

Weymouth Artist Design Brief for a Permanent Public Art Commission

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COMMISSION SUMMARY FOR LEAD ARTIST/MAKER/SCULPTOR/CREATIVE TEAM

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council seeks to commission an artist/designer/creative team to lead on the design of a series of public sculptures as a town trail. As the lead artist, they will also have a consultancy role to guide the integration of elements derived from community involvement into some of the works. They will be responsible for liaising with our producer, industrial manufacturer and other freelancers, with regards to the production and installation of the sculptures. Some of the sculptures will be required to integrate water bottle refill units into their design.

Deadline for expressions of interest (longlisting): TBC

Fee payable for outline proposal by 3 shortlisted artists: £1,000 per artist, to include research site-visit

Total contract fee for selected artist/team: £25,000 (supported by an estimated £40k production/installation budget)

Contract duration: TBC

Enquiries: contact TBC

1. DETAIL OF COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY FOR LEAD ARTIST/MAKER/SCULPTOR/CREATIVE TEAM

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council wish to appoint an artist/designer/sculptor **to lead on a public art project** along a designated route in Weymouth Town Centre. The resultant **sculptures/installations will demarcate a journey around the town**, in relation to a series of water refill units. Historically, drinking fountains were much loved because they **were beautiful architectural features**, which created places where people could congregate.

We seek to commission an experienced **artist, maker and visionary thinker/s** to lead the project and create a **feature artwork**. We welcome applications by teams if that provides the complex skills base this commission demands. Someone who can imagine how, in the footsteps of the Victorians and Georgians, we can install contemporary drinking fountains throughout the town using a sculptural approach, to present them as both beautiful and useful. One of the reasons public drinking fountains increasingly disappeared from our streets is the health risk they are perceived to present. Today's solution is to think differently, with an environmental impetus – to reduce the amount of single-use plastics overwhelming our land and oceans. By providing **water refill stations** in the town centre, we hope to reduce litter and pollution, whilst providing fresh water, free for all.

This commission is for a creative practitioner who is passionate about how contemporary art & design can improve the places where we live, work and play. We are looking for inspirational ideas about how the refill units can be embraced, embellished and integrated into the streets by the using some form of **sculptural presence**, as well as **introduce a trail** between them. There will be 6-8 stations installed connecting both sides of the harbour. Some of the water refill units will be encased, surrounded by, connected with, or accompanied by, their visual and material identity.

The full role of the **lead artist** is set out below the summary of the consultation findings.

2. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION CONDUCTED SUMMER 2018

b-side, an NPO Arts Council England funded arts organisation, were contracted to conduct a public consultation to inform this brief for a significant public artwork/s in the town. Beginning with the question "Should this public artwork be useful, or beautiful, or both?" a discussion was raised about what contemporary art might look like in the town, and what it might be. Consultation feedback was that it should be both, and three favoured approaches rose to the surface – a pavilion, sculpture/s or a drinking fountain. All feedback was collated and analysed – the drinking fountains came up as the favourite. The pavilion idea will be addressed by using the commissioned artwork to define designated busking areas for public events and performances to occur. Combining the drinking fountains with some form of sculptural installation came up as a clear favourite. (See consultation report).

Type of work

Preferences:

1. Drinking fountain
2. Pavilion/bandstand
3. Sculpture

Locations

People wish to see a trail of sculptures that connect various sites around the town, with specific attention to Hope Square, New Bond Street and the Esplanade

Permanent and Temporary

People asked us to provide both permanent and temporary artworks, allowing for a flexible approach that can accommodate community artworks and events in the future, as well as lead the way in creating something permanent and special for the identity of Weymouth as a destination.

Visibility

There were many comments about creating selfie/photo opportunities. They will be taken into consideration when selecting suitable locations for each unit.

3. THE BRIEF FOR THE LEAD ARTIST/TEAM

Weymouth has a fascinating history, a beautiful bay, working harbour and wonderful architecture. How the commissioned artworks tell the story of Weymouth is open to your creative interpretation.

What we seek to achieve:

- We want the artworks to tell a **story about Weymouth**, with a **contemporary twist**.
- A **series/trail of artworks** that lead visitors through the town, some/or all of them, positioned in relation to water refill units.
- **The lead artist is required to develop some way of connecting the units visually, to create a trail of sculptures** along an agreed route and **tell a story** as it does so.
- Together, the artworks and stations will **animate the streets, connecting people and places**, to produce an exciting and unique way of creating public art that is both useful, and beautiful. Cohesion could be achieved by using a repeat/sequential motif. For example, there may be areas that require demarcation as designated busking areas, or signage, creating a visual network.
- We encourage creative solutions concerning how **sculpture/installation** can relate to the refill units.

Traditional public drinking fountains are deemed to carry health risks, due to mouth contact, so we have been advised to focus on **water refill stations**. We will be the first seaside town in the UK to **integrate the fountains with sculptures** in such a unique way. This brief is for the **permanent artwork/s**, requiring a lifespan of a minimum of **ten years**. Consider how the Victorians and Georgians dressed their water fountains. What/how might the artwork be manifest is open to interpretation. Together, the refill unit and the sculpture create a 'refill station'.

The refill units: The units will be supplied from a separate budget to the fee, production and installation budgets and be WRAS compliant. Which units are suitable will depend on how the artist/designer elects to work with them, so that will be decided at a later stage. They need to be robust in every way and require plumbing in and have a low level of drainage. They are inclined to be visually low-impact.

The design: The 'design' we refer to is the **concept** and the **physical presence in relation to the refill units**. It could be a sculpture or an installation of any form. We seek visually high-impact designs that will stand out, as the streets are visually busy.

The 'motif': Is where a theme or 'repetitive' element is employed within the 'design' which may be applied in other contexts.

Ideas/questions to stimulate thinking:

1. The artwork could be installed on the ground, on walls close to, or around, the units or above them, or some other way.
2. It may be possible to embed the units into, or surround them by, the artwork.
3. A motif may be used to link the different sculptural forms and could also appear in surprise places, such as the underside of the Town Bridge (a popular suggestion), on the interior walls of public toilets, on rooftops, at the end of streets.
4. Consider in what ways communities could contribute to the design of the motif/s.ⁱⁱ
5. Modular units may be the best way to proceed – e.g. using tiles, cast materials (metal, concrete, glass, resin etc). Modularity allows flexibility in how many can be produced within budget.
6. The sculptures can all be different but must be visually relatable in some way, to provide a sense of 'trail' and a narrative to connect them.
7. The sense of 'trail' could be evident by telling a story or revealing a sequence of events.ⁱⁱⁱ
8. As the refill units are discrete in scale and design, how can we draw attention to them and make them visible from a distance?
9. How can they be positioned to connect both sides of the harbour?

As the **lead artist/team**, you will be familiar with **working collaboratively with communities**. You will have the support of a Producer, Project Manager and Council Officers with relevant experience. Wessex Water will also advise on the project, specifically in matters relating to the refill units. You will have the support of a Producer, Project Manager and Council Officers with relevant experience.

4. DELIVERABLES

To devise, design and produce a series of sculptural installations, making a trail through the town. Some of the installations will be required to incorporate water refill units and/or motifs contributed by communities, others to define/demarcate busking areas.

In detail:

- a) To design a related series of works that have the potential to host input from others in terms of motif/objects/words/styling. For example, if the work is to be ceramic, it may have drawings transcribed on tiles; if it were of cast elements there might be objects elected or cast by others, to embed; or patterns embraced – all depends on the medium used by the lead artist/team. The series could be identical in form, or different; identical in materiality, or different.
- b) To liaise with producer, industrial manufacturer and other professionals with reference to manufacture/production of the sculptures and how the proposed motifs are installed/embedded
- c) To liaise with an appointed local historian/storyteller to agree on a visual narrative that can a) connect the series of works and b) provide a starting point for others to contribute ideas/designs for motifs. A 'station' may respond to either its location, or to some factor drawn from the story.
- d) To liaise with the Producer on how best to deliver public engagement aspects of the project, which will be supported from another budget line
- e) To advise manufacturers and contractors on production of all works
- f) To liaise with Producer, Project Manager and other parties where required

5. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

With the increasing need for us to reduce single-use plastics, modern drinking fountains are now manufactured for the public to refill their reusable drink containers. We wish to integrate them into the streetscape by making them highly visible, by accompanying them with some form of contemporary fabrication process. Think ceramic tiles, wrought iron, glass or another street-wise material that is

sustainable and vandal-resistant. Those old drinking fountains are your inspiration, we wish to extend how that thinking could be used to connect places by forming trails and telling stories.

6. HOW TO APPLY

We initially request a simple expression of interest which must include:

- Up to two sides of A4 expression of interest (excluding the CV). In your EOI, you should succinctly outline your track record and creative practice, and how your preliminary thoughts for this commission might meet the selection criteria below.
- Your contact details
- CV – no longer than 2 sides of A4
- If you are applying as a team, include CV's for all and a brief outline of how you will work together
- Up to four images of previous artworks, URLs links to other media documentation of your work
- 2 named referees, which will be taken up should you be shortlisted to final three

7. SELECTION PROCESS

1. We request initial applications in the form of **2 - page EOI & CV with 2 named referees and up to four images of previous artworks, URLs and links** to other media documentation of your work. Submitted by email. **No fee** is payable for this stage. References will only be followed up if you are shortlisted to produce an outline proposal. **No interviews will be held** – shortlisting will be conducted on the quality of the ideas and track record presented in the EOI and CV. You are welcome to **contact us for an informal conversation** prior to submitting your EOI.
2. The independent Producer will present a longlist of EOI's and CV's to the selection panel.
3. The Arts Advisory Panel^{iv}, supported by the Producer, will select **three** artists/teams to take forward to present an outline proposal.
4. Following the site visit and receipt of the **three outline proposals**, The Arts Advisory Panel, supported by the Producer, will select **one** artist/team to take forward to contract as lead artist/team.

8. SELECTION CRITERIA TO BE APPLIED TO EOI

Applicants must consider the following criteria which their EOI will be measured against during the selection process. On receipt of the EOI's, an Arts Producer will create a shortlist of potential artists who meet these criteria and present those to the Arts Advisory Panel. Together, they will select **3 artists to produce an outline proposal for a fee of £1000**. In the EOI **you must** reference these **6 criteria to be eligible for selection**:

1. Demonstrate how well you understand the needs of a public art commission and provide evidence of relevant experience.
2. Demonstrate your enthusiasm for doing the necessary research in the town, to ensure the finished artwork will be unique and site-responsive. Your design will be required to engage with local narratives. It is not necessary, at this stage, to have identified the precise narrative theme, but if you have ideas, do share them.
3. Demonstrate your understanding of your proposed medium/process for the sculpture/installation. Your preferred material may be ceramics, glass, iron, stone, or anything else that meets the needs of a permanent, outdoor artwork, as a maintenance contract will be required to cover a minimum of ten years. (You may, for instance, be a studio potter and have never produced tiles suitable for outdoor use. That's fine, as the final production will be made by a commercial industrial process, using your design, with your guidance.) But do tell us if you have done something similar before.
4. Evidence your experience in designing artworks which are constructed and installed by a team of professionals, with guidance from appropriate specialists, as well as yourself.
5. Evidence that you are experienced at working with a diverse range of partners who will contribute to the overall project.
6. As the lead artist/team, you will be familiar with working collaboratively with communities.

It would also be **useful** to know your experience of the following:

1. Tell us how you might meet the need to create a trail through the town.
2. Depending on the final proposal, we may need to gain planning permission for the final work. Tell us if you have experience of submitting planning applications for permanent artworks.
3. Share any understanding of relevant legislation with regards to manufacture, including material-specific needs, British Standards and compliance with regulations.

3 artists will be selected by the Advisory Panel, supported by the Producer, and will be awarded a £1000 fee to progress an outline proposal. As part of that process, artists will be required to attend a site visit for information gathering and research, prior to preparing their outline proposal. This will be an opportunity to talk with the commissioning team and look at the locations identified during the consultation. **The site visit is part of the selection process and is compulsory.**

The contract will be awarded according to the outline proposals submitted, informed by our confidence that the selected person is the best applicant to meet the needs of the project.

9. OUTLINE PROPOSAL SELECTION CRITERIA

The outline proposals will be scored against the following criteria:

- The overarching design strategy – how achievable it is within budget
- Clear allocation of costings by category - fees, materials, specialists, manufacture, installation
- How it meets the needs of the overall brief in terms of permanence (a ten-year maintenance schedule will be required)
- How each element of the project is addressed, including how community/Dorset artist involvement will be achieved
- Demonstration of professional approach and understanding of public art work
- Demonstration of how quality control will be managed
- How the proposed sculptures/installations will provide something unique for Weymouth
- How the proposed sculptures/installations successfully create a coherent trail in the designated areas

Further information on application process:

The expression of interest **must** respond to the **criteria** against which it will be assessed. These criteria are particularly important to the Council as a means of ensuring that the artist/designer/team is able to deliver within the tight time window and has a good understanding of the processes required when producing a permanent public artwork for a town centre. **Only individual applicants, or teams, who have experience of creating work for the public realm** are going to understand those complexities.

In-house support for the artist/designer throughout the commission period:

- The Council will employ an Independent Producer, who will be available to support and guide as and when needed.
- There will be a designated Council Project Manager who will oversee all technical, licensing and installation needs, as well as liaising with the various Council departments, as required.
- The Producer and Project manager will liaise with external partners, for example, Wessex Water, who are supporting this project.

10. TIMELINE

Applicants must be able to work within these time constraints.

ACTION	DEADLINE	NOTES
Expressions of interest submitted	TBC	Initial applications by 2-page EOI & CV only. Inc 2 named referees and up to 4 images + links/URL's. (see below) No fee payable

3 Shortlisted artist/designer/teams selected	TBC	The Arts Advisory Panel is supported by an Arts professional will select three artists to take forward to outline proposal stage. They will attend a site-visit and work up an outline proposal and associated budget.
1 artist/team will be selected from the shortlisted 3	TBC	Dates for progressing the work will be agreed with the designated Project Manager, the Arts Advisory Panel and the arts professional.
Artist research, planning and designing	TBC	Dates to be agreed
Final design signed off for production	TBC	Dates for approving the final design for the work will be agreed with the designated Project Manager, the Arts Advisory Panel and the arts professional
Installation of the works	TBC	Dates for manufacturing and installing the work will be agreed with the designated Project Manager, the Arts Advisory Panel and the arts professional

11. FEES, PRODUCTION BUDGET AND OUTPUT STAGES

There are separate budgets for the whole project. Please note that the stage one payment is for **the design phase only**, the production and installation budgets allow for either the artist or sub-contractor to manufacture the works and will be managed flexibly. The full proposal will be required to include detail of manufacture costs etc. with which to commence the production phase. Staged payments will then be agreed according to need.

1. **No fee is payable for the expression of interest.** Artists are asked to submit a 2-page (maximum) expression of interest, CV up to four images, 2 names of referees and links to further information. As explained above, the expression of interest must respond to the criteria against which they will be assessed by. (see above).
2. **A fee of £1000** will be payable to each of the 3 artists/teams selected from EOI submission to attend a site meeting and submit an outline proposal and outline budget tender. The £1000 fee must cover all travel and accommodation costs and materials relating to presentation of the outline design proposal and deliverables.
3. **A staged contract for £25,000** will be issued to **ONE artist/team** awarded the contract. Payment stages to be agreed on appointment. They will then develop their broad stage outline to a final working proposal, with proposed budgets, for approval by the Advisory Committee. The artist will be working very closely with the Producer and Project Manager, as part of the project/engineering team throughout the implementation of the project. Other support will be provided as needed. This combined design & consultancy fee is to develop the final design/s of the series of sculptures, which must include an aspect of integrating design elements/motifs provided by others, in a pertinent way. To liaise with producer and industrial manufacturer with reference to manufacture/production of the sculptures and how the motifs are installed/embedded.

It is important to understand at this stage that there is a separate budget for production and installation. We can provide some flexibility in how that is used, in response to the proposed works and methods of manufacture. As a guideline only – we anticipate a total of £40,000 to be available to cover materials, production and installation. We actively encourage using Dorset suppliers, makers, craftworkers and materials where possible.

Modularity

It is anticipated that the finished artworks will need to be industrially manufactured to meet BS Standards and any necessary compliancy regulations. It must be frost proof, resilient, vandal resistant, colour fast and salt-water/wind resistant. If the designs are flexible and modular, we can cost out how many we can purchase of each. Inevitably, the amount we can purchase will impact on the design and how

many/where the units/modules are installed. We are open to exploring options. Until we know the intentions of the selected design, it is not possible to cost it accurately.

Copyright

The artist will retain the copyright on all drawings and designs they produce for the primary commissioning contract. We reserve the right to use the designs produced for this commission for other associated merchandise and signage in the town of Weymouth in perpetuity.

Insurances

The artist, and anyone working with them, must have suitable insurance as below:

- Public Liability £5m
- Employers Liability £5m (needed if the artist employs staff)
- Product Liability £1m

12. PARTNERS & SUPPORT PROVIDED BY WPBC

- The Arts Advisory Panel is comprised of seven Councillors. They will select the artist for the commission, with support from an Independent Producer, who will then advise the artist for the duration of the commission. The Producer will liaise with the artist and the Project Manager, and officers, where required. They will also assist the artist in making key curatorial decisions.
- A local historian/writer will be contracted, from another budget line, to advise on local narratives and support the lead artist in developing the theme for the final proposal
- A Dorset artist/educator will be contracted, from another budget line, to support the project to deliver community workshops if required. To be agreed by appointed lead artist/team and producer.
- Support will be available, if needed, to transcribe source designs from public for use in the finished artworks.
- Weymouth & Portland Borough Council has a wide range of in-house staff who will support the commission, ranging from an Urban Designer, Town Manager, Conservation Officer, Beach Manager and Environmental Officer.
- They will also provide an in-house Project Manager who will liaise with the artist at all stages and ensure all the engineering, technical and highways needs are addressed. If a planning application is necessary, all officers will help to ensure the application is submitted appropriately.
- Tourism and marketing will be involved in the development of the project, as it is intended that the results will be exciting, compelling and attract people to the town, as well as be of interest and pride to those that live here.
- Wessex Water is supporting the Weymouth community who wish to install water refill points. It will contribute to the costs of a set number of an agreed style of refill units with Wessex Water branding clearly visible. Wessex Water will provide expert advice on the location, installation and ongoing public health maintenance.

13. CONTACTS

Submit your EOI by email to: [\[contact name subject to agreement prior to release of this brief\]](#)

ⁱ This is budget dependant

ⁱⁱ For example, casting objects, incorporating words, drawings or designs, sourced from the community participants.

ⁱⁱⁱ For example, [The Dreadnought Story](#) includes Weymouth – it could mean that each of the units tells the story of the major events)

^{iv} The Arts Advisory Panel is a group of 7 elected Councillors, who will be supported on the selection by an independent Producer