,

In addition to this an allowance of £0.005m pa was included to maintain the commissions. The proposed commission for Brighton Station will be implemented as part of planned public realm improvements with additional budget from the Section 106 allowance (£0.153m) dedicated by the Transport project team.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 31/08/2021

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 The procurement which is carried out will need to comply with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (if applicable).

Lawyer Consulted: Alice Rowland

Date: 25/08/21

Equalities Implications:

- 7.6 The creation of this welcome signage offers an opportunity to give an inclusive welcome to residents and visitors coming into the city. The brief for the commissioning of welcome signage will include a diverse pool of artists for selection, engaging the city's communities in an ongoing dialogue about public art, raising the quality and ambition of artworks produced.
- 7.7 An overarching commitment to improving diversity and inclusion in terms of the Artist/s selected will be adhered to.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 All artworks will be developed in accordance with the statutory powers and planning obligations in consultation with relevant officers in the planning, transport and other relevant teams.

- 7.8 Every effort will be made to ensure that there is careful consideration to the choice of materials used to create the welcome signage in order to maximise sustainability benefits.

Brexit Implications:

- 7.10 There are no identified implications.

8.0 Any Other Significant Implications

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 8.1 N/A

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 8.2 N/A

Public Health Implications:

- 8.4 N/A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Background Documents

1. None

