



Aberdeen City Council – Public Art Guidance

September 2022



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1. Introduction and summary

What is the purpose of this document?

This document aims to guide the Council when considering the commissioning and caretaking of public art in Aberdeen by setting out clear objectives for public art, a clarification of policies, process, and the means of implementation.

It provides guidance for elected members, designers, developers, creative practitioners, individuals, organisations, planners and communities who have an interest in developing temporary and *permanent public art work, or a decision making role in approving proposals with a relevance to public art.

This document does not seek to provide guidance on the development, investment priorities and funding sources for Aberdeen's cultural and artistic infrastructure. This is steered broadly by the City's cultural strategy, which will compliment this document and may indeed identify opportunities in which public art can be created.

This guidance has been produced by Aberdeen City Council and links to existing visions and plans adopted by the Council such as the Aberdeen City Centre Masterplan (CCMP), Culture Aberdeen 2018-28, the Regional Economic Strategy, Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26, (LOIP), and Local Development Plan. As planning policy and implementation is a local authority statutory responsibility, the Council can, through planning legislation, positively influence the investment in, and quality of public art.

* Ref: 'Permanent' public artwork throughout the document means, the artwork is installed for the longer-term, it may need to be relocated for the reasons set out in 10 & 12.

[Civic Government \(Scotland\) Act 1982 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1982/10)

Large print

This publication is available in a large print format on request. Please contact the Public Art Panel Team publicart@aberdeencity.gov.uk



Tillydrone Gateway Feature, David A Ammand 2022
Photographer Donside Village Community SCIO

Tillydrone Gateway Swan project



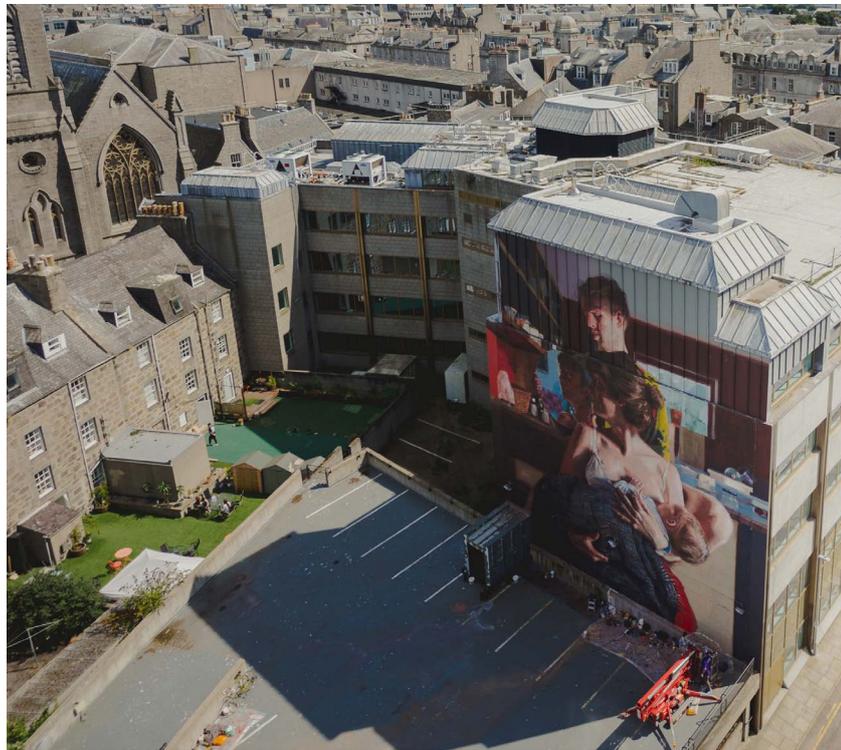
David A Ammand, Tillydrone Gateway Feature Project Team along with the fabricators (CAM Welding and Fabrication) and installers (A&S Contractors)



Artist Engagement Consultations for Tillydrone Gateway Feature
Artist- Svetlana Korobkova



Call, Pete Stollery Sound Festival 2021, Photographer Colin Black



Helen Bur, Nuart Aberdeen 2021, Photographer Clarke Joss Photography

Sound

Nuart

DanceLive



Reckless Sleepers, Clymnoes Dance Agency, DanceLive Festival 2018, Photographer Grant Anderson

2. What is Public Art?

Public Art refers to a work of art in any media that has been planned with the intention of being sited or staged in the physical public realm. This means outside spaces but can also at times refer to inside spaces that are accessible to the public, although not a gallery, museum, designated exhibition or performance space. Public art is usually, but not always, commissioned specifically for the site in which it is situated. Public art can take many forms, it can be permanent or transitory, large scale placemaking works or small intimate works which blend into the fabric of their surroundings.

Public art can be, but is not limited to:

- Designed features that are part of the built or natural environment.
- Permanent features as part of buildings.
- Landscaping or street furniture.
- Landmark sculptures.
- Trails and wayfinding features.
- Temporary installations.
- A creative process that invites public participation or interaction.
- A spectacle, part of a festival or event.
- A spontaneous creative act or 'happening'.



A House in the Woods, James Rigler, Look Again Festival 2018, Photographer Grant Anderson

Look Again

Spectra



Together, Lucid Creates, Curated Place, Spectra, Aberdeen's Festival of Light 2022

3. Vision and context

This guidance has been developed at a time when Aberdeen is going through a period of significant change economically, socially and environmentally, as the city seeks to transition from its reliance and perception as an 'Oil and Gas' city and reposition itself as a sustainable city at the heart of a vibrant and inclusive city region.

The vision for public art is conceived in the context of Aberdeen's cultural aspirations as set out in the Culture Aberdeen Strategy 2018-28, and the City Centre Masterplan, (CCMP) the broader vision for the City.

The CCMP is a regeneration blueprint that is transforming the city centre while conserving its proud heritage. The CCMP vision is Aberdeen: A city centre for a global city *"The city centre will reassert itself as the confident hub of a prosperous and liveable metropolitan city region"*.

The CCMP's Public Realm Strategy 'Light of the North' speaks to the City's unique qualities and desire for cultural distinction *'acknowledges the geographic position and microclimate of Aberdeen, making a virtue of this and positioning the city alongside other established cultural and visitor destination cities in the northern latitudes.*

It is important that improvements to the urban realm are designed to create a distinctive visual environment that is clearly of Aberdeen and references its history and culture. This visual language should be based on the key periods of change that the city has seen and involve the following layers of history- the Medieval, the 19th century that embraces Georgian and Victorian and finally a new, contemporary style.'



Aberdeen Skyline, VisitAberdeenshire

Culture Aberdeen

This document aligns with the Culture Aberdeen Strategy 2018-28 vision for the City:

Our vision for Aberdeen is a city...

- opening doors: where everyone can be transformed and inspired through engagement in the arts and culture; a place releasing our creativity.
- to experiment in: a home, a place, a destination and testing ground for artists, creative enterprises and new ideas; a place which has become Scotland's creative lab.
- which inspires: where exciting cultural experiences are around each and every corner and where there are no creative boundaries; a place where all the city is a stage.
- like no other: where we celebrate and promote our culture and heritage, the things we make and create, a place where culture connects us to the world.

People are at the heart of any development and the Aberdeen Local Outcome Improvement Plan's vision for Aberdeen is to be a place where everyone can prosper, regardless of their background or circumstance, it aims to improve outcomes for, and with, people in the city especially those most in need.

Public art should be enjoyed by locals and visitors alike and should enhance Aberdeen's reputation as a cultural destination bringing people together to celebrate our heritage and shape our future.

For the purpose of this plan, Aberdeen takes an expansive view of what public art is: and describes public art as the ways that artists work in, and creatively respond to the public realm. The breadth of public art approaches is as varied and far-reaching as the people, places, and materials involved and the outcomes can be both permanent or temporary.

[Culture Aberdeen updated.pdf \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](#)



4. Best Practice principles

This document does not prescribe or seek to define ‘artistic’ quality in respect to public art but it does set out what the Council defines as best contemporary practice in public art commissioning and project management which it would expect to see in any public art proposals coming forward. The success of public art in Aberdeen is dependent on clear objectives for the works, the effectiveness of the commissioning, and putting the artist at the heart of the process.

The principal characteristics of public art are, public process, public accessibility and artistic/aesthetic quality:

A public process: the public and/or the public’s representatives must, formally or informally, sanction the work as public art and its presence in the public realm.

Broad accessibility: the public must be able to physically experience the work.

Aesthetic quality: it must have artistic significance.

Public art projects must strive to show that:

- Works are of high artistic quality either through the physical work or the community legacy of the experience in the case of temporary and process-led work;
- An artist or artists with the appropriate level of experience relevant to the proposal is engaged and supported through the process;
- Innovation is present in the intention and intended impact of the work;
- The work is sensitive and appropriate to its location and relevant community;
- The art works are integrated into a broad design policy that supports its context;
- Public benefits for the community are clearly defined;
- The project is technically and financially feasible for delivery;
- The local and natural environment is able to absorb any additional visitors.
- The materials used are considered for their robustness and suitability for the intended lifespan, their ongoing maintenance and in the context of the setting;
- There is a clear plan in place for handover including insurance, ownership or custodianship, appropriate maintenance, care and conservation;
- There is a risk management plan, an assurance statement for public safety guarantee during install and for the lifespan of the work (public liability insurance with the artist or organisation) and consideration of insurance against theft or damage for the life span of the art work.

5. What are the benefits of Public Art?

Public art can deliver a wide range of benefits to communities and developers. These benefits can be significant when well-managed, adequately funded and successfully executed. Public art can impact through:

- Placemaking - Enhancing the public realm.
- Community engagement and cohesion.
- Diversity and inclusion, developing a feeling of belonging and civic pride.
- Creating a stronger identity for the site/area.
- Education and skills development.
- Highlighting local history and heritage.
- Creating opportunities and investment.
- Creating a safer environment.
- Developing a cultural destination, and enhanced tourism offer.

Where public art is delivered through development there are benefits for:

The Developer and the Development

- Enhancing the quality of the development and hence its market value
- Reinforcing the developer's profile and reputation
- Community engagement to generate goodwill, cohesion and support for the development



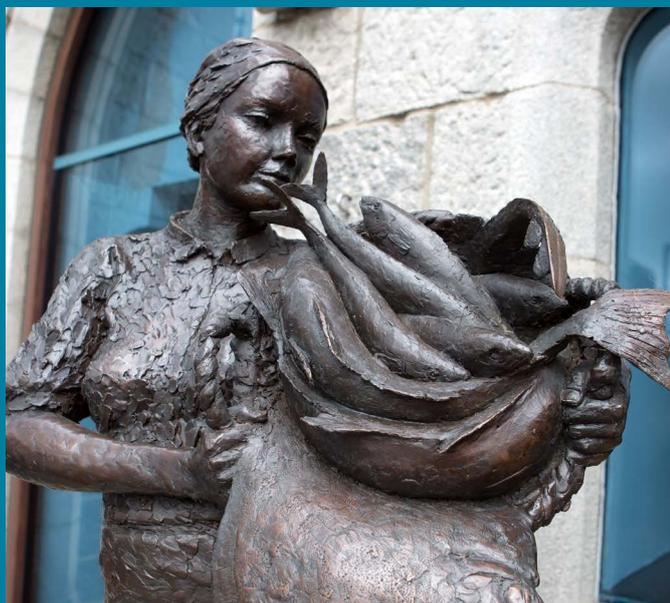
6. Public Art overview, considerations, and requirements

Permanent' Sculptural Work and 3D Work

Sculptural work is the artform most people think about when it comes to public art. The artwork can have a big impact on a space or site and also can have future consequences as to how an area is used. Sculptures may include 3D representations of figures from the city's history, or representations of former industries which were important to the social and economic history of the area. At their best they can provide a space with a strong identity, instil civic pride and act as visual markers and expressions of the heritage and personality of the area.

Considerations: *Permanent work can be expensive and there are various cost implications to be considered, not least the long-term maintenance commitments which can end up dwarfing the original expenditure in producing the piece. Permanent work, especially historic and representative works can divide opinions and are not always perceived as bringing value to a site. The importance of a transparent selection process, good communication and community consultation cannot be understated when it comes to commissioning this type of work successfully.*

Demand for new statues and monuments continues today at a level unequalled since the Victorian period. While statues have occasionally been repositioned or decommissioned, finding new sites for free standing memorials within the city centre is challenging, where demand is greatest, and means our historic legacy is not evenly spread across the city.



Detail, Fishing Memorial, David Williams-Ellis, 2018. Photographer: Sandra McKay

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- An artist or artists with the appropriate level of experience and reputation relevant to the proposal is engaged at the earliest stage;
- The work is sensitive in its approach to subject matter and appropriate to its location;
- Consultation, communication and transparency is embedded within the commissioning processes;
- The art works are integrated into a broad design policy that supports its context;
- The project is technically and financially viable with a clear plan in place for handover; including insurance, ownership or custodianship, appropriate maintenance, care and conservation;
- The materials used are considered for their robustness and suitability for the intended lifespan, their ongoing maintenance and in the context of the setting;
- There is a risk management plan, an assurance statement for public safety guarantee during install and for the lifespan of the work (public liability insurance with the artist or organisation) and consideration of insurance against theft or damage for the life span of the art work;
- In terms of sculptures which are representative of a specific person, it is advised that the person should have died at least 20 years ago before proceeding to commission a commemorative sculpture. This is to ensure that the decision whether to erect a statue is made with a sufficient degree of hindsight (this is consistent with the Council's Commemorative Plaque policy).



Fishing Memorial, David Williams Ellis, 2018. Photographer Sandra Mckey



Robert the Bruce, Alan Herriot, 2011



Permanent' Sculptural
Work and 3D Work



Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital, Ally Wallace 2004, Photographer Mike Davidson

Street Furniture, Streetscape and Lighting

As an alternative to commercially available products, commissioning street furniture developed by artists can give an area a unique look and feel, creating a distinct destination and sense of place. This can include everything from seating, fencing, paving, lighting, or shelters through to soft landscaping and planting arrangements or creating communal areas. The engagement approaches an artist can provide with the community offers additional benefits adding to the sense of local pride and feelings of ownership, leading to reduced vandalism through increased guardianship.

Considerations: *Unlike commercially available products these unique works will not be as readily replaceable and may carry a higher maintenance cost. The artwork needs to be properly risk assessed and tested to ensure long-term durability and safety. Contracts should clearly state where maintenance responsibilities lie and should ensure that contingency funding is in place to support any associated repair costs which may occur.*

It is important for an artist to consult with disability groups as to what their requirements are for new street furniture or streetscapes and what they want to be addressed.

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- The process must engage an artist in the creation or production, as commercially produced work does not constitute public art;
- The art works are integrated into a broad design policy that supports its context;
- There is a risk management plan, an assurance statement for public safety guarantee during install and for the lifespan of the work (public liability insurance with the artist or organisation) and consideration of insurance against theft or damage for the life span of the art work;
- The materials used are considered for their robustness and suitability for the intended lifespan, their ongoing maintenance and in the context of the setting;
- There is a clear plan in place for handover including insurance, ownership or custodianship, appropriate maintenance, care and conservation.



Hazelhead Memory Path

Hazelhead Memory Path

Infant Memorial



Infant Memorial, Fleeting, Maja Quille 2019. Photographer by Ditte Solgaard Dunn

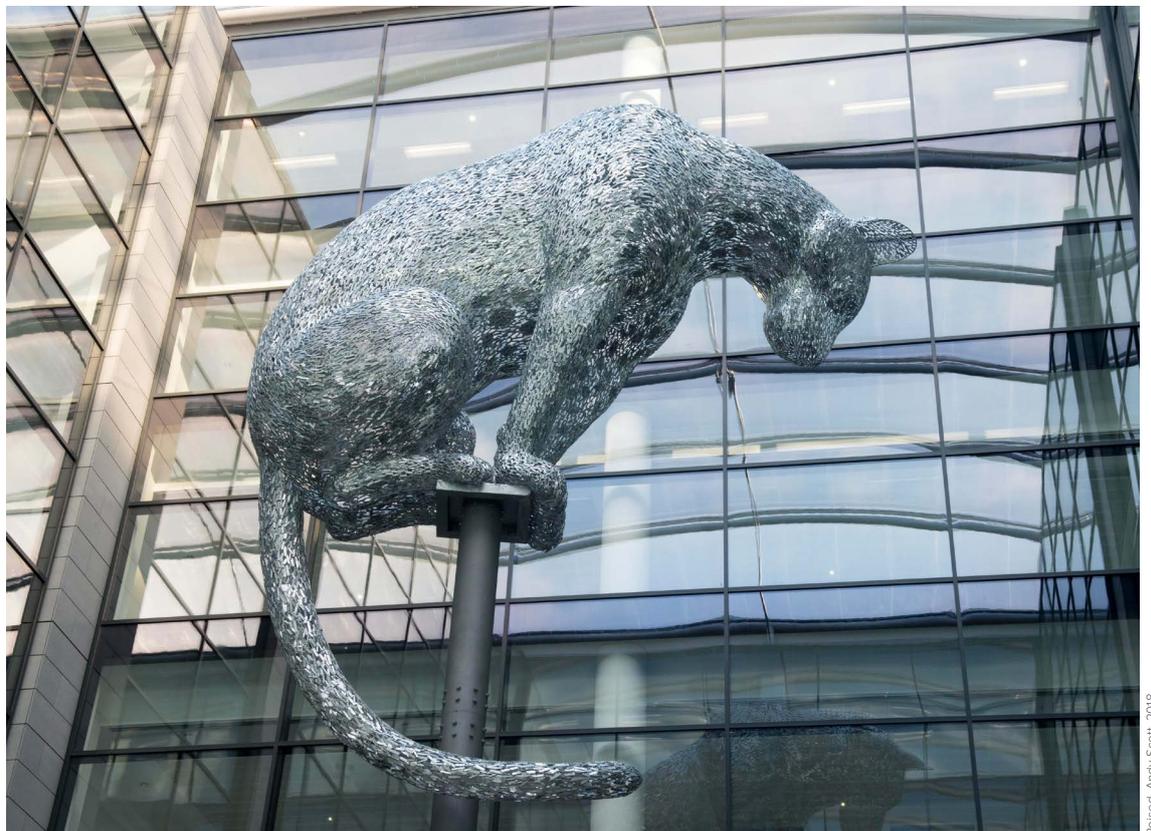


Detail of Fleeting



Wind, Rosemount Square Aberdeen, Thomas Bayliss Huxley-Jones 1948

Landmark and Architectural Features



Polised, Andy Scott, 2018

Landmark and Architectural Features

As part of a major development or regeneration programme artists may be commissioned to work on a larger scale development in the public realm. This can range from engagement in masterplans to producing major landmark works for open spaces or plazas. An artist may also work closely with an architect to design significant physical features within a town or landscape.

Located within an open courtyard area of Marischal Square internationally renowned sculptor Andy Scott created a world-class public artwork in Aberdeen in the shape of a five-metre tall leopard called 'Poised.' The work was inspired by symbols on Aberdeen City Council's historic coat of arms. It weighs just over two tons and sits proudly on top of a 10 metre high steel column.

Situated on Rosemount Square at Leaside Road and South Mount Street there are two carved granite bas-relief sculptures by Thomas Bayliss Huxley-Jones FRBS, ARCA (1908-1969). The artist was also Head of Sculpture at Gray's School of Art, 1938.

Considerations: *These major development projects can take many years to complete and are subject to regular planning changes. With any major capital project there are risks of timescales lengthening, costs increasing and requirements varying. The types of works can often involve specialist fabrication and installation contractors. Therefore, good project management and clear responsibilities are essential, contracts need to be clear about expectations of the artist and include a degree of flexibility for all parties involved.*

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- An artist or artists with the appropriate level of experience and reputation relevant to the proposal is engaged at the earliest stage;
- Innovation is present in the intention and intended impact of the work;
- The art works are integrated into a broad design policy that supports its context;
- Public benefits for the community are clearly defined and engagement opportunities are in place for the community and stakeholders;
- The setting can absorb the footfall of additional visitors;
- The project is technically and financially feasible for delivery;
- There is a risk management plan, an assurance statement for public safety guarantee during install and for the lifespan of the work (public liability insurance with the artist or organisation) and consideration of insurance against theft or damage for the life span of the art work;
- The materials used are considered for their robustness and suitability for the intended lifespan, their ongoing maintenance and in the context of the setting;
- There is a clear plan in place for handover including insurance, ownership or custodianship, appropriate maintenance, care and conservation.



Green Public Engagement Project - Aberdeen War Memorial Lion under construction - 1924. Mr George Cooper Clark Mason on right with James Philip. Aberdeen Archives Gallery & Museums



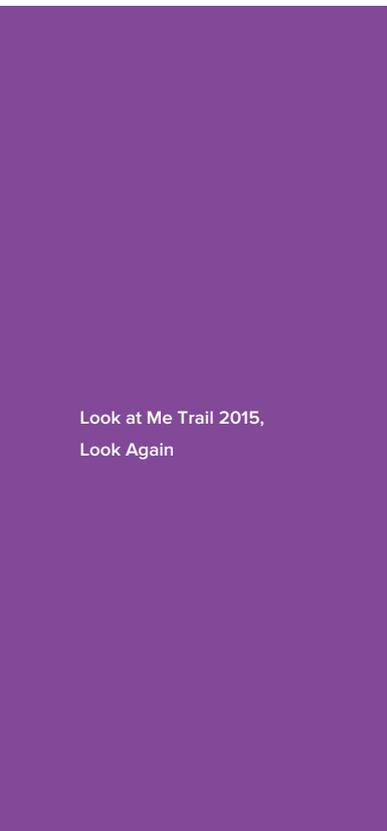
Look at Me, Robbie Burns, Above and Beyond, Gordon Burnett collaborating with Rosy Wood of Deeside Knitters, 2015
Photographer Look Again Festival team



Look at Me, General Charles Gordon, Salmena Carvalho, collaborating with RGU students and Jenny McHardy, Caitlin Hynes and Anna Cunnu, Tyree Hill & Siobhan Thomson, 2015. Photographer Look Again Festival team



Oor Mannie, Philip Thomson, Look Again Festival 2015. Photographer Look Again Festival team



Look at Me Trail 2015,
Look Again



Look at me, Albert, The Prince Consort, #blueskythinker, Collin Priest 2015. Photographer Look Again Festival team

Trails, Routes and Wayfaring

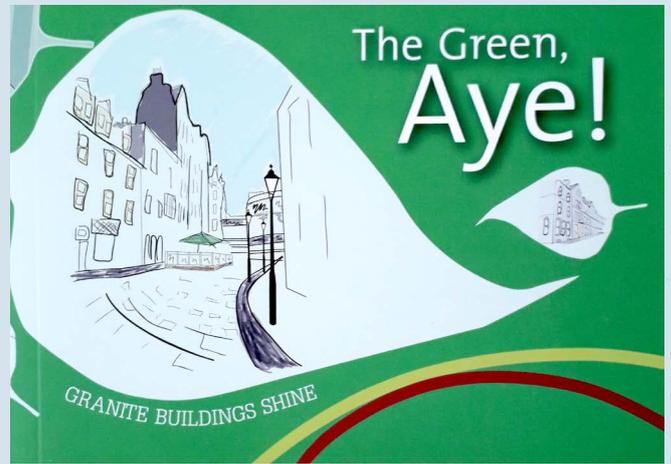
Public art can play a role in increasing footfall in cities, encouraging residents and visitors alike to explore areas they would not otherwise engage with. For established routes it can elevate practical infrastructure to a space cherished by the community. Public art in this context can vary from permanent works to temporary interventions to provide sight markers to highlight a route as well as an interpretation of a site and its heritage.

There are a variety of mediums that can be used as interventions in this context, from permanent sculptural reliefs, markers and signs, through to the use of technology such as augmented reality apps and sound walks that can include the potential for interpretation in different languages and formats that will make the artwork more accessible and will reach a wider audience.

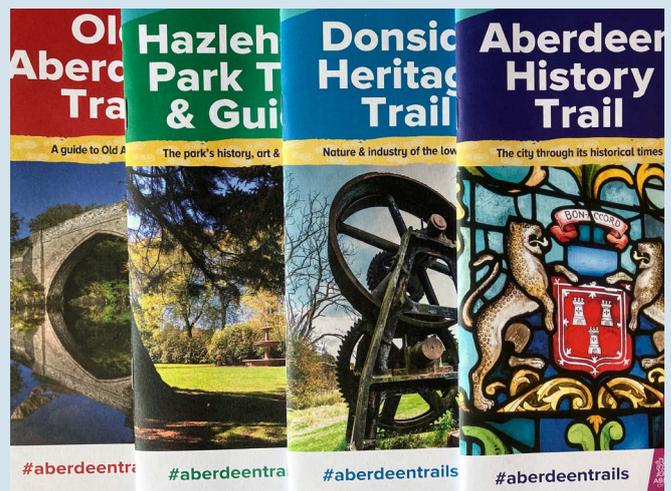
Considerations: *There is an important difference between 'Information' and 'Interpretation,' nevertheless, care needs to be taken to ensure that the historical interpretation of a site or trail is checked prior to installation for both sensitivity and accuracy. For example, consideration of the historical references to the past in relation to the slave trade or gender issues. And if technology is used for wayfaring, it is kept up to date and does not become outdated or unreliable. Also, that any installed art works are well maintained for health and safety reasons, and don't lose relevance due to environmental changes, usage of space or route developments.*

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- An artist or artists with the appropriate level of experience relevant to the proposal is engaged and supported through the process;
- Work which is interpretive has been appropriately checked for sensitivity and accuracy;
- The work is sensitive and appropriate to its location, and consideration has been given for the environments ability to absorb additional visitors;
- Best practice policies are upheld such as equal opportunities and environment responsibility, etc.;
- There is a clear plan in place for handover including insurance, ownership or custodianship, appropriate maintenance, care and conservation.



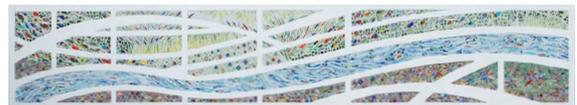
The Green Public Engagement Project, Aberdeen City Council, Creative Learning 2011



Aberdeen City Council Trail Leaflets

Aberdeen Trail Leaflets

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM/local-history/heritage-trails>



28 The Japanese Garden

The Japanese Garden at Duthie Park was designed by the Japanese-born landscape architect Takashi Sawano. It was officially opened by His Excellency Toshi Yamazaki the Japanese Ambassador to Britain in June 1987.



Mr. Sawano has created a peace garden to commemorate the many thousands of people who died in 1945 from the effects of the atom bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II. The design of the garden has as a focal point a stream, crossed by stone bridges, which meanders slowly over rock formations until it flows into the pond. The outline of the water feature represents the Chinese character 'kokoro', which means 'heart'. There is a snow-viewing lantern 'yukimi', whose wide roof catches the snow as it falls. All of the materials are used in the traditional Japanese way including the bamboo fences and wisteria trellis.



Mr. Sawano returned in 2000 and 2014 for further work to the

29 Glass Mosaic

Fused glass mosaic (above) by 2017 Artist in Residence Shelagh Swanson in collaboration with the local community.

30 Regensburg Männchen

Richard Ross Robertson, Aberdeen, 1914-2007. Student and tutor at Gray's School of Art. Replica of the Regensburger Brückenmännchen – Bridge Man of Regensburg – which stands on the bridge over the Danube at Regensburg. Presented by the Scottish/German Association in 1973 in recognition of Aberdeen's twinned city link.



31 Gargoyle

Artist unknown. This water spouting gargoyle was formerly sited in the Victoria Park, Rosemount in a section known locally as Tom's Castle. A miniature castle once stood on the summit of a small knoll and children believed that it was inhabited by little Tom Thumb himself! The gargoyle was part of a well at the base of the knoll.

32 Trade and Finance

Sydney Boyes 1878-1931, Southampton, England. This bronze panel in high relief, was designed by Boyes and cast in Burton on Trent between 1905-1908. Originally set into the cast iron parapet or balustrade, formerly on the south side of Union Bridge. This side was removed when shops were built in 1962. The figures represent: trade, finance, fishing, shipbuilding, engineering and agriculture.



Aberdeen City Council Trail Leaflets

Signage and Plaques

Commissioning original signage can give a sense of distinctiveness and character to a street, building or neighbourhood. While there are regulations to follow for public signage there is a multitude of opportunities for this form of public art within an urban environment, from street signs, directional signs, entrance gateways, through to location markers and street maps.

Commemorative Plaques are another popular signage feature within Aberdeen's built environment, celebrating significant individuals who have lived or worked in Aberdeen or to mark places or events of historic importance. The Council has a separate policy and process for commemorative plaques, and they are not subject to the Public Art Panel process.

Considerations: *Public signage is covered by regulations and will require planning consent. Signage works must still fulfil their utilitarian purpose and be legible for the general public.*

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- The process must engage an artist in the creation/production, as commercially produced work does not constitute public art;
- Best practice to be followed in respect to signage regulation;
- The art works are integrated into a broad design policy that supports its context;
- There is a risk management plan and an assurance statement for public safety guarantee;
- The materials used are considered for their robustness and suitability for the intended lifespan, their ongoing maintenance and in the context of the setting;
- There is a maintenance and decommissioning plan.



Jeannie Robertson plaque, Aberdeen Archives Gallery & Museums, 2003



Nan Shepherd plaque, Aberdeen Archives Gallery & Museums, 2019

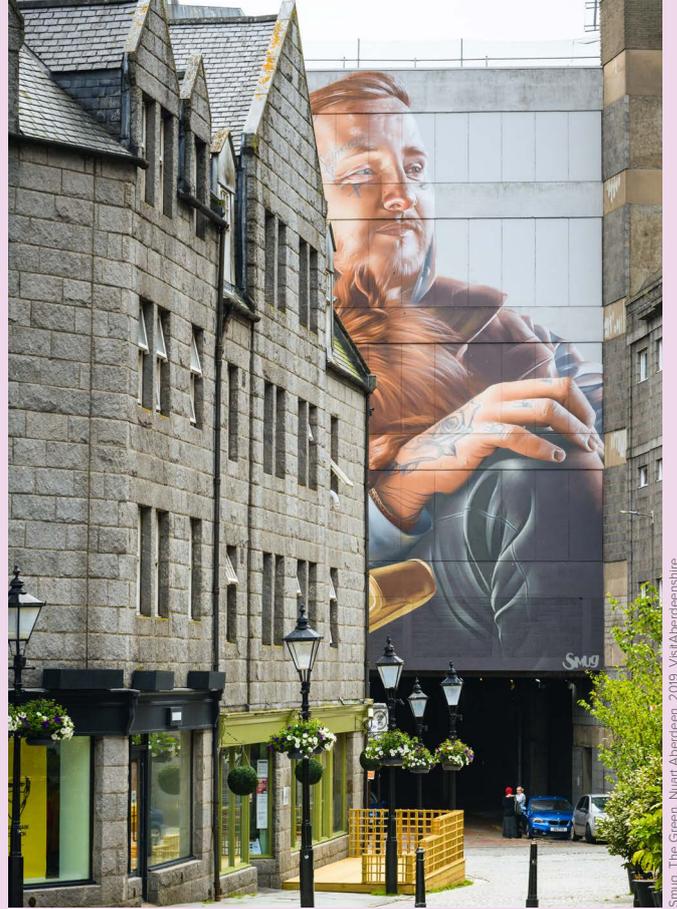
Working with existing built environment, Walls and Murals

There are a multitude of ways artists can work with existing buildings, transforming run down or vacant spaces, highlighting distinctive architectural or historical qualities as well as being a canvas for communities to express themselves and create a sense of ownership in a respectful considered way.

Considerations: *These types of commissions can be expensive, large wall surfaces may require preparation work to make surfaces secure before artwork designs begin. Production may require the use of scaffolding, cherry pickers or lifts on site. It can be difficult to get the appropriate landowner's consent and may require planning permission. Commissioners should have a good understanding of the building's future use to ensure they can be clear on the intended lifespan of the work and any maintenance plans required.*

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- An artist or artists with the appropriate level of experience relevant to the proposal is engaged and supported through the process;
- The setting can absorb the footfall of additional visitors;
- The work is sensitive, safe and appropriate to its location and relevant community;
- Landowner permission has been secured and the project is technically and financially feasible for delivery;
- The materials used are considered for their robustness and suitability for the intended lifespan, their ongoing maintenance and in the context of the setting;
- There is a production methodology statement, a risk management plan, an assurance statement for public safety guarantee and well being of artists and public during install and for the lifespan of the work (public liability insurance with the artist or organisation). Also, consideration of insurance against theft or damage for the life span of the artwork;
- There is a clear plan in place for handover including insurance, ownership or custodianship, appropriate maintenance, care and conservation;
- The lifespan and decommissioning plans are in place.



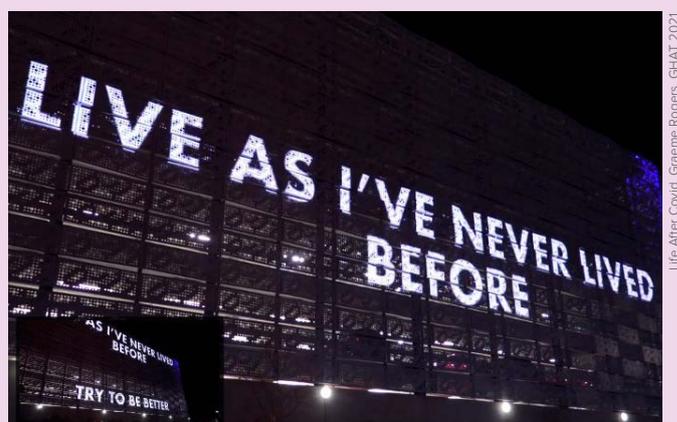
Smug, The Green, Nuart Aberdeen, 2019, Vs1/Aberdeenshire



Henrik Ugalen, Nuart Aberdeen 2021, Photographer Clarke Joss Photography

Nuart

GHAT – Projection



Life After Covid, Graeme Rogers, GHAT 2021
Still photograph of projection



Aberdeen Jazz Festival 2018. Photographer Alastair Robb



Aberdeen Jazz Festival 2018. Photographer Stewart Mitchell



My Friend Take Care of Me, Fleur Darkin, City Moves Dance Agency SCIO, DancaLive 2021. Photographer Beth Hopkins

Aberdeen Jazz Festival

Citymoves Dance Agency
SCIO



Aberdeen Jazz Festival 2016. Photographer Stewart Mitchell

Temporary Installations, Festivals and Performances

Aberdeen has developed a reputation for its innovative festivals and temporary interventions, which are a highly engaging experience for the public, animating under-utilised spaces, revealing stories and reflecting on our sense of place in ways that can be fun, challenging as well as surprisingly moving. Work can vary from performances and installations to interventions which transform our connection to a location, and for many onlookers who have never stepped foot in a gallery or theatre this might be their first exposure to contemporary art which encourages them to explore the City's cultural offer further.

Considerations: *Safety is paramount when devising these types of projects for both audiences and artists alike. Consideration needs to be given as to how the activities impact on residents and surrounding businesses. Depending on the scale and location of the event organisers would need to submit a parks and open spaces application and present the activity to Aberdeen's Safety Advisory Group (SAG). With temporary works organisers need to have clear plans for evaluating success and impacts, and ensure the intervention is documented.*

Requirements to be demonstrated in Public Art applications

- An artist or artists with the appropriate level of experience relevant to the proposal is engaged and supported through the process;
- There is a production methodology statement, a risk management plan, an assurance statement for public safety guarantee and well-being of artists and public during install and for the lifespan of the work (public liability insurance with the artist or organisation).
- Innovation is present in the intention and intended impact of the work;
- The work is appropriate and safe for the intended location and the site is appropriate for any additional footfall from visitors;
- Public benefits for the community are clearly defined;
- Best practice policies are upheld such as equal opportunities and environment responsibility, etc;
- Where there is/are physical object(s) there must be a decommissioning plan in place.



Cloud, Caitlin Brown and Wayne Garrett, Curated Place, Spectra Aberdeen's Festival of Light 2017
Photographer Wulie Marr



Double Take Projections, Face of Innovation, Curated Place, Spectra Aberdeen's Festival of Light 2016. Photographer Wulie Marr

Spectra

DanceLive



Just Us, City Moves Dance Agency SCIO, DanceLive 2021
Photographer Beth Hopkins

7. Key Areas and Opportunities in Aberdeen

Aberdeen's waterfronts, its varied topography, historic skyline, the underlying medieval fabric, the consistent use of granite and the magnificent urban set location of Union Street forms a very distinctive sense of place which provides unique settings and opportunities for public art to expand on the City's story, challenge perceptions, reveal hidden details or enhance pride.

The City Centre Masterplan and Local Development Plan sets out opportunities in the transformative regeneration of Aberdeen's city centre, its former market, and beach front. These multi-million projects include the pedestrianisation of Union Street Central, the creation of a new city market, and the revitalisation of the beach area.

These improvements will build on place making opportunities, will create investment and will enhance the public realm.

The Scottish Government's National Strategy for Economic Transformation sets out plans to develop a wellbeing economy, thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, one that delivers economic prosperity for all Scotland's people and places.

The post-covid recovery for Aberdeen city and its communities also presents an opportunity for public art to help reconnect people with their communities and the changing ways in which they live, work and travel within them, while reflecting on the impact of covid and their future.

The Culture Strategy for Scotland, speaks to the opportunities for public art under Ambition 3, Empowering through culture, celebrating culture as part of every community is essential to our lives and wellbeing.

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/people-and-communities/equality-and-diversity/equality-outcomes-and-mainstreaming-report>

[LDP_WS_20170328.pdf \(aberdeencity.gov.uk\)](#)

[City Centre Masterplan | Aberdeen City Council](#)

[Aberdeen City Local Outcome Improvement Plan 2016-26 – Community Planning Aberdeen](#)

[The Vision - Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation: summary - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](#)



Aberdeen Beach, VisitAberdeenshire

8. Public Art Panel process

The Public Art Panel (PAP) exists to support the City Council in upholding the Council's Public Art Guidance, to ensure the commissioning of work be it led by a developer, community group or the Council itself meet the core principles of public process, public accessibility and artistic/aesthetic quality.

Any party wishing to deliver public art in the urban realm is bound by the direction and consent of the PAP process, with recourse only to any elected member of the Finance and Resources Committee to raise matters with the Convenor if unsatisfied with any matter raised in the pursuit of new public artwork.

Any proposal for artwork to be sited in the Aberdeen city public realm which is permanent or temporary must go through the PAP process. For the avoidance of doubt this is inclusive of;

- Any development or proposal for public artwork to be sited in the public realm requiring planning permission.
- Any request or motion to Council Committee seeking approval for the installation of artwork in the public realm or financial assistance for the creation of work.
- Temporary art in the public realm (this includes inception of new artistic festivals and performances).

This is a non-statutory service; the PAP process does not have legal powers or responsibilities and is not empowered to approve or prohibit public art projects proceeding. Organisations forming the PAP, however, have the powers required to ensure projects comply with their legal obligations, for example the Council may remove permission for the use of their land for public art works which do not receive the full support of the PAP or meet their processes requirements.

Stages of PAP Process

1. Contact us as soon as you start planning your project using a Public Art enquiry form which is available online at publicart@aberdeencity.gov.uk.
2. The Public Art enquiry form will be reviewed, initial feedback provided, and advice given on next steps, which may include submitting a full application form.
3. The submission of the Public Art application and supporting documents.
4. The application is reviewed by the Panel.
5. Panel decision notification is sent, which includes feedback on the proposal and any specific requirements for progressing.

Details to be set out in a Public Art application:

- A description of the proposed public art project, including its main aims.
- The specific objectives which have been set.
- How the success of the project will be measured.
- The process for selecting and appointing the artist(s).
- How artists have been/will be involved in the commissioning process and delivery of the project.
- A description of the work that will be realised through the involvement of artist(s).
- A statement of how the project will have local benefit. This should refer to any consultation, research undertaken, or community involvement. This may include those areas that the proposed project will have a positive impact on.
- How the project will be managed and by whom.
- The programme for implementing the project including key stages and timescales.
- The risks associated with the implementation of the project and how they will be minimised.
- The anticipated life span of the completed work.
- A statement on the public safety aspects of the project in implementation and on completion.
- How the project will be maintained and by whom.
- The threats to the future survival of the artwork and how its future maintenance will be supported.
- A budget for the art project including its overall cost, a detailed breakdown of cost elements and the finance allocated for maintenance (if not a temporary work and/or decommission).
- Details of the ownership of the completed work.
- How the project will be recorded, and the artist's work archived.
- How the project will be publicised.

9. How to Commission Public Art

This section sets out cross-cutting step by step guidance on the commissioning process and project management of public art projects. It is not exhaustive, but it does provide an overview of all the key stages and considerations for a successful project.

We would advise at the earliest stage anyone seeking to develop a public art project should complete the Public Art Enquiry Form to provide a short overview of the proposal. This will be reviewed by Officers from the Cultural Policy and Partnership Team who will be able to advise if your project should go through the Public Art Panel process and provide advice as appropriate.

Public Art Commissioning Process Management and Governance

When commissioning a project, a lead person with the relevant experience should be nominated or appointed to manage the process, this could be internal staff, a community representative or an independent consultant appointed to undertake the project management/ coordination responsibilities. Depending on the size of the commission, it would be advisable to establish a project group made up of relevant stakeholders to have overview and/or manage the project. Representation on such a group may include, members of the community, funding bodies, local authority representatives as well as those with expertise in arts, finance or design and planning. In most circumstances, the project group would be advisory and will participate in approving artist briefs, however there may be projects where the group lead will have oversight of the process and even assist in aspects of delivery.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In-line with Aberdeen City Council's commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion the Council aims to encourage good practice and ensure that public art projects, be they commissioned by the Local Authority, the community or external bodies are undertaken in-line with the Equality Act 2010. Ultimately, the aim is to make public art projects inclusive and representative of all sections of our society and to enhance the civic participation and pride. As part of this commitment, to highlight what good practice is, any open call opportunities should be widely advertised, and the project lead should work to:

- Ensure intentions and actions to promote equality and diversity are embedded into planning and reach underrepresented groups effectively.
- Identify opportunities, where possible, to engage and work with artists and participants from underrepresented groups.
- Make sure that communities in Aberdeen are consulted and engaged with, for better representation and participation.
- Ensure that the public artwork and any information, goods and services are accessible to people with disabilities.
- Make available opportunities for people with socio-disadvantage to participate by mitigating participatory costs (those with low or no income, older people and younger people).
- Consider how they might adapt and develop their programme to increase engagement from people with protected characteristics.
- Explore new approaches to commissioning to ensure greater diversity.

Spectra



Creatures from the Deep, Designs in Air, Curated Place, Spectra, Aberdeen's Festival of Light 2020

Artist Briefs

Defining a clear and robust project brief from the outset is essential. The brief should include:

- Contextual information
- Vision
- Aims, objectives and desired outcomes
- Details of proposed locations, any issues/restrictions
- Context of site
- Consultation and engagement requirements
- Budget and associated project stages (concept, design, fabrication, installation etc.)
- Ownership and copyright
- Production schedule
- Liabilities
- Contract, schedule of payments
- Maintenance and decommissioning
- Health and safety
- Documentation
- Accessibility information
- Decision making process.

Setting Project Budgets

Budgets should be realistic and take the following into account.

- **Artist fees** - This should include all stages of involvement: concept and detailed design, fabrication and installation, attendance at opening events, press coverage and costs for those who are socially or economically disadvantaged. Guidance issued by Creative Scotland and the Scottish Artist Union show sample day rates to guide arts budgeting and help artists negotiate a fair rate of pay for short-term contracts such as commissions, residencies and community projects. A link to the Creative Scotland Guidance document is available here. [Guidance-on-Industry-Standards.pdf \(creativescotland.com\)](#).
- **Travel and Accommodation** - Depending on the artists location these costs may be in addition to the artists day rate.
- **Additional Expertise** - Depending on the nature of the project the budget should allow for any other expense required such as public art consultants, structural engineers, marketing, evaluation etc.
- **Permissions** - allowance for planning permissions, temporary event licence etc.
- **Costs for community engagement and consultation** - This could potentially include materials, costs for translation or alternative communication, accessibility costs, refreshments, design and print, volunteer expenses, venue hire etc.
- **Exhibition** - If the artist is expected to exhibit their proposals an allowance for design and print of exhibition boards, maquettes/models and promotional materials should be included.
- **Fabrication, delivery, and installation costs** - this may also need to include security costs if installation takes place over more than one day.
- **Maintenance, care and decommission costs** - see point 10 and 12 in this document.
- **Documentation** - it is always preferable to allow a budget for photography and/or filming and when relevant an allowance for a project brochure or leaflet should be in place.
- **Opening Events, Promotion and Interpretation costs** - an allowance should be included for any opening events, publicity costs and interpretation plaques or materials.
- **Contingency** - 10% contingency should be in place during the fabrication and installation stages.
- **Insurances** - Insured for Public Liability whilst the artwork is being developed and insured for damage, fire, theft and public liability for the lifespan of the work once the artwork has transferred to the client or site owner.
- **VAT and/other tax** - Payment schedules should be negotiated with the artist to ensure that the payment milestones are in line with the funding required during the fabrication and installation stages.

Promoting Opportunities

In order to reach a diverse range of artists it is important to engage partners and organisations in helping to promote commission opportunities. This can include reaching out to partners to invite them to share information via their traditional marketing channels and e-communications, websites and sharing via social media channels. There are also national networks, journals and forums that you can pay for to advertise commissions.

- Creative Scotland Opportunities <https://opportunities.creativescotland.com/>
- Culture Aberdeen Culture Round Up Email creativelearningteam@aberdeencity.gov.uk
- ArtQuest <https://artquest.org.uk/opportunities/>
- Artist News <https://www.a-n.co.uk/>
- Arts Hub UK [Opportunities | ArtsHub UK - Arts Industry News, Jobs & Career Advice](#)

Artist Appointment

There are several approaches to take when appointing an artist for your public art project. The most appropriate method will depend on the scale and nature of the project. The three main methods are:

- Open competition
- Limited competition
- Direct invitation.

To ensure a fair process, any assessment should be undertaken against the criteria set out in the artist brief alongside consideration of the quality, success, relevance and the scale of the artist's previous work. For permanent commissions it is essential to establish that the artist has trusted fabricators and installation experts. At least two references should be sought before appointment.

Obtaining Additional Investment

Funding for public art, whether it is temporary or permanent is normally drawn down from multiple sources. If a partnership approach is adopted not only can the commission support multiple agendas, but it can also make the project more deliverable by spreading the cost across those partners.

It should be noted that funding for permanent artworks is limited.

The following options can be explored when looking for additional funding for a public art project: -

- Existing Design Budgets (e.g., landscaping, lighting, street furniture).
- Creative Scotland various budgets.

- Trusts like Esmee Fairbairn Foundation etc.
- Local Trusts [Grant funding support | Aberdeen City Council](#)
- National Lottery Funding
- Health and Wellbeing – like the Wellcome Trust
- Digital/Innovation - NESTA
- Landfill Tax Credits
- Private Donation, Business sponsorship, Business Improvement District's
- Individuals – Crowdfunding.

Minimising Environmental Impact

During the concept and design phase, the artist and the Project group should consider how to minimise impact on the environment. This could include:

- Encouraging the use of public transport for artists. The Project group involved could utilise video calls if a site visit is not necessary.
- Encouraging use of more local fabricators/contractors and locally sourced materials as appropriate.
- Careful consideration of materials used for temporary and permanent works including any foundations required.
- Consideration of any damage to the environment through any foundations required during the installation process.
- Works including lighting should be sensitive to the impacts on local bird and animal life and should mitigate impacts.
- Power use for lighting and sound should wherever possible use renewable energy, kinetic, clockwork or solar power.
- Consultation with landscape architects and local conservation groups to ensure that invasive species are not included in any complementary planting and that any planting is appropriate to the site.

Embedding Learning and Engagement

Opportunities for learning, mentoring, co-creation, co-production and engagement should be embedded from the outset of each project to maximise value and could be open to members of the community, local artists and creatives, students, local arts and cultural organisations, local authority Councillors and officers.

Possible approaches could include:

- Mentoring opportunities within artist commissions.
- Embedding artist talks.
- Embedding community engagement within commissions to include workshops and events.
- Embedding opportunities for children and young people to work with commissioned artists.
- Documenting commissions and sharing lessons learnt through online case studies.
- Student Placement on the Project group to support commissioned artists deliver engagement programmes.
- Opening up learning to wider creative sector through the artist or the project lead delivering talks as part of regional or national events.

Event Guide for Temporary Events in Public Spaces

There is a guide to support anyone organising an event that has been created by Aberdeen City Council [Event management guides | Aberdeen City Council](#) or organisers can contact cityevents@aberdeencity.gov.uk for advice.

Communication and Interpretation

A transparent process should be adopted to ensure clear communication about the commission from start to finish. This will support public engagement throughout, build audience and encourage local ownership of temporary and permanent commissions. Interpretation of the work should be included whether in the form of a plaque, leaflet, website etc. To acknowledge the artist, client, funder and provide some detail about the inspiration behind the work to enable people to gain better understanding.

Evaluation

Each commission will have its own targets and timeline, and evaluation meetings should be arranged at key milestones with the project group and the appointed artist to monitor progress against original aims. It may be appropriate to engage external expertise to lead this process.

Evaluation should be considered and planned alongside the design of the commission, so that it reflects and measures the purpose of the project and any outcomes the project is intended to deliver.

It is important that the Public Art project group:

- Ensures that all user groups are consulted and involved in the evaluation process.
- Gathers baseline information to establish the effectiveness of what subsequently takes place.
- Gathers data that links, where appropriate, to local plans and strategies ensuring it is GDPR compliant.
- Decides if it is the process or the product, or both, which are being evaluated.
- Uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data gathering.

Maintenance, Decommission and Insurance Considerations

The following points should be taken into consideration into maintenance requirements:

- Maintenance, care and conservation of public artworks should be considered from the outset and built into any future plans.
- An ongoing maintenance budget should be in place for any works especially those that include use of water, electricity, digital or moving parts.
- Artists should provide a maintenance schedule including contact details for the artist and any fabricators used, detail of any colour palettes materials used as well as detailed instructions for caring for the work plus a decommissioning plan.
- Consider the need for and how works could be moved in future e.g., consider placement, fixings etc.
- Seek advice from the artist about the shelf life of any digital works and potential costs for regular updates.

Once the ownership of the work has been transferred to the client the responsible organisation should ensure that the adopted works are properly insured for damage, fire, theft and public liability insurance for the lifespan of the artwork.

It is essential to keep a central record of public artworks and associated details and maintenance plans to avoid future problems if key personnel move on. A copy of the record of the work should be provided to Aberdeen City Council (see section 11).

10. Maintenance

Where a statue or monument is located within the public realm the Council will need to be satisfied of the arrangements for future maintenance. The Council will want to ensure that the applicant can fund the entire project costs and that provision is made for the artwork, along with any associated landscaping, to be maintained into perpetuity, and to the specification of the City Council.

Artists may expect that if a work is commissioned for a public site, it will remain there permanently. This is hard to guarantee. It is better to agree that the work will remain in the proposed location for a specific period and its location will be reviewed, in conjunction with the artist, after that time. Any decision to relocate the work should involve the artist, or the artists estate and maintain the integrity of the work.

To ensure that the issues of maintenance and longevity of the artwork are addressed a plan should form part of the contract with consideration given to:

- The intended life of the work.
- Clarification of who owns the work.
- The materials to be used and their durability.
- The financial implications for routine cleaning and minor repairs.
- The environment where the work will be located (dampness, extreme wear and tear etc.).
- Clarification of who is responsible for checking the condition of the artwork or item and how often, and responsibilities for maintenance.
- Who is responsible for repairing the work if it is damaged (vandalism etc.).
- Decommissioning protocol: what happens in the event that the work deteriorates or becomes damaged beyond reasonable repair.
- Relocating: who needs to be consulted if it is proposed that the artwork is moved to another site.

Insurance of a statue or monument is also recommended for damage, fire, theft and public liability insurance for the lifespan of the work.

The cost of maintenance and decommissioning must be factored into the public art proposal and submitted to the Council for approval. A percentage of the production budget for the artwork must be put aside for its maintenance, up to 25 years, or for its decommissioning. This applies to public art in both the public realm and on private land. The specified period for maintenance is over 25 years, but the Council recognises that the maintenance period will vary depending on the type of proposed artwork, e.g., embedded artwork may require maintenance in perpetuity, whereas artist designed street furniture may have a life of up to 10 years. Maintenance Plans will be agreed with the Council on a case-by-case basis.

The maintenance of a public artwork within the private boundary of a site provided through a Section 75 agreement will be the responsibility of the developer or landowner.

The maintenance of a public artwork in the public realm will be the responsibility of the Council:

- Where this is a Council initiative, the maintenance will be funded by the Council;
- Where it is funded through a Section 75 agreement funding must be from the developer through a commuted sum within that agreement; and
- Where the Council supports public art works on the highway, they will be the responsibility of the Council, not the Highway Authority.

11. Documentation

Next to the original physical work itself, good documentation is essential for the return of investment and success of the public artwork, be that to ensure detailed records for maintenance, high quality photography to support promotion, project management records to support future commissioning or in the case of temporary works to provide essential documentation for legacy.

For general documentation we would recommend the following:

- Details of artist credit, title, year of production, medium, commissioner/ ownership, duration (if applicable).
- Information about the artist including qualifications, experience, and relevance for the project.
- Artist's concept and historical references (if any), relationship to the building design and the surrounding area, location, size, materials, life span/decommission date, and accessibility to the public.
- The commissioner should retain copies of the artist brief, the response proposals, consultation documentation, any associated planning documents, notarised artists contract including details on concept, fabrication, and installation.
- High quality photography, video or audio (as appropriate) should be used to document the artwork as well as the process of its development and fabrication.

Depending on the scale or type of work, supply of documentation may be a set requirement of the Public Art Panel process for approval.

The City Collection records in respect to public art are currently under development but it is the Council's plan to create a more comprehensive database of both permanent and temporary public art.

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/AAGM/collections/browse>



Paste It Up, Nuart Aberdeen Festival 2021
Photographer: Clarke Joss Photography



Ben Eire, Nuart Aberdeen Festival 2019, Photographer: Brian Tallman

Nuart



Martin Watson, Nuart Aberdeen Festival 2022
Photographer: Connor Gault

12. Decommissioning

Good practice when commissioning new work is to consider a decommissioning framework at the outset. A clearly written Decommissioning Plan should include an agreed assessment criteria, process and timescale for decommissioning. The artist, with those who commission new work should, as part of their role, produce a maintenance plan with all the technical specifications and other relevant issues, clearly considered through all stages of the commission, including a budget for the artwork's life expectancy.

Being outdoors exposed to all weathers, public art is subject to daily wear and tear, as well as vulnerable to such issues as vandalism or site redevelopment. Consequently, public artworks, clocks, monuments, fountains and other designed public realm features (such as significant signs or street furnishings) can begin to look tired, out of context or lose meaning or relevance for a site. Much care and thought goes into the original commissioning and positioning of such items but inevitably circumstances change, therefore it may be necessary to relocate or temporarily/permanently remove an item through a decommissioning or relocation process.

For example, one or more of the following conditions may apply:

- The work has physically deteriorated, and the physical condition of the work is no longer of an acceptable quality.
- The work possesses faults in its construction or materials, that are un-repairable or to an extent where the repair is unreasonable or impractical.
- It represents an unacceptable risk to public safety due to deterioration.

- It requires excessive or unreasonable ongoing maintenance.
- The work is not on display, rarely exhibited or there is no longer a suitable place to display the work.
- The work is a duplicate, or is considered "excess," in a large holding of work of that type or of that artist(s).
- It is no longer considered to be the original work of art; it is fraudulent or stolen.
- A written request from the artist(s) has been received, that seeks removal of the work, the return of the work to the artist, or for extensive repair of the work.
- Changes to the environment impact on the integrity of the work, affecting the artist's original intent or moral rights.
- The work no longer fulfils its purpose and is therefore not appropriate for continued public display (i.e., a historic monument where the context of the artwork is no longer relevant or appropriate to its community and its surrounds etc.).

A decommissioning plan allows for changing circumstances to be taken into account, such as the change of use of a site, or user, which necessitates the decommissioning (removal, re-siting or storage) of a work. In the case of temporary artworks, the Decommissioning Plan forms an important part of the public artwork proposal submission.

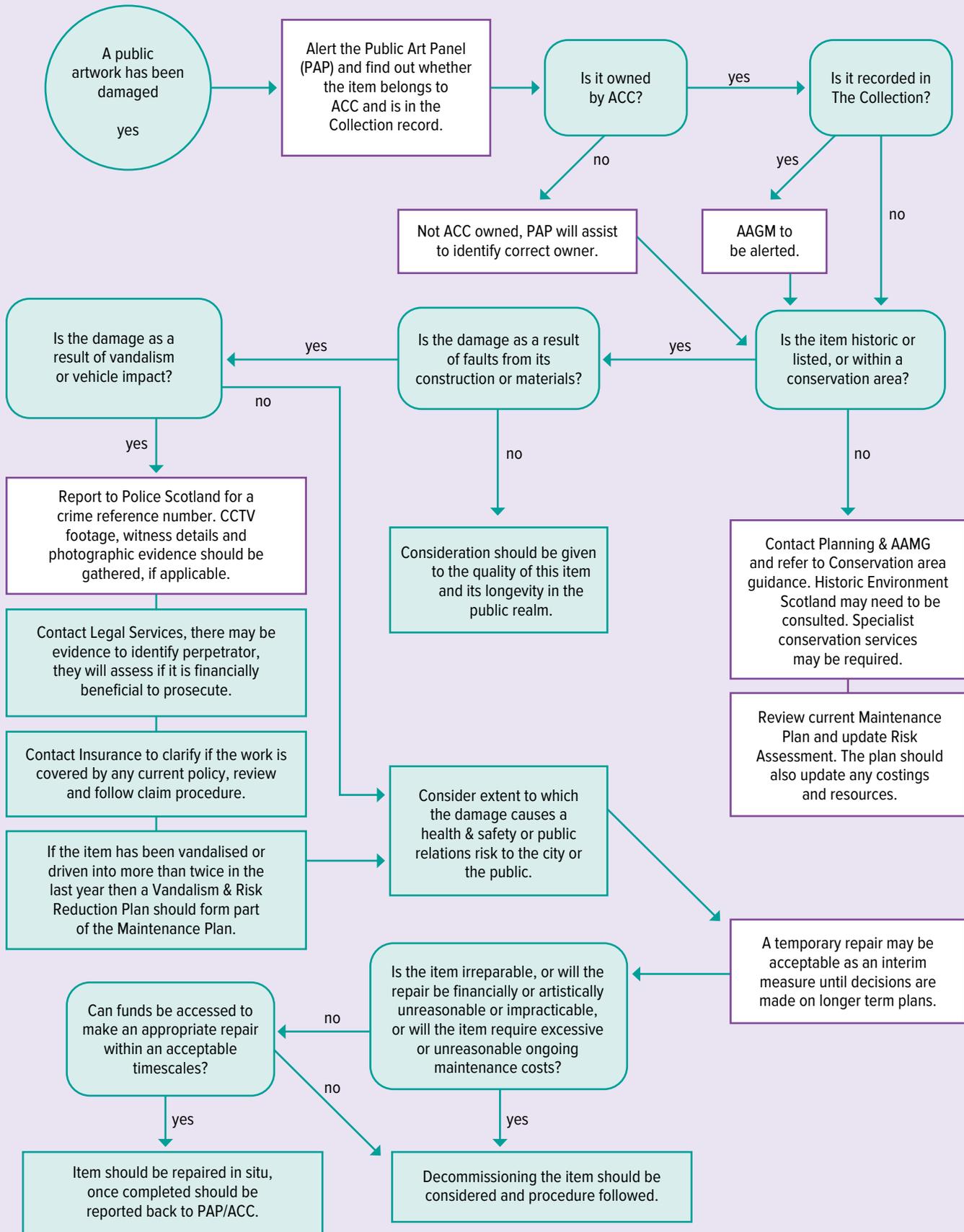
The process for decommissioning should be transparent and involve the Public Art Panel with experts, artists and interested parties.

Nuart



Elisa, Nuart Aberdeen Festival 2022. Photographer Conor Gault

Decommissioning/ Repair Decision flowchart



Decommissioning Checklist

Heritage considerations apply when:

- The artwork is historic or listed.
- The artwork is placed on, or within a listed building.
- The artwork sits within a conservation area, the grounds of a listed building or in a registered park or garden.

For assistance contact Conservation Team and/or search Historic Environment Scotland's database:

<https://www.historicenvironment.scot/advice-and-support/listing-scheduling-and-designations/>

Relocation Considerations

Is there another Aberdeen public or public/private environment where the item could be relocated?

Whether it is a public space owned by ACC, or a 'public' space owned by a private corporation, consideration should be given to the materials of the item and its change in environment (the character of the public realm; site lines; exposure to sunlight; footfall and potential for public interaction etc) and whether it will:

- Impact on the artistic integrity of the piece.
- Affect the artist's original intent or moral rights.
- Increase the potential for the item to be damaged or vandalised.

It is good practice to contact the artist and commissioner to seek guidance on relocation suggestions. PAP should be able to assist with this.

Ideally the recommended site should be unaffected by redevelopment in the next ten years.

If the site for relocation is within a conservation area, an environment surrounded by listed buildings or on a listed building, seek advice from ACC Conservation Team. Planning consent is likely to be required and these timescales should be considered at the start of the relocation process.

Points to weigh up for decommission or relocation

- Is the artwork of significant artistic, cultural or historical importance?
- Is the artwork authentic or a duplicate?
- Are there many works by this artist; regionally, nationally or internationally?
- Does the artwork display skilled workmanship and good quality?
- Is the financial value of the artwork significant?
- What were the circumstances in which the item was commissioned or made, e.g., does it commemorate or celebrate a significant event?
- Does the artwork celebrate an important figure from the City and/or wider region?
- Has the artwork been adopted as a recognised landmark by residents and/or visitors?

Considerations for moving items into temporary storage

Putting items into storage should be a last resort due to the inefficient high costs in transportation and logistical requirements in reassembling and reinstalling the item from storage. It is therefore important to obtain full costings for this process and ensure costs are covered prior to the item being stored. The recommendation for this course of action should include the estimated time it will stay in storage before a suitable development or alternative display option can be arranged.

It may be appropriate for some items to be stored at the Aberdeen Treasure Hub Collections Centre. Where the item is not ACC owned or has not been gifted to the City, there may be options for storing the item in private storage facilities. Contact PAP for guidance, publicart@aberdeencity.gov.uk.

Types of Decommissioning

Decommissioning refers to the process of removing an item from display permanently. Options include long-term storage, gifting, selling, loaning or destroying items.

The following are not preferred options for decommissioning: destruction; long-term storage (see note 5) and sale of an artwork, due a) to the public nature of the item and b) the appropriation of funds from the sale of the item. A policy decision is required to confirm if these funds could be ring-fenced to support maintenance costs for other items, or to support new commissions.

Recipients of gifted items could include: the original artist or their family, schools, other museum and art collections, arts organisations or local authorities.

Justification will need to be made as to why one of these above options have been recommended and/or the decision-making process used to recommend to whom an item is being gifted, loaned or sold, and on what terms and conditions.

Costs for deinstallation, transport, insurance and destruction of an item need to be taken into account, including the cost of quality repair work on the highways/ public realm once the item is removed.

Before an item is decommissioned, it should be documented, and a record kept by ACC - contact PAP for guidance, publicart@aberdeencity.gov.uk. It is good practice to contact the artist and commissioner to notify them of the reasons for this decision, and to undertake a good depth of public consultation as further options could arise as a result.

Stakeholder and Public Consultation

Consultation is a key part of the decision making process. It is a statutory requirement in respect to matters of planning consent.

However, not all artworks will require planning consent. It is recommended to consult on all artworks that may affect a particular area or community, stakeholder events and workshops can also be used to help to raise awareness and provide other methods of consultation. Contact PAP for guidance, publicart@aberdeencity.gov.uk.



Dolphin Watch Curated Place, Spectra, Aberdeen's Festival of Light, 2020
Photographs Ian Georgeson



Creatures from the Deep, Designs in Air, Curated Place, Spectra, Aberdeen's Festival of Light, 2020
Photographs Ian Georgeson

Spectra



Trumpet Flowers Amigo & Amigo, Curated Place, Spectra, Aberdeen's Festival of Light, 2020



Love at First Sight, Morag Myerscough, Look Again Festival 2019, Photographer Grant Anderson