

Newham Council

Approach to Street Art Projects



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Photo on page 1: 'Everyone Is Welcome' Mural at Beckton Globe, E6 5JQ. Designed by Van Dang in collaboration with Beckton Youth Zone as part of the Shape Newham Programme 2020-2021.

1. Introduction

Street art can be defined as artwork applied onto external surfaces of buildings, walls, fences and other land or structures that is easily visible from public spaces. This document seeks to outline the value of street art and the Council's approach to new installations.

This document is based upon existing Council Policies and the approved Scheme of Delegations. It is hoped to provide useful guidance by bringing together relevant policies and delegations into one place to help inform the installation of new street art in Newham.

A chapter on Strategic Context gives an overview of the value of street art and how new installations should align with the Council's commitment to building a fairer Newham. Additional explanation is provided to outline the Council Strategies and Planning Policies that are relevant to the delivery of new street art in Newham.

A chapter on Delivering Street Art in Newham the Council's approach to delivery of new street art in a way that aligns with the Council's commitment to building a fairer Newham and relevant strategies and policies. Guidance is provided in the form of details about approvals and funding options to those looking to install new street art.

Two appendices are included that present a Three Year Action Plan presenting the activities the Council is taking to promote street art in Newham, as well as a diagram outlining the Approvals of New Street Art in Newham Diagram.

2. Strategic Context

2.1 The Value of Street Art

There is an increasing body of research that demonstrates the impact and value of street art to benefit local communities. The benefits of street art can include:

- creating a sense of place and contributing to a distinctive identity
- engaging communities
- supporting way-finding
- celebrating cultural diversity
- breaking down barriers between people of all ages and backgrounds
- contributing to the wider cultural offer
- having a positive impact on health, wellbeing and happiness

Street art can create employment for artists and contribute towards their ongoing professional development, providing opportunities to develop their practice through collaborative working with other sectors of the built environment i.e. engineers, architects, designers, conservationists.

Creating opportunities for artists provides multiple benefits, such as:

- Artists are “well placed to creatively engage individuals and communities and give voice to their sense of place, their concerns and their aspirations for the areas they live, work and play in” (Farrell Review of Architecture and the Built Environment, 2014).
- Additionally, facilitating the creation of employment for artists, will in turn help to attract and retain investment in the local area. There may be potential to develop mentoring opportunities for art students and other aspiring artists that will further help develop the local artistic skills and empower local communities to lead on projects.

Street art can additionally support positive regeneration opportunities by engaging with local communities as well as supporting neighbourhoods and town centres to be attractive places to live, work, play and study.

2.2 Street Art in a Fairer Newham

Newham Council has adopted a new Corporate Plan to focus on Building a Fairer Newham. The Council’s approach to street art seeks to support the building of a Fairer Newham given that:

- a) A Fairer Newham involves investing and improving Newham’s high streets to support thriving local neighbourhoods. The Council’s Approach to Street Art recognises that street art can support this objective by creating vibrant and colourful places that celebrate the identity of local places and encourage enjoyment of the neighbourhood.
- b) A Fairer Newham enables local residents to choose projects to receive funding to improve their neighbourhood through local Community Assemblies. The Council’s Approach to Street Art recognises the Community Assembly Programme as a funding route to enable residents and community groups to deliver new street art to improve their neighbourhoods.
- c) A Fairer Newham requires the involvement of marginalised communities in consultation over the future of Newham’s neighbourhoods. The Council’s Approach to Street Art proposes that new street art is developed through a community co-design process where all

local residents including those from marginalised communities have the opportunity to shape the enhancements to their neighbourhoods.

The actions and activities that the Council is taking to promote high quality street art that enhances Newham's neighbourhoods is outlined in appendix 1.

2.3 Newham Council Strategy Context

Alongside supporting objectives of the Council's new Corporate Plan - Building A Fairer Newham, the Approach to Street Art seeks to align with a number of relevant Council strategies.

The Council has produced a Cultural Strategy and Action Plan, 'Building Newham's Creative Future' that was approved by Cabinet in February 2022. The Cultural Strategy commits to providing access to cultural and creative opportunities, with a vision for supporting high quality public art across the borough. This commitment looks to support and curate a programme of public art, involving and showcasing local voices, local artists and in the future, internationally renowned talent.

The Council is delivering a High Streets Programme to promote attractive neighbourhoods with inclusive high streets as the beating heart. Consultation in various neighbourhoods as part of the Newham High Streets Programme Phase 1 in 2020 found the suggestion of 'Colours of Newham Murals' was popular with residents living in Green Street, Manor Park and Forest Gate neighbourhoods. Funding for public art including Colours of Newham Murals was subsequently included in the Council's Levelling Up Funding Bid, with acceptance of the grant funding and decision to proceed with implementing the projects approved by Cabinet in January 2022.

The Council is committed to a Community Wealth Building agenda. This includes making the best use of its assets to provide social value and support community wealth building.

The Council seeks to provide opportunities for residents to input into decision making and has launched the Community Assembly Programme as an ambitious exercise in participatory budgeting. The Council also acknowledges as part of its approach to social integration that there is a role for arts and culture, presenting opportunities to learn about each other, build connections and understanding.

Further details on the Council's strategies that have relevance to the production of new street art in the borough can be found in:

- Building Newham's Creative Future, Cultural Strategy and Action Plan 2022 - 2037
- Community Wealth Building Strategy 2020
- Newham High Streets Phase 1 Reports 2021
- Social Integration Strategy 2020
- Democracy and Civic Participation Report 2020

2.4 Planning Policy

The London Plan (2021) sets out the intention to promote town centres in a way that complements local character and supports place identity, engage inclusively with stakeholders for the benefit of spaces, promote cultural assets and celebrate the diversity of cultural infrastructure. See:

- Policy SD6 Town centres and high streets
- Policy GG1 Building strong and inclusive communities

- Policy GG5 Growing a good economy
- Policy E10 Visitor Infrastructure

The Newham Local Plan (2018) sets out the intention to raise the quality of public realm at appropriate locations, enhance the distinctive features of the borough, recognise the value of place-making assets that contribute to local character and promotes town and local centres being vibrant, vital and valued. See:

- Policy SP7 Quality Movement Corridors and Linear Gateways
- Policy SP1 Borough-wide Place-making
- Policy SP5 Heritage and other Successful Place-making Assets
- Policy SP6 Successful Town and Local Centres

The Council is currently refreshing its Local Plan. As part of the Local Plan refresh, it is the intention to introduce a policy outlining a new 'public realm net gain' approach that requires developers to add value in the public realm on their site and adjacent, and not treat public realm as leftover space. One key way of public realm activation supported by the policy is the provision of street art.

3. Delivering Street Art in Newham

3.1 Community Engagement

Newham Council is committed to providing opportunities for communities to shape their neighbourhoods. The development of new murals should include a co-design and consultation process. The community engagement approach must consider a due regard for equalities considerations.

There are many different ways that communities can be invited to participate in the installation of new murals. Some ideas are listed below, however it is likely that the exact nature of co-design and consultation used in a project will need to be determined on a project by project basis to reflect the different nature of different projects.

Some ideas for community participation that has been used in the installation of new murals include:

- Participation in the selection of the mural artist
- Engagement to facilitate expressing preferences for the content of the mural
- Voting on concept design options for ideas of murals that could be installed
- Workshops to contribute to the design of the mural
- Events to allow joining in with painting of a mural

In situations where the street art installation is funded by the Council or located on Council property then a co-design approach will be required for the installation to be approved (see appendix 2 for details). The co-design approach will depend on the type of project:

- Community Assembly Projects – *the co-design and consultation processes will be agreed as part of the existing governance processes for Community Assembly Programme (as approved by Cabinet in January 2023).*
- Commissions as part of Council Delivery Programmes – *co-design and consultation processes will be agreed through the specific Programme Governance Structure.*
- Other Projects (such as ad hoc requests from third parties privately funding a mural on Council Property) – *a suitable co-design and consultation processes will need to be agreed with the relevant Tier 2 Director in consultation with the associated Cabinet Member.*

3.2 Funding of New Street Art Projects

There are two main routes through which the Council might fund the installation of new street art.

1. There may be opportunities for the Council to commission street art through various Council Delivery Programmes where funding has been included within the agreed budget. For example, the Shape Newham programme [2019-2022] commissioned murals with opportunities for local residents and youth groups to co-design the projects in locations they had selected.
2. There may be opportunities for local residents, businesses and community groups to secure funding for street art through the Community Assembly Programme. Should a local resident, business or community group seek funding for street art they could submit a proposal to the relevant community assembly, for the local community to vote on to determine if it should receive funding. Funding allocated through this route will be required to align with relevant

decisions related to the implementation of the Community Assembly Programme, such as that approved by Cabinet in January 2023.

Other projects proposed by third parties would not normally receive Council funding unless commissioned by the Council as part of a Council Delivery Programme or incorporated into a proposal put forward by a local resident, business or community group to the Community Assembly Programme. These other projects would instead be required to be developed and funded privately by third parties.

3.3 Maintenance of Street Art In Newham

Often street art is used to improve the appearance of an area. By showcasing artistic talent and enabling community enjoyment of spaces; the occurrence of graffiti and other anti-social behaviour can be discouraged. The installation of street art can therefore form part of a maintenance strategy, painting over existing graffiti and other signs of anti-social behaviour in order to improve appearances.

However it is important to consider the ongoing maintenance of new street art at the planning stages of new projects. This will include consideration of how to prevent graffiti and other anti-social behaviour occurring and how it will be removed if it does occur. Ensuring the appearance of street art is maintained and supports a good appearance of the street scene is important. The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 gives powers to the Local Planning Authority to issue a section 215 notice, which requires land to be "cleaned up when its condition adversely affects the amenity of the area".

There is no general Council funding to maintain street art and remove graffiti and when discussing installation of new projects with landowners, agreement will be needed on the arrangements regarding responsibilities and budgets to ensure upkeep of the appearance of the street art for its agreed lifespan. New street art will only be permitted on Council owned property where it is assessed as unlikely to create new maintenance costs and/or a maintenance plan is put in place by the party proposing the mural (see appendix 2 for details).

Steps can be taken to reduce the maintenance considerations for new street art installations and ensure ongoing appearances. Recommendations include installation above head height where it is less easily accessible to deface the street art and use of anti-graffiti coating so graffiti can easily be washed off if the street art is defaced.

3.4 Planning Approvals, Landowner Consents and Other Statutory Permissions

All installations of new street art projects require the permission of any parties with legal rights and responsibilities over the external appearances of buildings. Should one or more property owners not agree with the proposal, alternative locations should be proposed and discussed. Even when Newham Council is a landowner of a site, there may also be other parties with property interests from whom consents would be required before street art could be installed.

Various consents may be required from the Local Planning Authority before street art can be installed. Advertising consent is required if the street art is deemed to include advertisement, announcement or direction. Listed Building Consent is required if the street art is to be installed on a listed building or within the curtilage of a listed building. If illumination is to be installed to light up

the street art at night then this would require planning permission. If unsure, it is best to ask the Local Planning Authority if planning permission will be required. The decision to grant or refuse planning permission for a new street art project if the project requires planning permission falls within the remit of the Local Planning Authority and is separate to any other consents/permissions granted by the Council.

There are also a number of other statutory permissions that may be required before street art can be installed such as Highways Licences if the installation requires closing a public footpath. The required licence would depend on the location and method of the installation. Discussion with the local Highways Authority on required permits is recommended.

3.5 Additional Approvals Required for Newham Council Projects

Where the Council is the funding body, project manager and/or land owner, there are additional processes that the Council will require new street art projects to comply with prior to proceeding. These additional processes are not intended as a barrier to the installation of new street art projects, but aim to ensure projects align with the Council's focus on Building a Fairer Newham and support existing policies and strategies. The overview of required approvals is outlined in appendix 2.

As explained above (see section 3.3-3.4), all installations of new street art projects require the permission of any parties with legal rights and responsibilities over the external appearances of buildings. Where Newham Council is the property owner, then permission for the installation will only be granted by the Officer with the delegated authority for management of the property once certain conditions have been met, which includes:

1. Sufficient evidence is provided to demonstrate engagement with occupants of the property (if applicable) and no objections have been raised which are sufficiently strong to give overriding grounds to prevent the project from proceeding.
2. Any parties with a legal property interest relating to the external appearance of the property (if applicable) have formally consented to the installation of the street art.
3. Suitable arrangements are agreed to facilitate upkeep of the appearance of the street art for its agreed lifespan without creating additional costs for the Council.

As additional explained above (see section 3.1) the Council requires street art projects to include a co-design and consultation process involving the wider community as part of the production of the street art. Different types of project will follow different co-design and community consultation processes:

- Community Assembly Projects – a co-design and consultation process will need to be approved through Community Assembly Programme.
- Commissions as part of Council Delivery Programmes – a co-design and consultation process will need to be agreed through specific Programme Governance Structure.
- Other Projects (such as ad hoc requests from third parties privately funding a mural on Council Property) – a suitable co-design and consultation processes will need to be agreed with the relevant Tier 2 Director in consultation with the associated Cabinet Member

Where the Council is the funding body, project manager and/or land owner of the project, the final designs will need to be signed off before they are installed. To ensure that the content does not conflict with the values or brand of Newham Council the design will be reviewed together with, and signed off by, the Head of Communications and Campaigns. This review will also consider to ensure the content does not conflict with any legal obligations for the Council including having due regard

for equalities considerations. The final sign off for the project, prior to installation will then be taken by the relevant Tier 2 Director in consultation with the associated Cabinet Member.

Appendix 1. Three Year Action Plan for Street Art in Newham

The delivery of Street Art that helps build a Fairer Newham will involve action from the Council alongside local communities, property owners and artists. The three year action plan serves as a call to action encouraging all relevant groups to get involved and outlines possible activities different groups can take to support new street art projects.

The Council is taking a number of strategic activities to promote street art:

Activity	Description	Actor	Timeframe
Launch of Building Newham's Creative Future, Cultural Strategy and Action Plan 2022 – 2037	This strategy promotes culture and artwork to be accessible to all, with street art as a method for promoting access for all of Newham's communities to experience artwork in their neighbourhoods.	LBN (Council Wide Strategy)	2022
Launch of Newham Council Approach to Street Art	This document outlines the value of street art and the Council's approach to new installations, promoting Newham as a host borough for creative installations that promote local and international talent and facilitates the co-designing of neighbourhoods with residents.	LBN (Council Wide Document)	2023
Local Plan Refresh	Refresh of the Local Plan where it is the intention to introduce a policy outlining a new 'public realm net gain' approach that requires developers to add value in the public realm on their site and adjacent, and not treat public realm as leftover space. One key way of public realm activation supported by the policy is the provision of art.	LBN (Planning)	2024

The Council alongside local communities, property owners and artists will all play a role in enabling the installation of new street art. Some of the activities that will support the approach to new street art projects outlined in this document are shown in the table below:

Activity	Description	Actor	Timeframe
Community Assembly Programme	The annual cycle of community assemblies provides opportunities for residents and local groups to bid for funding to deliver projects that improve the local area such as new murals.	LBN (Resident Participation); Local Residents and Community Groups	Ongoing
Newham High Streets Phase 1 - Project Delivery	Various murals will be delivered across Forest Gate, Green Street and Manor Park as part of the Newham High Streets Programme – Phase 1 delivery, following requests from residents during community consultation. These murals will be funded through the Levelling Up Fund Grant and will involve co-design opportunities with residents and local creative communities.	LBN (Community Wealth Building)	2022-2024
Designing Out Fly Tipping Sites	The Public Realm team constantly review hotspots for fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour. In some of the identified sites, the team will continue to work with the community to reclaim these spaces and make them beautiful with interventions such as planters and murals created with local school children.	LBN (Public Realm); Local Residents; Local Schools	Ongoing
Granting Permissions for Street Art Installations	Street art can only be installed with the permission of the property owner. The process the Council will follow to permit new murals on its property is outlined in appendix 1. The majority of walls across Newham are in private ownership and so private property owners are also encouraged to make walls available for street art, particularly where there is a local co-design process involved.	LBN (Property); LBN (Housing); Private Property Owners	Ongoing

Appendix 2. Approvals of New Street Art in Newham Diagram

