



BLACKPOOL COUNCIL

ARTIST'S
COMMISSION
OPPORTUNITY



ARTIST'S COMMISSION OPPORTUNITY ANCHORSHOLME PROMENADE, BLACKPOOL 'Sketch' Concept Design Brief

Blackpool Council has an exciting opportunity for an artist to develop a public art work for Anchorsholme Promenade. The site is located between the seafront promenade and the coastal road Princess Way and is adjacent to the T junction with Anchorsholme Lane West.

We invite expressions of interest from artists, designers or creative professionals experienced in creating work for the public realm to produce outline ideas. We will select up to 4 artists from the expressions of interest with each artist receiving a fee of £1,000 to produce 'sketch' concept design proposals.

A sum of up to £45k is available for the Council to commission further detailed designs, production and installation of the work.





Background

This opportunity has come about due to a £80M investment by United Utilities in work to change and upgrade the sewer network in the town. This has included the redevelopment of Anchorsholme Park which opened to the public in July 2020 after a 5 year make over with a new café/community meeting space, amphitheatre, play area, hard ball courts, and a new underground waste tank and pumping station. The work was carried out so less wastewater escapes into the sea when it rains heavily and a new, longer outfall pipe which will carry wastewater further out to sea was laid down. The site proposed for the artwork is directly above the old Victorian underground tank and where the original pumping station was located; this has been decommissioned as part of the overall scheme and is being filled in with concrete. The original iron ventilation ducts are also to be removed.

Image showing scale of the works to create the new state of the art pumping station and redevelopment of Anchorsholme Park – now all completed. The red circle indicates the proposed site for the artwork



Blackpool and Public Art

Blackpool has a strong track record of working with artists to create high quality permanent and temporary public art works. They contribute to the unique feel of the seaside resort that attracts 18 million visitors a year; a place with a rich entertainment history and a strong contemporary and popular cultural offer. Examples include the giant mirror ball 'They Shoot Horses, Don't They?' by Michael Trainor, part of the Great Promenade Show on South Shore; and the international award- winning Comedy Carpet by artist Gordon Young and Why Not Associates on the Tower Headland (www.comedycarpet.co.uk). The town is also home to the Grundy Art Gallery, a National Portfolio Organisation with the Arts Council www.thegrundy.org.

Our Aspirations for the Artwork – Possible Themes

The Commissioning Steering Group is looking for a work that acts as a landmark that celebrates Blackpool's entrepreneurial spirit (the town's motto is 'Progress'). The art work should connect Blackpool to the world stage, to the great coastal cities and locations that have endured difficult times but have been creative in their successful reinvention – Vancouver, New Orleans, Lisbon, Barcelona, Cape Town. Now more than ever, in the most challenging of times, we are looking for a work that inspires our communities and in particular local young people to connect to the wider world and look forward to an exciting future knowing they live in an extraordinary place.

We are also all aware of the unprecedented environmental challenges to us living in harmony with our planet and the potential threats we face from climate change and global warming – something we are very much aware of in Blackpool where flooding is a real danger to our way of life and our amazing heritage coastal landmarks such as the Tower and our piers. With government support we have invested millions over the past 15 years in building state of the art sea defences to protect the town from an uncertain future. We would like the artwork to make reference to climate change in some way.

Our Aspirations for the Artwork – Possible Themes (..cont)

The work must be permanent and conceived with materials that take account of the harsh seafront weather conditions – corrosive salt, wind and sand. The work should become memorable, surprising and an intriguing intervention that will add interest, narrative and character to the area. We would welcome the art work having some interactive element possibly using new technology or function that allows the viewer to connect with the history of this part of Blackpool, the sea and the view from the promenade and that a connection is made with the new park.

The Commissioning Steering Group wants to work with an artist that has a genuine commitment to engaging with people about their practice and their design. Artists should share their ideas at this early stage on how local stakeholders such as the Friends of Anchorsholme Park, and local young people i.e. children at Anchorsholme Primary School might be involved in developing the final work. This could be in the form of community consultation and collaboration during a detailed research stage, or possibly in the co-creation and co-production stages of the final commission.

Historical Context

Blackpool as the world's first working class seaside resort has a rich history that may provide inspiration to create new contemporary art works. Artists may find inspiration from the Council's archives including the Blackpool Illuminations archive, and those of Blackpool Tower Circus and the Winter Gardens see www.heritageblackpool.co.uk.

Illumination plays a major role in our town and we have a bespoke production space at Lightworks. Artists may want to explore opportunities to work with the Illuminations Team and facilities as part of their proposal.

Artist Selection Process

Artists will be appointed through a competitive selection process. A Commissioning Steering Group – including Anchorsholme ward councillors Paul Galley and Tony Williams (also Leader of the Conservative Group for the Council), the Head of Arts, Head of Coastal and Environmental Partnerships, and Curator for the Grundy. They will review artists' expressions of interest and from those received, artists will be shortlisted and invited to develop 'sketch' concept design proposals.



How to apply

We are inviting expressions of interest from artists with a proven track record of high-quality commissions and experience of engaging with the community during the process of creating works for the public realm. We would like to see:

1. Information about your practice
2. Five examples of previous work that you feel are relevant to this brief (links to websites or documents no bigger than 5MB)
3. Why you are interested in this opportunity
4. How you feel your practice and relevant experience would fit with the brief
5. How you intend to engage with key stakeholders/interest groups and the community/public.

Please keep letters of interest under three sides of A4.

Please send your expression of interest applications by email to Carolyn Primett, Head of Arts to arts.development@blackpool.gov.uk the deadline for submission is **Monday, 7th June 2021**.

Artist's Scope of Work for this Stage:

The appointed artists will work with the Commissioning Steering Group to develop their 'sketch' concept design proposals.

Shortlisted artists will be invited to a familiarisation/site visit day. Artists will then be expected to develop their concept proposal through initial consultation and independent research and prepare a high quality and detailed proposal which should include:

1. Visualisations of the work which clearly set out the concept, information on the size, materials, weight and appearance of the artwork. Drawings or a maquette(s) can be submitted.
2. A written narrative outlining the ideas, research and inspiration for the key concepts associated with the artwork, and its appropriateness for the site and function.
3. An outline methodology for consultation, production and fabrication.
4. An outline budget for detailed design, fabrication and installation and outline time line.
5. Consideration for maintenance and long-term sustainability of the proposed artwork.

Artist Fees for this 'Sketch' Concept Stage

(including all expenses) is £1,000. Artists' must be able to provide a Unique Tax Reference Number. Artists are required to attend a site visit day at the beginning of the process (current Covid-19 guidelines will be followed) and present their ideas to the Commissioning Steering Group on submission/completion. The artist selected to go forward with the commission will be required to complete the Council's standard due diligence checks before any formal contract is agreed.

Artists will be notified if they have been selected week beginning 14th June 2021 and briefing/site visits will be arranged for the week of 21st June 2021.

Pictures of the proposed site for the public art work showing different aspects/angles



