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SCIENCE CENTRAL: PUBLIC ART COMMISSIONING STRATEGY

ScienceCentral

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Introduction

The Science Central site is situated in the city centre of Newcastle, to the west of the Newcastle United Football Club's stadium and formerly the Tyne Brewery. The Science Central Project Team is acting as development manager for the site on behalf of the joint venture partners Newcastle City Council and Newcastle University. Science Central has the declared vision statement:

"To create a new urban quarter in the centre of Newcastle, which will be an exemplar in sustainability, attracting leading-edge scientific organisations to a new mixed-use community encompassing a variety of educational, business and residential uses".

In line with this vision, the approved site masterplan comprises a mix of uses to ensure Science Central becomes a new urban quarter in the city centre. It will encompass new streets, landmark buildings and public spaces which will open up this central site to the rest of the city and provide the required infrastructure for the city to meet the aspiration of developing its science and knowledge-based economy. Science Central is likely to be developed in a number of phases over an extended period of c20 years, and public art will play an important role in defining its characters and the quality of its public spaces and buildings.

An adopted public art strategy in one the outline planning conditions for Science Central, and the Project Initiation Document agreed by the two joint venture partners requires the public art strategy to:

- develop cohesive site-wide themes for artwork which promote the ideals and objectives of Science Central
- set out how future phases will incorporate artworks, with recommendations of how to fund, develop and implement those artworks

Expanding upon the arts commissioning sections of the RIBA stages C and D reports, this strategy is in three sections: 'Where we are now' sets out the relevant strategic framework and introduces the three art commissions under development for Phase 1 of Science Central; 'Where we want to be' sets out a vision for future arts commissioning at Science Central, proposing three integrated approaches to arts commissioning – *spatial, engagement* and *research*; and finally 'How we are going to get there' proposes a methodology via which the vision can be achieved.

SECTION 1: WHERE WE ARE NOW



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Where we are now – Introduction

Five key strategic documents form the strategic context for the Science Central Public Art Strategy, placing it into a city-wide context and crucially providing an equal emphasis on the spatial use of public art as a placemaking tool and on its use as a mechanism for engaging communities:

- Science Central Masterplan
- Science Central Design & Access Statement
- Newcastle Public Art Strategy 2011-15
- Arts Strategy for the Discovery Quarter
- Newcastle University Engagement Strategy

Both the Newcastle and Discovery Quarter public art strategies identify Science Central as a priority site for public art activity, capture the core theme of *Visualising Science* and make reference to the role of artists on design teams and as a conduit between the scientific community and the wider public. The University's Engagement Strategy also places emphasis on this human component and provides outline guidance on how communities might be engaged. The Masterplan and Design & Access Statement identify key locations for art commissions, and expand upon the theme of *Visualising Science* by placing greater emphasis on sustainability in all its forms.

In parallel to the development of this strategy, and for reasons of construction timescales, it has been necessary to progress the commissioning of public art into the two main public spaces and the first building of Phase 1. Phase 1 of the site development includes a capital allocation for three major permanent art commissions, one for each of the two main public spaces and the first building:

- Hare Inges Idee, Public Space #1
- Small World Network Peter Evans, Public Space#2
- Wavewall Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway, Building #1

The aspirations of the project partners have been tested during the development of these artworks and a greater understanding of how public artworks should be commissioned has been established. The artworks themselves set a standard for future phases, including the ambition to achieve greater engagement with both scientific and local communities during the development of commissions.



Strategic Context – Science Central Masterplan and Design & Access Statement

Two key design-centred documents that inform this public art strategy are the site Masterplan and Design & Access Statement submitted as part of the Outline Planning Application for the Science Central site. The Masterplan sets out the site layout, creating four character areas, and provides the massing and building heights (particularly relevant on this sloping site). The comprehensive Design & Access Statement document contextualises the development within the wider cityscape:

"The site sits on the edge between the largely residential communities of Arthurs Hill and Elswick to the west, and the urban centre to the East. It also sits between the Urban recreation and natural environment of Leazes Park to the north, and the main train station and business/education activity to the south. As such it acts as a transition between differing parts of the city."

To achieve the integration of Science Central into the wider cityscape, the Masterplan and Design & Access Statement arrives at a vision for a mixed-use city-centre district with residential, live/work and commercial developments. Connectivity is an essential element of the design approach, which seeks to 'restitch' the site into the city and create the level of fine urban grain lost during the expansion of the brewery. This takes three forms – within the site, to the city centre, and to the surrounding communities – and is particularly focussed on improved pedestrian and cyclist routes.

The site is given structure by a primary network of larger routes and spaces, but will also contain a number of smaller streets and lanes more private in nature. This hierarchy of routes and spaces helps to prioritise resources available for public art commissioning to specific areas where they offer the greatest value to site users.

Of particular relevance to this public art strategy are Section 6, Landscape and Public Realm; Section 7, Appearance; and also Section 9, the thematic section on Climate Change and Energy. With an aim to *"provide places for people"*, the focus on the creation of social spaces throughout the site suggests a role for art and creative projects. Reference to public art is made within section 6, with *"artistic intervention shall be integral to the approach to the public realm and be integrated into the design of the streets and places"* and six main themes outlined – 'The Artist Garden', 'Visualising Science', 'The Urban Gallery', 'Facade', 'Stop & Go' and 'Small Gestures'.



Strategic Context – Newcastle Public Art Strategy 2011-15

Adopted by Newcastle City Council in 2011, the strategy has a vision for public art in Newcastle that builds on the City's reputation and continuing ambition as the regional cultural capital. The main Vision Statement with the strategy includes the following text:

"Over the next four years, Newcastle will support a sustainable programme of high quality and innovative public art activity that builds on the City's reputation and continuing ambition as the regional Cultural Capital. Newcastle will take a targeted and collaborative approach to the commissioning of artists and future public artworks, and will foster critical debate and greater engagement with the process. This is a city-wide strategy supported by a wide range of regeneration agencies, arts organisations, design specialists and artists, all of whom will become more active in the commissioning of public art"

The Public Art Strategy sets out a number of actions through which the Council and its partners can achieve this vision, with activities targeted within three broad programme themes:

Theme 1, *Future City*, seeks to support the early involvement of artists and designers in the commissioning of major capital developments, and their long-term creative engagement with the City's communities and research clusters through programmes of artists' residencies.

Theme 2, *Hidden City*, aims to support a diverse range of projects and temporary commissions that will reveal and reanimate Newcastle's hidden heritage, histories and forgotten spaces. It will pull out some of the stories and personalities of the city itself, and the people within it.

Theme 3, *Open City*, seeks to generate a culture of informed debate and discussion around public art in the City and about the future of artistic practice in the public realm; to place greater emphasis on new media and technology projects; and make more of the public art collection through marketing and interpretation.

The *Future City* theme is most relevant to the public art commissioning at Science Central, which is exactly the kind of major construction project that the *Future City* theme seeks the integration of artists' creativity into. Importantly *Future City* advocates a move towards the use of artists' residencies, placements and other forms of longer-term relationships with the city as an appropriate means of generating proposals for integration into regeneration schemes.



Strategic Context – Arts Strategy for the Discovery Quarter

Commissioned by Newcastle City Council from artists Cath Campbell and Kathryn Hodgkinson and seen as an artists' commission, *An Arts Strategy for the Discovery Quarter – How art can make a place* (2008) sets out a creative framework for placemaking within the Discovery Quarter – which includes Science Central. Presented as a series of conceptual questions, six artistic rules and eight specific project proposals, the strategy has one key objective – "contribute to excellence in placemaking by thoroughly integrating creativity throughout the development of the Discovery Quarter". This is a wide-ranging and ambitious strategy, with the 'six rules' suggesting a commissioning approach rooted in a response to 'regional personality' and specific city 'quarter identity'. Of the eight specific projects outlined in the strategy six are relevant to the Science Central Public Art Strategy:

Project 1: The Artist's Garden – a series of small scale green spaces with "a national and international reputation for being unique and full of surprises" and "created by artists who use the concept of a garden, landscape or vegetation as a vehicle for ecological statements or social critique". There is potential for such projects as interim uses within the Science Central site.

Project 2: Visualising Science – specific to the Science Central site, this project proposes a high profile annual artist's residency within the science community, adding to the creative profile of Newcastle both nationally and internationally, enhancing the physical environment and adding to the inherent character of the Discovery Quarter. Anticipated outcomes would range from temporary events, performances or exhibitions to permanent pieces incorporated within the development, including the design of buildings.

Project 3: The Urban Gallery – the integration of billboards, plinths, public projection spaces and other forms of infrastructure that could enable temporary forms of creativity;

Project 4: Facade – recommends artist/architect collaborations on the design of major new buildings, and in particular the external facades. This project would be appropriate for future buildings within the Science Central site where the opportunity of visualising the scientific research that goes on within would be beneficial.

Project 6: Stop & Go – 'Stop and Go' proposes a bespoke response to street furniture and layout on key walking routes, designed to leave plenty of room for human appropriation.



Strategic Context – Newcastle University Engagement Strategy

Newcastle University's *Engagement Strategy: Institutional Principles and Approaches to Engagement* (August 2012), builds upon the university's existing commitment to strengthening the relationship between the University and civil society. The Engagement Strategy, itself responding to a number of external national and regional policy drivers as well as the University's own corporate values, has a vision for engagement with five strategic objectives:

- SO 1 To develop the public understanding of Newcastle as a world class civic university
- **SO 2** To position Newcastle as a recognised leader in the social, cultural and economic development of the North East of England
- **SO 3** To attain national and international recognition for the University in respect of three Societal Challenge Themes
- SO 4 To develop the public profile of Newcastle as a City of Science
- SO 5 To develop and maintain good relations with stakeholders, alumni and the wider public

Each Strategic Objectives contains a number of more specific aspirations, and some in particular are relevant to Science Central and to arts commissioning. The driver to see the university's research activity made more transparent and open to wider audiences underpins the strategy, with SO1 aiming to "provide a platform for engagement of citizens in research activities, communicate our research with non-academic audiences, and encourage debate and challenge from non-academic audiences", whilst SO2 seeks to ensure that the University's activities and resources can be accessed by communities and minority groups. Similarly SO5 includes the aim of ensuring that the University effectively communicates with, and becomes more accessible to, outside organisations.

The level of ambition at which the strategy is pitched is also relevant, with SO3 referring to the attainment of national and international recognition for the University's flagship programmes. Since SO2 proposes support for "a vibrant and responsive programme of cultural events in the City and region", and SO4 is entirely focussed on City of Science it is reasonable to conclude that arts commissioning of the highest quality for the Science Central site is fully supported by the Engagement Strategy. Applying this to the Science Central Public Art Strategy, it is clear that arts commissioning should facilitate the engagement of communities (both local communities and 'communities of interest') in the work of the university's scientific research community.



Phase 1 Commissions

The detailed design of Science Central's Phase 1 has been developed throughout 2012, with construction due to start in 2013. The first phase comprises:

- · Completion of the first building on site to provide commercial business and incubation space for SME's
- Creation of two new public spaces
- Alterations to Wellington Street to provide shared space (between pedestrians and vehicles)
- Infrastructure works that will facilitate access to the new build and future development plots
- Interim Uses across the whole site creating a public access network, parkland, community gardens and reclamation greening.

To integrate public art into the two main public spaces and the first building of Phase 1 it has been necessary to progress the commissioning of public art in parallel to the development of this strategy. Phase 1 of the site development includes a capital allocation for three major permanent commissions, one for each of the two main public spaces and the first building (in keeping with the locations prioritised in the site Masterplan and Design & Access Statement):

- Hare Inges Idee, Public Space #1
- Small World Network Peter Evans, Public Space#2
- Wavewall Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway, Building #1

As noted in the introduction to this section, the process of commissioning these three projects has offered a greater understanding of how public artworks should be commissioned for the site. In particular there is a clear requirement that the scientific community, local communities and the wider public are considered more centrally in the selection and briefing of artists, the evaluation of artwork proposals, and during the design development process. Primarily this will be achieved by initiating the commissioning process earlier, thereby extending the available timescale and allowing for greater levels of research and engagement to take place.



SECTION 2: WHERE WE WANT TO BE





A Vision for Public Art at Science Central

Fundamentally the commissioning of public art for Science Central is about placemaking, and the creation of a sustainable area of the city with a strong sense of identity. The arts commissioning for Science Central will take the widest range of media, materials and approaches; include both permanent and temporary artworks, standalone and integrated projects; and will probably be delivered by a range of arts organisations and individuals. However all commissions will share thematic characteristics.

The key theme for the art strategy is *Visualising Science*, and in particular those sciences relating to *Sustainability* in all its forms – *Environmental*, *Social* and *Economic*. Science Central is seen as a testing ground for scientific research into issues of sustainability – the geo-thermal borehole and community garden spaces are examples – and this approach can extend to arts projects. An emphasis on *Innovation* is also expected: both the exploration of scientific innovation by artists (in particular the works and influence of notable Newcastle born/educated scientists and inventors) and the use of innovative materials, processes and technologies.

Fundamentally the commissioning of public art for Science Central is about placemaking. The site masterplan divides Science Central into four distinct character areas – Knowledge District, Live& Work, Home Zone and Local Facilities – and therefore the four areas will have their own well-defined and distinctive approaches to public art commissioning, to be developed in detail as these phases are commenced. Alongside permanent artworks there is also great potential for interim uses in those areas of Science Central that will be developed in future phases.

The vision for public art at Science Central is not limited to the themes, scales or level of ambition for the artworks themselves, but also applies to the process by which people are engaged in the development of those artworks – the scientific community, local communities and the wider public. Care will be taken to embed this requirement into the planning and delivery of each art commission or activity.



Commissioning Approaches

This strategy proposes three interlinked approaches to public art commissioning for Science Central – *spatial*, *engagement* and *research*.

The *spatial approach* builds upon the existing masterplan for the site and the detailed RIBA Stage D public realm designs for the construction of phase one, in which a number of key locations have been identified (and agreed by the Science Central partners) for major public art commissions. Primarily this approach is concerned with the integration of permanent pieces of public art into each phase of construction, with the three schemes already under development for Phase 1 of the site acting as exemplars for this approach.

The **engagement approach** seeks to maximise opportunities to align public art commissioning with programmes for marketing and community engagement. Any art commission on a science or sustainability theme would help the general public understand the research carried out on the site, but the engagement approach extends beyond that to require active consideration of communities in both the outcome of the art commissioning process *and the process itself*. Similarly the marketing of the site, primarily focussed on attracting private sector inward investment, could benefit from the outcomes of artists' residencies.

The **research approach** recognises the excellence of the research currently undertaken by Newcastle University, and the relevance of many of the Schools within the Faculty of Medical Sciences and Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering to Science Central. But the strategy also values the creativity and research interests of the arts sector – in particular Newcastle University's Fine Art department within the School of Arts & Cultures – and the value of collaborations and exchange between these fields, aiming to facilitate such exchange through a series of residencies and placements.

These three approaches are intended as **complementary strands within an integrated approach** as opposed to a three unconnected programmes. For example, an artist-in-residence working with a specific scientific research team may also engage local communities in that process, but may also propose a project that could be incorporated into the design of future phases of development. All three approaches also explore potential interim uses for those areas of the site that will be developed in future phases, and which therefore offer real opportunity for experimentation in both science and art.



Science Central's four character areas, as identified by Land Use Consultants



Key artwork locations within the public realm, as identified by Land Use Consultants

Spatial Approach

The *spatial approach* builds upon the existing masterplan for the site and the detailed RIBA Stage D public realm designs for construction phase one, in which a number of key locations have been identified (and agreed by the Science Central partners) for major public art commissions. Artistic intervention shall be integral to the approach to the public realm and be integrated into the design of the streets and places. The focus will be on science, innovation and sustainable urbanism, with the aim of the strategy being to provide places for people. Primarily this approach is concerned with the integration of permanent pieces of public art into each phase of the construction programme, with the three schemes already under development for Phase 1 of the site acting as exemplars for this approach.

The masterplan divides Science Central into four distinct character areas – Knowledge District, Live& Work, Home Zone and Local Facilities – and whilst in reality the character of these zones may not be so distinctly defined they do prompt or recommend particular approaches to arts commissioning. The priority must be the **Knowledge District**, the largest of the four zones which provides the main 'public face' of the site and includes the three main public spaces. The Knowledge District includes all of phase 1 and is the area proposed for scientific research facilities as well as other developments such as an hotel. The massing of the buildings will be substantially larger in this area of the site, and the area character will principally be that of a work environment. Within the Science Central Masterplan and RIBA Stages C and D reports, the primary locations and routes identified for public art in the Knowledge District are:

- *Public Space #1 'Gateway Square'* the gateway to the site from the city centre, and most visible public space within the site.
- *The 'Knowledge Link'* an important pedestrian-dominated axis across the site linking Heber Street to Westgate Road, the Knowledge Link will become the pedestrian spine of Science
- Central and a key access route to and from University facilities.
- Public Space #2 'Science Square' on the Knowledge Link and the edge of the site at Wellington Road and Heber Street.
- *Public Space #3 'Knowledge Square'* also on the Knowledge Link, but central to the site at the convergence of the Knowledge, HomeZone and Local Facilities districts.
- *Building Plots* the facades and internal spaces of the nine buildings masterplanned within the Knowledge Zone.



The third major public space, Knowledge Square, will be delivered in a future construction phase. Knowledge Square is the heart of Science Central, within the Knowledge District but at the point of interface with the Home Zone and Local Facilities areas and with the Knowledge Link running through it across the full extent of the site. This is a major opportunity for real collaboration between an artist and landscape architect from the very earliest point in the design process – something that has not been possible in the Phase 1 construction due to the extent of works and programming pressures. This form of collaboration should lead to a public realm in which each aspect of placemaking can be reviewed, reevaluated and revised; with bespoke street furniture, integrated artworks and lighting all contributing to a unique spatial design that reflects one or more aspects of science and sustainability.

One potential theme for inclusion within the design of knowledge Square and the Knowledge Link is the works and influence of notable Newcastle born/educated scientists and inventors such as Matthew Murray, William Armstrong, Joseph Swan, Charles Merz, Peter Higgs and Samuel Tolansky (alongside Lewis Fry-Richardson who inspired the *Wavewall* project).

Looking ahead to the Live& Work, Local Facilities and Home Zone character areas, the **Home Zone** residential area provides a transition between the Science Central site and the existing communities that adjoin the site, and is the community heart of Science Central. The Home Zone principle places greater emphasis on the pedestrian through the use of shared surfaces, traffic calming measures designed into the street layout etc. Artworks have often been included in Home Zone projects, typically generated through intensive workshops with local communities and often small scale and integrated in nature – bespoke street furniture, creative lighting and even the choice of street names. Given the sustainability theme for Science Central, projects that can engage the community in issues of renewable energy, food production and recycling should be a focus for commissioning.

The Live & Work District is the hardest district to define an arts approach for since it shares characteristics with both the Knowledge District and the HomeZone. In part that approach must be to respond to the arts commissioning planned for those two districts, then tightly define an approach that will create a distinctive character. Integrated commissions, perhaps with an additional focus on the role of designers and craftspeople in the creation of passive and active recreation facilities for the community – e.g. sculptural outdoor exercise equipment, opportunities for interaction, music and play – should be considered.



Engagement Approach

The **engagement approach** seeks to maximise opportunities to align public art commissioning with existing and future programmes for both marketing and community engagement. Any art commission on the theme of science and sustainability would offer the general public some understanding of the research carried out on the site, but the engagement approach extends beyond that to require active consideration of communities in both the outcome of the art commissioning process *and the process itself*.

Engagement is not seen as being limited to local communities and the general public, although the arts will be a valuable tool in visualising science and introducing the site to local people. Engagement with the scientific and arts communities in the city, for whom the site represents a focus for research and investigation, will also be necessary in order to activate the site and facilitate their sense of ownership of it. And engagement also applies to the commercial sector to whom the site is being marketed. Public art will act as a signifier of quality, help to define a unique character for the site, and in the short term add visual interest to vacant plots through interim uses. The priorities for these forms of engagement will gradually evolve over the long-term lifespan of this strategy, with the following priorities:

Short term (0-5 years)

promoting the site and attracting inward investment introducing the site to the surrounding communities introducing scientific research to the surrounding communities and wider public enhancing the visual appeal of vacant areas through interim uses defining the special character of the HomeZone area

Medium term (6-10 years)

introducing scientific research to the surrounding communities and wider public engaging with site-users in the Knowledge Zone on future commissions defining the special character of the Live/Work area

Long term (11-20 years)

introducing scientific research to the surrounding communities and wider public establishing the businesses and residents of Science Central as a community in its own right engaging with site-users in the Knowledge Zone on future commissions



Research Approach

The **research approach** recognises the excellence of the research currently undertaken by Newcastle University's Faculty of Medical Sciences and Faculty of Science, Agriculture and Engineering. It also values the creativity and research interests of the arts sector – in particular Newcastle University's own Fine Art department, Digital Media course and Culture Lab research centre – and the benefits of collaborations and exchange between these fields, aiming to facilitate such exchange through a series of residencies and placements.

Supporting the key thematic aim of *Visualising Science*, the research approach comprises three components:

- Establishing a programme of artists' residencies and placements within Newcastle University's scientific communities, with the aim of engaging the wider community in their scientific research.
- Fostering an environment where Science Central welcomes and actively attracts the research and creative skills of other artists and arts organisations.
- Generating proposals for potential public art commissions for the Science Central site.

In proposing this approach, this strategy acknowledges the issue that much groundbreaking scientific research undertaken within the university passes unknown and under-appreciated by the general public, and recognises that artists can play a valuable role in visualising this research. The use of residencies and placements for artists is supported by the Discovery Quarter Art Strategy and Newcastle Public Art Strategy, each of which make specific reference to Science Central; and also support Newcastle University's Engagement Strategy and its focus on the public's understanding and appreciation of Newcastle as a City of Science.

The research approach should not be seen as separate to the arts commissioning outlined in the 'Spatial Approach' section of this strategy, but as a valuable first phase of it. The rationale for taking a residency approach is that it will arm the artists with a far greater understanding of scientific research than could normally be achieved in a traditional procurement route (wherein the artist would typically be given c8 weeks to generate an outline proposal). With this enhanced understanding in place, then the depth, complexity and quality of the proposals generated should be equally strengthened – best practice that will ultimately lead to permanent commissioned artworks of the highest quality.

SECTION 3: HOW WE WILL GET THERE





Introduction

Proposing a detailed methodology by which the vision in this strategy can be delivered is complex given the long timeframe over which Science Central will be developed, and the high probability of significant changes to the economic context over that period. What can be stated is that the best chance for successful delivery is a balanced approach that takes a strategic lead on major commission opportunities (such as the Knowledge Square and Knowledge Link), but that also allows sufficient flexibility to respond to new situations and opportunities (such as interim uses and advances in technology).

Looking forward to futures phases, whilst the strategy outlines an approach it cannot and should not attempt to be too prescriptive about those future phases – the public realm design for those phases is still at the masterplanning stage, and the public art strategy matches that level of detail. A specialist arts consultant acting as part of the design team appointed for future phases will develop this strategy into specific deliverable projects for key buildings and public spaces.

This consultant's professional expertise and curatorial vision, balanced by the guidance from the Science Central Public Art Steering Group, should ensure that arts commissioning on the site is coherent, innovative, of the highest quality and supports the wider aspirations for the site. Due attention to the accountability of public funds, both in terms of initial procurement of artworks and in the long-term care of those artworks, will be provided by the Science Central team and supported by the Science Central Public Art Steering Group.

However whilst this structural organisation is essential to maintain continuity, coherence and quality, there also needs to be a mechanism whereby Science Central and its two joint venture partners can take advantage of future funding streams and creative opportunities that cannot be foreseen. This could include proposals or expressions of interest from artists and arts organisations that may be received during the extended timeframe for completing Science Central. The Science Central Public Art Steering Group will continue to act as the forum at which these kinds of opportunities can be presented, debated and, when appropriate, acted upon.



Artists' Residencies and Placements

As already noted in this strategy, the process of commissioning the three phase 1 artworks has offered a greater understanding of how future artworks should be commissioned for the site. In particular there is a clear requirement that the scientific community, local communities and the wider public are considered more centrally in the selection and briefing of artists, the evaluation of artwork proposals, and during the design development process.

Primarily this will be achieved by initiating the commissioning process earlier, thereby extending the available timescale and allowing for greater levels of research and engagement to take place. The cornerstone of the **research approach** is a major programme of artists' residencies and placements within the scientific research communities at Newcastle University. Spread over an initial three year period the residency programme would see international, national and regional artists placed with a 'host' scientist or department – the primary aim being to explore cutting-edge scientific research and broaden understanding of that research through contemporary art practice. Within that aim, the objectives of the residency programme are to:

- Promote the scientific research undertaken by Newcastle University to a broader audience
- Engage local communities in scientific (particularly sustainability) and arts research
- Generate high-quality artwork proposals for Science Central

Offering artists access and insight into high-level scientific research allows for new partnerships and understanding to be established between artists and scientists, and this has value to those involved and for the profile of Newcastle University and Science City. But whilst primarily focussed on the scientific research, these are intended as outward-facing residencies with a clear expectation that selected artists will help the wider public access this research. The residency programme will include a substantial community engagement component, with local communities and school groups that neighbour Science Central as the focus. An essential aspect of the residency programme is that each artist will be expected to develop a proposal for a public art project at Science Central. Although no commitment will be entered into that these proposals will subsequently be commissioned, it does mean that the Science Central Public Art Steering Group will be able to consider a number of high-quality, relevant proposals that already have the support of the University's scientific community.



Procurement, Maintenance and the Public Art Steering Group

There will be two distinct routes by which artworks will be developed for Science Central – firstly, as has happened in Phase 1, where Science Central actively initiates the art commissioning process; and secondly where it receives proposals from arts organisations or artists which it then supports either through a financial contribution or in-kind support. In either scenario the role of the Public Art Steering Group will be central to the decision making process, and to ensuring the accountability of that process.

In the first scenario – the commissioning model – the role of the Public Art Steering Group in the shortlisting and subsequent selection of artists (with attendant scoring sheets, meeting minutes and notes) provides a clear and accountable means of commissioning artworks, residencies and other opportunities. The more complex issue is how the initial longlist of artists is arrived at, since irrespective of whether an arts opportunity is advertised locally, regional, nationally or not at all, at some point potential candidates will be assessed by one person responsible for assembling a suitable longlist for consideration by a selection panel. Researching and assessing suitable artists for specific projects is a specialist curatorial role that the Science Central team currently contract to an external consultant (acting as a sub-contractor of the design team appointed for Phase 1 of the site). Therefore it is the role of 'Curator' or 'Arts Consultant' for specific projects or programmes needs to be openly procured (e.g. via NEPO or as part of a wider consortium), with the responsibility for the initial longlisting of artists clearly stated in their brief. Ultimately this individual judgement is balanced by that of the Public Art Steering Group, chosen to represent the community, project partners and creative sector.

In the second scenario – the facilitation model – in which Science Central acts as a 'welcoming host' and receives proposals from arts organisations or artists, the Public Art Steering Group will provide the strategic perspective required. Within the strategic framework provided by this strategy and other key documents, the Public Art Steering Group will assess the value of these proposals and identify what assistance can be provided in the form of grant aid or in-kind support (letters of support, access to site, introductions to other partners etc).

As Science Central is developed it will begin to assume the character of an urban campus, and at that point a closer relationship between the Science Central Public Art Steering Group and Newcastle University's Coherent Campus Art & Performance Group would be appropriate. Furthermore a continued dialogue between those responsible for delivering arts commissioning for Science Central and the academic and research staff from the University's Fine Art and Digital Media courses should prove mutually advantageous.

Key roles for the Science Central Public Art Steering Group will be to:

- Ensure that appropriate procurement processes have been followed, particularly with regard to the selection process for artists and arts organisations delivering arts commissions on behalf of Science Central
- Be the first point of contact and discussion forum for unsolicited opportunities that may be proposed by arts organisations, artists and other creatives.
- Members will act to support the commissioning of public art by making their expertise and networks available (e.g. in a similar manner to that which led to the re-use of obsolete turbine blades in the *Hare* sculpture).
- Establish closer links with the Coherent Campus Art & Performance Group
- Act as a 'critical friend' to those directly responsible for the delivery of public art commissions, particularly with regard to issues of maintenance.

Given that the two joint venture partners will retain responsibility for future maintenance and decommissioning of artworks, the issue of maintenance should be central to the commissioning process. That is not to say that all artworks should be 'maintenance free' in perpetuity, but that the maintenance implications and potential lifespan of each artwork should be clearly understood and assessed against its perceived value to the site. Although the responsibility for assessing maintenance implications and other risk factors would rest with Science Central, the Public Art Steering Group will be expected to actively consider the issue, keep that issue on the agenda during the development process and, where possible, to offer professional opinion.

Whilst the joint venture company will retain responsibility for maintenance of artworks in external public space and internally within those buildings it develops direct (such as Building #1), maintenance responsibility for artworks within buildings delivered by private sector developers will remain with the developer. Nonetheless the partners will seek to ensure that the developer has given adequate consideration to the issue of maintenance during the contract negotiations, design phases and via the formal planning process.



Funding Mechanisms

At present the three Phase 1 art commissions have budget allocations for their delivery. For future commissions there are a number of key funding sources in support of the delivery of this strategy:

- Private Sector developer contributions (by negotiation or via the Section 106 mechanism)
- Science Central (i.e. the joint venture partners Newcastle City Council and Newcastle University), drawn from construction, marketing and engagement budgets
- Arts Council England (primarily Grants for the Arts)
- Research bodies (e.g. Nesta and the Arts & Humanities Research Council)
- Charitable bodies (e.g. the Wellcome Trust)
- Attracting to Science Central those arts projects with existing funding in place (i.e. acting as a welcoming and supportive host)

Given that public art is seen by the project partners as a fully integrated component in the creation of highquality places and as a signifier of quality through which the site can be successfully marketed, it is envisaged that the fabrication and installation phase of major public art commissions will be funded as an allocation within the capital budget for each new public space of building.

But as noted on pages 21-22 there is the ambition to extend the process by which the outline proposals for art commissions are developed, primarily through the use of artists' residencies and placements. Such long-term research processes may commence in advance of any architectural or spatial design, and could be funded by a wider number of routes. As an example, the initial three-year programme of residencies and placements suggested on page 21 could be seed-funded by a contribution from Science Central, with additional support through the Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF), Newcastle University's engagement programme, and funding applications to The Wellcome Trust, Arts Council England's Grants For The Arts scheme and their international equivalents.

The engagement and marketing budgets for Science Central may also support smaller temporary arts activities, and the creative reconfiguring of site remediation works (such as the construction of hoardings or the use of crushed overburden material and the managed planting of wildflowers/ vegetation to create landform artworks) also offers cost effective funding for arts activity.



Key Recommendations

- Delivery of the three art commissions under-development for Phase 1 of Science Central *Hare, Small World Network* and *Waveform*.
- A commitment to commissioning permanent artworks in each construction phase, prioritising the key public spaces and buildings outlined in the masterplan particularly Knowledge Square and the knowledge link.
- Collaboration from the outset between artists, architects and/or landscape architects on the design of future buildings and public spaces, leading to a more integrated approach.
- A programme of artists' residencies and placement as a means of exploring scientific research and generating proposals for future public art commissions.
- A continued role for the Science Central Public Art Steering Group as the forum for receiving and evaluating potential arts projects and commissions.
- A greater focus on engaging the general public, and particularly local communities, in scientific research through artists and artwork.
- Greater exploration of the role of temporary arts projects in promoting the Science Central site, and further integration between arts commissioning and marketing plans.
- A continued role for a specialist arts consultant(s) within the design team(s) leading on future phases of development, in order to achieve a broad and balanced range of high-quality art commissions across the site.
- Explore opportunities for integrated artworks, and in particular bespoke street furniture for use throughout the site.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE PROJECT SUMMARIES



Hare Inges Idee, Public Space #1



Phase 1 of the site development includes a capital allocation for three major permanent commissions, one for each of the two main public spaces and the first building. Other commissions and activities will be subject to the funding allocations made for future construction phases, other budgets for related activity such as marketing and engagement, or from external funding sources.

Highly visible from St James's Boulevard, Public Space #1 will represent the key arrival point for visitors to the Science Central site from the City Centre and therefore represents the creation of one of the most important new public spaces in Newcastle.

The first building on site (also to be constructed in Phase 1) acts as a formal backdrop to the space, and this backdrop will be completed in a later phase by a hotel development. The space itself has been designed to accommodate a large-scale public artwork located towards the axis of St James Boulevard and Wellington Street. This artwork, which will explore themes of scientific research, should offer the following benefits:

- To signpost the establishment of the new urban quarter
- To signal Science Central by a strong presence onto St James Boulevard
- To contribute to the urban realm and civic quality of the wider City
- To create a highly distinctive public space through high quality artwork
- To promote the key theme of scientific research
- To set a benchmark for future phases of the Science Central site

Procured via a limited competition, Berlin-based artist collective Inges Idee's proposal *Hare* has been selected for this site. *Hare* is a large-scale sculpture that poetically juxtaposes nature and green technology, combining elements of the now-familiar wind turbine within the figurative context of a hare. Humorous and elegant, *Hare* will act as an iconic landmark within the cityscape, but the sculpture also captures a very specific moment in terms of the sustainability challenges of the 21st century. The potential for 'upcycling' decommissioned turbine blades for use within the sculpture is being explored as a welcome contribution to the sustainability theme for the site.



Small World Network Peter Evans, Public Space #2

Located on the knowledge link that runs from the West Road, through the site and onto Heber Street, this second public space falls within Phase 1 of the development. This new public space will represent a key arrival point for visitors to the Science Central site from Heber Street and further the University and therefore represents the creation of one of the most important new public spaces in Newcastle. In a far quieter location than Public Space #1, this second space will be a meeting place, a fulcrum of movement, and a place for outdoor events, socializing, exchanges of ideas, learning and eating. It will have pedestrian priority and be accessible to cyclists and the disabled.

The space will become the junction of several pedestrian access routes and the area in which a number of strategic views start or terminate. The design will respond to these linkages in its layout of threedimensional components and surfaces. In the centre of the space is the intersection of visual axes from several directions and this location is suggested as a meeting point within the masterplan. The artwork commissioned for this site should explore themes of scientific research – and in particular concepts of progression in scientific knowledge – offering the following benefits:

- To contribute to the urban realm and civic quality of the wider City
- To create a highly distinctive public space through high quality artwork
- To promote the key theme of scientific research
- To set a benchmark for future phases of the Science Central site
- To establish a physical and visual link from the University's existing campus

Procured via a limited competition, Newcastle-based artist and graduate of Newcastle University's Culture Lab Peter Evans' proposal *Small World Network* has been selected for this site. A 'Small World Network' is in effect a pattern found in many scientific disciplines from neurology to sustainable transport – in some disciplines it is a well known and understood principle, in others a new discovery. Probably best known in sustainable transport as 'Hub and Spoke' network, such a network is characterised by the fact that whilst most "nodes" of the network are not neighbours the majority can be reached by a small number of hops or steps, with the remaining minority forming long connections. For Public Space #2 the proposal is to develop a small world network as an animated 'drawing in light' suspended above the space via a framework of thin cables, and engaging with the layout of paving and seating areas. This proposal is still in its early stages and is subject to further design work.



Wavewall Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway, Building #1

The third artwork commissioned as part of Phase 1 is Lise Autogena and Joshua Portway's *Wavewall*, a data visualisation project prompted by the work of the Newcastle-born scientist Lewis Fry-Richardson whose pioneering discoveries in fluid dynamics and weather forecasting laid the foundations for modern climate science and chaos theory, and whose famous paper "Weather Prediction by Numerical Process" concludes with the following description of turbulence:

Big whirls have little whirls that feed on their velocity, and little whirls have lesser whirls and so on to viscosity.

The first building on site will offer commercial incubator units, university facilities and a 'science showcase' on the ground-floor. Newcastle-born, Lewis Fry-Richardson's parents owned a tannery business on the Science Central site, and his story is well suited to the science showcase location.

The artists' response to the inspiration of Fry-Richardson focussed on the use of fluids to create a dynamically stabilised form - a structure that balances on a delicate edge between chaos and collapse. A bold sculptural presence in the building's double-height atrium, *Wavewall* comprises a series of glass tanks in which two distinct fluids flow through at different rates, creating varied levels of turbulence from a completely calm straight line, through regular sine wave up to very beautiful crashing waves. Controlling these flow rates, and thereby producing very varied visible effects, will be live data feeds from relevant sources (potential examples include traffic management systems, weather simulations, energy consumption within the building etc).

The simultaneous energy and fragility of these delicately balanced states conveys both the complex balance of forces that sustain our planet, and the turbulent and sometimes unpredictable energy of technological progress.



Planets Peter Evans, sample project proposal

Developed by artist Peter Evans during his initial research period for developing proposals for Public Space #2, the planets project has been well received by the Public Art Steering Group and other stakeholders and has a mandate to be progressed should funding become available.

The project was conceived as a means to accurately and powerfully convey the vast scale of the solar system by directly comparing it to both the human scale of the viewer and the architectural scale of the city centre. The artwork would also fulfil a secondary role of increasing awareness of Science Central through a physical presence in the city and the associated press coverage that could be achieved through this innovative approach. A third role for the project would be to assist in the process of connecting Science Central with existing science and cultural venues in the city.

With the Sun centred within the 'science showcase' area of Building #1, the first four planets , when accurately scaled to each other – Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars – fall entirely within the Science Central site. The outer planets of Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune fall within the city centre, establishing connections with a number of other science-related institutions with the city – most notably the Discovery Museum (Saturn), the Literary & Philosophical Society (Uranus) and the Great North Museum (Neptune). These outer planetary rings also align with other highly visible locations within the city including St James Park football stadium, Newcastle Civic Centre, the Guildhall, the Theatre Royal, Grey's Monument and Eldon Square shopping centre. The planets would be accurately scaled in physical size as well as distance apart, bringing home in a very powerful way just how vast the solar system actually is. For example, with the Sun located at Science Central and Neptune 1073 meters away at the Great North Museum, the sun would measure only 300mm and Neptune 12mm.

The cost of this project is largely dependent on the scale at which the project is delivered – whether temporary or permanent, and with planets at single or multiple locations on each 'orbit'. Ideally this project is seen as a combined-media artwork, with both a physical presence in the city and a virtual one via a GPS-enabled smartphone App capable of carrying far greater levels of information. As a city-centre wide project with a strong marketing and engagement function, the majority of funding for this project would be required from Newcastle University and Newcastle City Council, potentially with smaller contributions from other institutions and organisations on each 'orbit'.



Fur Immer Peter Evans, sample project proposal

Also developed by artist Peter Evans during his initial research period for Public Space #2, *Fur Immer* (*For Ever* in German) is a proposal that literally visualises scientific research. It comprises a robot arm encased within a glass display case that repeatedly writes and erases extracts from scientific texts onto a blackboard. Whilst welcomed by the Science Central Public Art Steering Group, the group opted to pursue Peter Evans' *Small World Network* proposal for Public Space #2.

This scenario – of a high-quality outline art proposal that is valued by the steering group but cannot or will not be selected for the specific location it was developed for – is likely to occur regularly during the development of Science Central. The recommended approach in such a scenario is to explore opportunities to utilise the proposal on an alternative site, or reconfigure the project so that it has value for marketing and/or community engagement.

The British Science Festival is one of Europe's largest celebrations of science, engineering and technology, with over 250 events, activities, exhibitions and trips taking place over a one week period. The festival is unique in the UK as it moves to a different location every year, and will be hosted by Newcastle-upon-Tyne in September 2013.

Therefore *Fur Immer* is being developed as a temporary art installation for the British Science Festival, acting not only as cross-marketing for the festival and Science Central, but also testing the general public's engagement with and appreciation of the artwork. In effect the temporary installation acts as a live test ahead of *Fur Immer's* potential integration as a permanent art commission within a future building on site.

Funding for this temporary project would be via Newcastle University's engagement activity developed around the British Science Festival, augmented by contributions from organisations responsible for the animation of Newcastle city centre such as NE1.