

Full Council

Date:	10 August 2021
Title:	Public Art Thame
Contact Officer:	Cassie Pinnells, Acting Town Clerk

Purpose of the Report

1. To approve the signing and sealing of a Legal Agreement to draw down Section 106 Funds towards Public Art from South Oxfordshire County Council.

Background

2. Thame has been awarded Public Arts Funding through Section 106 agreements in light of new developments in the town. In November 2017, The Town Centre Working Group formed a sub Public Arts Working Group to write a Public Art strategy. The Strategy set out the definition of public art, its value, what needs to be done to ensure the s106 funding is spent appropriately and that the community is involved.
3. The strategy was approved at the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee meeting on Tuesday 25 September 2018, giving the Working Group permission to progress projects proposed in Section 10 of the Strategy, within available funds to completion, in line with the Strategy.
4. Section 10 of the Strategy outlines priority projects. The first project is a 'Town-wide wayfinding project that both improves communication routes through the town as well as raising awareness of Thames Heritage. Included in this connecting all new estates into Thame, but also covering wayfinding throughout the rest of town (covering Lea Park)'. This project was split into 3 Phases:
 - a) Phase 1: identify the most suitable places for pieces of Public Art to be located. Use this information to finalise an Artists Brief, then send out a call to artists to respond to this brief.
 - b) Phase 2: Commission an Artist who will then choose from proposed locations; engage in research community engagement and design, including risk assessment, installation and method statement.
 - c) Phase 3: Pending fully costed design proposals for creations, delivery of works, installation and unveiling of the works of art.
5. Phase 1 began in 2019 and drew down £4,950 from S106 Ref:15S31. This engaged with members of the community and led to the creation of a Wayfinding report. From this an Artists Brief for this project was created, calling for an Artist who would lead on the wayfinding project, but also lead on establishing art that responds to the heritage and history in a few key locations on these wayfinding routes.
6. Earlier in 2021, Phase 2 was started with this Artist's Brief going out to advert. Following a positive response to this call to artists, and through a competitive interview process, a lead artist – Nicola Henshaw – was selected.
7. Arts Development Officer at South Oxfordshire District Council, Abigail Brown, has guided us through the commissioning process.

Funding Drawdown Required

8. We now want to commission our lead artist to carry on in the implementation of Phase 2 and move this work through Phase 3. The aim is for this work to commence in September 2021.
9. In order to do this, we need to draw down funds from S106 as follows:
 - a) £47,772.47 from 15S31 “Public art contribution towards directional signage and information boards on the foot ways around Thame”. This was £52,672.47, with £4900 already spent to develop the Wayfinding Strategy of leaving £47,772.47.
 - b) £22,957.94 from 15S12 “towards Public Art in Thame”, and
 - c) £9519.59 from 15S13 (of £31,522.97 leaving £22, 0003.38 for our next public art project) “towards Public Art in Thame”.
10. To meet our ambition of launching this work in September 2021, Approval is sought for the Acting Town Clerk to sign the relevant legal agreements to allow the drawdown of this funding between this and the next meeting of the Full Council.

Legal Powers

- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act s19
- Localism Act 2011 s1 General Power of Competence

Recommendation:

- i) ***To approve the signing of relevant legal agreements by Acting Town Clerk to allow the drawdown of this funding so that work can commence in September 2021.***