

## SERVICE UPDATE

<b><u>Name of Function:</u></b>	City Growth
<b><u>Date:</u></b>	18/01/2023
<b><u>Title of Update:</u></b>	Public Art Guidance and Panel
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### **UPDATE:**

The establishment of the Public Art Panel Aberdeen (PAPA) Terms of Reference and the Public Art Guidance was approved at the Finance and Resource Committee meeting on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

PAPA was set up to advise The Council on public art matters and review proposals for public art that are on Council land, buildings and adopted roads. The Public Art guidance and information on the PAPA process was published on The Council website in early 2023 to direct any enquiries from interested parties.

Membership of the PAPA was set out in the terms of reference and in accordance with its purpose as an advisory group. It is made up of Officers representing the relevant Council Services pertaining to public art matters, including Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums, Corporate Landlord and Planning. The Panel is chaired by the Cultural Planning Officer who has the responsibility of presenting submitted proposals to the panel for consideration and collating feedback to provide to the applicant and where relevant reporting to committee.

In this pilot year the panel reviewed seven applications, five applications were projects that had already started prior to the panel being set up and were quite far into their development, limiting the consideration and supporting advice which could be provided. These were Aberdeen Letters and Nuart by Aberdeen Inspired. The Tillydrone Gateway Feature Sculpture Trail, Tilly Tops by the Donside Village Community Scio. The Denis Law Legacy trail by Aberdeen City Council and Denis Law Trust. JJR MacLeod by the JJR Memorial Statue Society.

Applicants were invited to attend a meeting online or in person with officers to discuss their proposals. This gave the applicant and the panel the opportunity to ask questions and for the panel to give advice for next steps. After each meeting a letter was sent to the applicant, providing a record of points considered as well as recommendations.

In the case of the projects that were already in development the Panel could not comment on the commissioning process and the artists selected. They also noticed common situations of no prior consideration in the proposal when confirming the final ownership and responsibility of the public artwork. This lack of clarity meant it was unclear if liabilities fell to The Council or the applicant in respect to maintenance,

insurance and decommissioning of the public art work. This has led to the PAPA to make sure that there is a record of the ownership of these artworks, and information about their life span and decommissioning.

Two projects that PAPA have supported and were in early development in 2023 have been the Aberdeen Market Commission led by Aberdeen City Council, Corporate Landlord, and North Hub Scotland also the Remembering Together Covid Memorial project led by SHMU on behalf of Culture Aberdeen, with The Council as a partner and member of the steering group. Both projects have now been shortlisted and interviews will be in February 2024. In the case of the Remembering Together memorial the Communities, Housing and Public Protection May committee recommended this artwork is to be sited in Bon Accord gardens.

Following the end of the pilot year Officers of PAPA have met to review and reflect on the current processes and to consider any areas for improvement or lessons learned throughout the year. Feedback has also been sought from applicants and wider Council services such as Environmental Services which have a role to play as custodians of public art. The feedback given has indicated they felt the process has given a consistent approach to projects, giving staff and community groups more confidence. Some applicants have found the process very beneficial in the case of permanent artworks while another applicant felt it was an additional process.

PAPA met at short notice throughout the year to accommodate applications and going forward would like to have set meetings throughout the year that coincide with the Finance and Resource committee process, this will be published through The Council webpages. The participants have found that meeting as a group in person to be the most beneficial way to operate and have considered options to streamline meetings to be more effective for both officer and applicant time. A new scoring-based matrix will be introduced to provide a more nuanced approach to feedback on areas of improvement to applicants, and to offer a more consistent approach for reviewing and reporting back to committee in the future. They would also like to action 5.3 in the Terms of Reference to invite participation from external organisations who have public art knowledge and experience to join the panel.

PAPA will continue to review the Public Art Guidance, to make improvements to give applicants greater clarity and streamline the review process. This will include confirming the key objectives, which all applicants will need to consider when submitting a proposal for public art in the city, in accordance with the current vision set out in the Guidance. Further information will also be included in the document on how relevant Council services will use or reference the guidance in accordance with current policies and strategies.

Through the PAPA review meetings, a number of areas have been identified which will require further investigation with services;

- Identified increase in demand for monuments and memorials. This is an area which may require a specific process or adaption of the Plaque Policy for consideration at a future committee.
- Lack of records for historic public art sited on Council land, this includes confirmation of ownership, maintenance plans and condition surveys which could pose future risk. To resolve this Officers are currently looking at external funding options to undertake a public art audit, providing the necessary information assurance, and could also form the basis for public art maps and trails to engage residents and visitors alike in exploring Aberdeen and its many cultural assets.