

Blue Lagoon Redway link Public Art Commission, Milton Keynes

We are looking to appoint a creative practitioner or collaborative creative practice who have experience of developing and delivering site specific public art commissions.

The Blue Lagoon

The Blue Lagoon Local Nature Reserve in Bletchley is a former brick works site that opened in 1929. Bletchley lies on the [Oxford Clay Belt](#) and the manufacture of bricks was a major industry in Bletchley between when the brickworks were first opened in the 1890s until the development of Milton Keynes in the 1970s

The area of the nature reserve contains two pits: the northern [Water Eaton](#) pit, now known as the Blue Lagoon, and the southern Flettons pit. The Water Eaton pit was flooded in the 1940s when the adjoining [Water Eaton Brook](#) burst its banks.^[3] The pure blue colour of the pit gave the lake its colloquial and now official name.^[3] The Flettons pit was used in brick manufacture until 1970 and in the early 1980s was used as a landfill site

The site opened to the public in 1994, covering 116 acres it is rich in wildlife including: badgers, bats, grass snakes, great crested newts and dozens of bird species alongside the smaller insects. Future plans for the Blue Lagoon include creating better and accessible links with the surrounding area and features for visitors.

Redway Links Project

This project will see the delivery of three new links in Milton Keynes redway network (off-road cycle and walking routes), improving connections between the Lakes Estate, Newton Leys, Bletchley town centre and railway station.

This commission opportunity is specifically for the new redway link between Newton Leys and the Blue Lagoon. The new redway links will help to encourage active and sustainable

travel and improve connections between the residential Lakes Estate and Bletchley's town centre and beyond.

Aims for the Commission

Milton Keynes Council (MKCC) are looking to appoint an experienced creative practitioner or collaborative practice to deliver a new public art commission as part of the Redway Links Project, specifically the new link between the Blue Lagoon and Newton Leys.

Through this commission, we are keen to demonstrate the value that creative practitioners can bring to public spaces, and evidence how public art interventions can enhance the lived experience and meaningfully engage local communities.

The total commission budget is £24,000 ex VAT. This includes all fees, fabrication/delivery costs, installation, and publicity.

Aims for this commission can be summarised as:

- To develop and deliver a permanent public art commission, which is inspired by and specific to Newton Leys and the Blue Lagoon.
- To work closely with commissioning partners and build schedule to create a durable and engaging output.
- To explore the new route, to make connections between areas and encourage residents and visitors to use the new route for recreation, exercise and well-being
- To help promote the new route through walks, talks and the artwork itself.
- To investigate the rich heritage of the local area, specifically its brick making history and consider how this might be reflected and celebrated within the final commission.
- To work collaboratively and respectfully within the existing public realm, taking into consideration any existing constraints and sensitivities.
- To work with the highest quality materials and fabrication processes, with a life span of 10+ years, ensuring the commission continues to contribute positively to the local area over a long period of time.
- Consideration should be given to environmental impact of the commission.

The proposed commission can be of any material and scale. It could be a series of small and intimate interventions or a larger and more substantial work. There could also be a connection and narrative that run between a series of works.

Considerations

- Consideration must be given to health and safety implications of the commission.
- Consideration should be given to the durability of the work and its future care and maintenance needs.
- The appointed applicant will be required to support any planning applications or other permissions required for commission delivery.

- The appointed applicant will be expected to work closely with the Project Manager to ensure production and delivery.
- Sufficient time and resource should be allocated to marketing and publicity throughout commission development and delivery to share the scheme with the community.

Stakeholders and Local Partner Engagement

There are many creative practitioners, makers and fabricators in Milton Keynes, as well as a rich variety of cultural organisations. It is important that applicant creative practitioners and practices are aware of this context. Additionally, Milton Keynes has an exceptionally strong third sector with many local community groups, clubs and societies.

Some useful websites about Milton Keynes include:

[Home | Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council \(bletchleyfennystratford-tc.gov.uk\)](#)
[get around mk - Google Search](#)

[The Lakes Estate regeneration | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#)
[Milton Keynes - Get Around MK](#)

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/culture

www.destinationmiltonkeynes.co.uk

www.aha.org.uk

Budget

The total commission budget is £24,000 exclusive of VAT and includes all fees, research and development, travel and expenses, permissions, fabrication/installation costs.

Additional Support

A dedicated Project Manager (MKCC) will be assigned to support the delivery of the Commission. Additional support will be provided by stakeholders and partners as required.

Exclusions

We will not accept proposals for existing artworks; projects that do not meet the timescales or budget or approaches that do not respond to the local context.

How to apply and selection process

To apply for this commission please submit the following information to culture@milton-keynes.gov.uk :

- An outline of your approach to this commission brief - max 2 sides of A4.

- Provide up to 3 examples of previous relevant commissions (pdf or jpg file types only) with information about each project – max 5 sides of A4. Please include indicative budget spend for each example and images.
- Current Curriculum Vitae or practice profile
- Letter confirming your availability and contact details for 2 referees (email and telephone) – note: preferably from recent commissioners
- Evidence of insurance cover

Please do not exceed 6MB in file size.

Submissions will be assessed according to the following criteria:

Approach - respond to identified themes, aims and objectives, with the ability to research and respond creatively to the Brief.

Quality of previous projects – A proven track record of high-quality delivery, working in collaboration with communities and partners to develop and deliver exceptional, innovative, and engaging artworks within the public realm.

Experience - successful delivery of projects of similar scale and budget, demonstrable experience of working collaboratively with communities, partners and stakeholders, excellent communication skills with the ability to articulate ideas and processes.

Deadline: The deadline for receipt of applications is **Monday 11th December at 5pm GMT.**