

## **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PANEL**

**5 June 2007**

#### **Public Art and Design Policy: Taking up the Public Art Challenge 2007 – 2012**

(This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Cllr J. Horsley, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development)

#### **1 Purpose of Report**

- a) To highlight the main principles of the proposed updated public art and design policy (copies of the full policy and review are held in the members' room).
- b) To indicate to members a set of recommendations for adoption of the policy.

#### **2 Background**

- 2.1. In 2001 Taunton Deane Borough Council adopted a percent for art policy entitled Constructive Thinking: Public Art Policy 2001-2005. This led to a number of commissions including the Heron at the Hankridge Roundabout. The Tourist Information Points in Wellington, Wiveliscombe and neighbouring villages across West Deane were also designed by local artists.
- 2.2 Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan and Project Taunton provide a one-off opportunity to develop an outstanding public realm for current and future generations. High quality, sustainable design will create an outstanding accessible county town of which everyone can be proud. Excellent public art and functional civic design will increase the marketability of developments as well as generating significant economic and social benefits for Somerset.

#### **3 New definition of public art**

- 3.1 Aspirations to achieve high quality public art remain the same. However the new Local Development Framework offers an opportunity to refresh, reinvigorate and develop the public art policy and mechanisms to deliver it.
- 3.2. It is felt that the Council should continue to promote and support excellence in Public Art as an integral element of the design of buildings and public realm. Furthermore, it is also felt that the Council should seek to achieve integration and consideration of good quality public art and design in order to create a highly valued and attractive environment across the Borough.

- 3.3. Members are asked to note that a more detailed version of the proposed policy framework has been placed in the Members Room for information.

#### **4 Public Art & Design Policy Statements in the Local Development Framework**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Core Strategy and the Design Code SPD states that:

“Taunton Deane Borough Council promotes and supports excellence in public art as an integral element of the design of buildings and development and enhancement of the public realm.”

- 4.2 The current policy framework seeks to ensure that developers integrate public art into the design of buildings and the public realm from pre-planning throughout all stages of planning applications, and deliver a high quality during construction.
- 4.3 Developers must also address the issues of community response, sustainability and provision for maintenance costs.
- 4.4 The Council seeks to secure that developers commission an experienced public artist (who meets the criteria set out in the Developers’ Guide) particularly at designated public art and design sites within the Town Centre Area Action Plan.
- 4.5 If this is not achieved, as a default mechanism, one percent for art from all developments over 15 dwellings will be secured towards public art and enhancement of the public realm.

#### **5 Designated Public Art & Design Sites (DPAS)**

- 5.1 The following locations are recommended as designated art & design sites within the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan where the Council seeks to ensure that an artist is commissioned as part of the design team from the earliest possible stages.

- 5.2 Public realm developments led by Taunton Deane Borough Council, Somerset County Council, Somerset Highways Authority, the Environment Agency and other public bodies including:

- The River Tone frontage creating a pedestrian & cycle leisure corridor from Park & Rides East and West with legible links into the Town Centre
- Pedestrian routes from the train station & car parks into the town centre
- The Cultural Quarter including Coal Orchard, Goodland Gardens and Castle Green
- The Public realm within the town centre
- The Inner Relief Road, Third Way Bridges and main arterial routes.
- Outer Gateways such as the new M5 Park and Ride

- Inner Gateways to the Town Centre such as Corporation Street, East Reach, Station Road and Wellington Road,
- Multi Storey Car Parks

5.3 Developments led by the private sector

- Residential developments of significance size (15 dwellings or above) or visible from the river front.
- Retail developments of 2,500 sq metres or above
- Employment developments of 2,500 sq metres or above
- Mixed use developments of 2,500 sq metres or above
- Multi Storey Car Parks

5.4 Where the development is smaller, but significant because of visibility or location, the Council will still seek to secure integrated public art & design.

5.5 Taunton Deane Borough Council may waive or apply the Public Art and Design Policy and associated Section 106 obligations for all or part of a DPAS as it sees fit.

5.6 A DPAS may be subsequently redefined in an appropriate LDF document.

5.7 The area of a DPAS may include smaller specific DPA sites which may be defined subsequently.

## 6 Implementation

6.1 It is recommended that the Council sets up a Public Art Panel which will monitor the planning applications, and seek to ensure that a high standard of Public Art is incorporated at the earliest appropriate stages of planning and delivered during the development.

Taunton Deane Borough Council's existing public art and design working group consists of the arts officer, a senior planning officer, a representative of the Taunton and District Civic Society and the Somerset County Council public art officer. It is proposed that this is strengthened with member involvement to become a Public Art Panel that meets on a regular basis to monitor implementation.

Public Art South West and CABA will be invited to advise the panel and the Council as required

6.2 The Public Art Panel will:

- Advocate the significance of excellent public art and design
- Seek to deliver the Public Art & Design Policy through collaboration and negotiation.
- Respond to significant planning applications and pertinent policies
- Propose a design champion for the Council.
- Consult with officers, agencies and council members to recommend & ensure development sites achieve the desired quality of integrated public art and design.
- Secure additional resources to enable the council to implement the policy especially in the light of Project Taunton developments.

- g) Monitor & support a public art commissioning advisory service for negotiations between planners, developers, artists, communities & other agencies.
  - h) Monitor & review planning applications & ensure Section 106 and conditions are met.
  - i) Review existing work & arrange maintenance or decommissioning as necessary.
  - j) Ensure that public art & design are identified in corporate priorities and included within Local Area Agreements, the sustainable community strategy, the cultural strategy and other relevant policies over time.
- 6.3 The arts officer and planners will take on the following responsibilities until such time as additional resources are found for a Public Art specialist to manage the implementation of the policy.
- Convene and administer to the public art panel
  - Implement an action plan agreed with the public art and design panel
  - Produce, distribute and maintain commissioning guidelines for private and public developers.
  - Monitor and comment on planning applications for public art contributions
    - Manage any direct commissions from Taunton Deane Borough Council.
  - Provide a commissioning advice service for developers and planning officers which includes:
    - a) Briefing developers on the TDBC Public Art & Design Policy, and how it affects them, issuing the Developers' Guidelines and any other supplementary guidance.
    - b) Providing contacts for artists & other specialists.
    - c) Signposting advice on project management and commissioning.
    - d) Assisting Development Control in the assessment of public consultations carried out by developers, and the extent to which the proposals are in line with the Public Art & Design Policy and the community strategy.
    - e) Advising Development Control over planning conditions and section 106 contributions for public art, and assisting in negotiations as required.
    - f) Collaborating with planners and others to incorporate public art and design into the legibility guide for the Town Centre Area Action Plan and other plans as necessary.
    - g) Advising Development Control on provisions for maintenance, after care & decommissioning as appropriate.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1. There are no financial implications for the Council arising from this report.

## **8. Recommendations**

8.1. It is recommended that the members:

- a) Consider the public art and design policy outlined above.
- b) Consider the benefits of inclusion of the Policy framework as outlined above in the Council's emerging Local Development Framework and strengthened planning procedures.

c) Consider the establishment of a Public Art Panel to manage the public art policy and its implementation.

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