

3. ART IN PUBLIC PLACES POLICY

Officer responsible Associate Director	Author John Dryden, Associate Director, DDI 361-1652
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The purpose of this report is to confirm that the Environment Committee will be responsible for policy relating to Art in Public Places.

INTRODUCTION

Works of art placed in the city's public spaces such as its squares and parks have long contributed to the image and pleasantness of the city.

From the time of settlement through to the middle of the 20th century, public art works have commemorated many of our early historic figures and events. The Bridge of Remembrance, the Citizens War Memorial, Victoria Clock Tower, the Barker Fountain and the statues of Godley, Captain Cook, Queen Victoria, Moorhouse, Rolleston, Fitzgerald and Scott, come to mind. Many of these are now listed as heritage items in the City Plan.

Since about 1950, public art has been less about commemorating events and people and more about adding aesthetic features to the townscape. For example, the Stewart Fountain, the Ferrier Fountain and the Floral Clock and soon, Chalice.

Another aspect is works which may be on private land adjoining and readily visible from public places and works within public buildings that are generally open to the public.

Apart from remembering important events or people, works or art in public places add life and interest to the streetscene, provide focal points for vistas and views and add to the general attractiveness of the city for residents and visitors alike. Some cities have used major public artworks as a driver of economic change, for example about the "Angel of the North" near Newcastle, UK, "the undistinguished town of Gateshead has suddenly acquired an international reputation which has boosted both tourism and economic activity". Apart from the quality of the art itself, its relationship to the city's layout, buildings, streets and paths has a major impact on the environment of our city.

CURRENT POLICY

The Council currently has an Art in Public Places Policy, approved in 1993. Apart from setting out a number of objectives and criteria for evaluation of proposals, the policy established an Art in Public Places Working Party to give advice to the Council and in particular to the then Cultural and Social Services Committee.

The general Arts and Policy strategy of the Council is currently being revised and in relation to art in public places, the intention is that it:

- promotes and expands public arts programme, which includes art from a wide spectrum
- facilitates and promotes events and performances in public spaces
- ensures that the arts are considered in all Council sponsored capital projects and programmes as resources allow
- encourages developers to include the arts as part of significant new developments and regeneration programmes."

CONCLUSION

Art in Public Places is clearly a part of the wider Arts Policy of the Council. At the same time, Art in Public Places does play a major role in the environment of the City, particularly in the Central City. Its integration into the wider environment and juxtapositions with building and public spaces is clearly important. Any requirement for developers to include arts as a part of new building projects, will need to be developed through the City Plan.

Provided the Art in Public Places Policy is administered within an overall art framework, there should be no difficulty with the Environment Committee assuming responsibility for administering this policy.

- Recommendation:**
1. That the Council agree to the Art in Public Places Policy becoming the responsibility of the Environment Committee.
 2. That a review of the Art in Public Places Policy be carried out.