

Summer Festival Commission Swale

Brief for Festival Management

Summer Festival Development and Delivery

January 2009



Deadline – February 26th 2010

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Introduction

Swale Borough Council is seeking to commission an innovative weekend arts festival for Sittingbourne town centre, to be delivered in July or August 2010. The Festival will be both street and venue-based, using vacant shops to host engaging and interactive temporary activities in 'familiar' spaces with an aim to cultivate new audiences in areas with little formal access to the arts.

Festival Vision Statement

A festival of high quality, innovative and accessible cultural experiences to reach, engage, and enrich the lives of all members of the Swale community. A programme that supports and develops the aspirations of artists based locally, to enable and empower the creative community.

Budget: £36K. This figure is to include all Festival Management expenses and fees, and all festival costs including commissioning and delivery, marketing and PR, and all related audience development activities.

Deadline for submissions: 12p.m. 26th February 2009

Delivery of commissioned project – July / August 2010

The Commission

'The Feasibility of Developing Cultural Infrastructure as part of Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration Scheme', (see Annex 1) analysed results of a survey of local residents' and stakeholder views on Sittingbourne's cultural offer. The most popular demand for new cultural activity was festivals (45%), followed by street arts performance (31%)

The report identifies a responsive programme of activities that would develop audiences for cultural activity in Sittingbourne. These reflect the need for innovative and high-quality participatory activity and include live art showcases, outdoor screenings, carnival parades and music as part of performance-based festivals/events (see Annex 2 for further information on Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration)

'Developing Swale's Festivals and Events Programme' (see Annex 1) recommends that Swale Borough Council commission a two-day summer festival running over a weekend in

July or August in Sittingbourne. The Festival may relocate to a strategic green space in 2011 such as Milton Creek, offering an opportunity to address other agendas prioritised by the Borough Council.

The Summer Festival Commission will need a High Street presence and has a remit to raise environmental awareness and explore opportunities to 'bring the rural to the urban' in support of the Discovering Places programme, which showcases the historical, built and natural environment and landscape at both iconic and undiscovered urban and rural sites. (See Annex 1 for key documents). A possible opportunity exists in encouraging residents and visitors to 'look up' above the shop fronts at the built environment.

The FEI report highlighted a number of green agenda activities including visual arts commissions or performance, participatory workshops using recycled materials, junk drumming, bicycle-powered staging, which may or may not be integrated into other profile-raising, participatory, and distinctive commissions to be developed as part of the event.

The Venues / Empty shops:

Building on the national trend to help tackle recession in the high street, this commission will engage business partners and economic development teams to address this need in Sittingbourne, to regenerate both the physical space itself and the hope and ambition of stakeholders and communities. In the longer term this festival will create something of lasting benefit, not just for those individuals and participants but also for the wider community and local economy.

These venue-based activities will mark out new territory for inclusive art that can be experienced by all ages and abilities. The artworks, interventions, installations or performances will encourage engagement and participation with the community and draw on the unique qualities of the building/space and location either aesthetically or conceptually.

Work required

Aims:

- Develop an artistically excellent and innovative festival programme that enables and invests in high-quality, innovative and accessible cultural experiences that reaches, engages and enriches the lives of Swale's community
- Develop opportunities for exciting projects sited in vacant shops in Sittingbourne.
- Consider fundraising, sponsorship, and other income-generating opportunities to maximise the budget and 'value for money'.
- Consider related or integrated opportunities for 'green' participatory activities and promote Swale's unique natural landscape and environment
- Invite cross art form collaborations and partnership working. Investigate opportunities to maximise spend through 'artist-sharing' with other festivals based in Kent, such as the Fuse Festival (Medway) and Canterbury Festival

- Develop a campaign which enables people to see Sittingbourne as a place that values and supports innovative and high quality creative practice
- Develop a community engagement / audience participation programme, to engender a sense of involvement and ownership (particularly with BME communities and young people), leading to a greater understanding of the value and role of art in an urban setting
- Encourage a broad range of stakeholders and partners to contribute to the programme leading to new partnerships, including traders associations and the business community more widely
- Develop a brand for the festival, manage and deliver all related marketing in collaboration with the Communications Team at Swale Borough Council

Proposals should be able to evidence:

a. Artistic integrity

Projects must demonstrate a commitment to high quality and artistic merit.

Quality and merit relate to innovation, creativity, vision, originality and the power to communicate ideas, as well as to the highest possible standards of delivery in all aspects of a project's development and implementation.

b. Professional development opportunities for artists

Including the extent to which the project:

- Offers training or mentoring opportunities for emerging artists / creatives based in Swale
- Offers opportunities for artists / creatives to work across artforms and disciplines, or in collaborative situations
- Provides formal or informal skill sharing between established and emerging creatives
- Provides unique opportunities for their own professional development

c. Audience development

Including the extent to which the project:

- Contributes to broadening the reach of arts projects through developing diverse new audiences, and deepens the experience for existing audiences
- Has positive educational benefits for the general public and the creative community
- Demonstrates a methodology for strong community engagement as audience/ participants, in the development and delivery of the work

d. Recognising and capturing the existing qualities and identity of the area

Projects must draw upon the existing character of Sittingbourne to engage communities. It should reflect a deep connection with place, making connections for the participants and communities who live and work there.

Outcomes:

- Stimulate involvement and engagement of local communities in creative activity (National Indicator 11). Broaden the audience by creating access to contemporary, high-quality and innovative activities
- Raise the profile of local cultural activity, infrastructure and heritage
- Raise the profile of the green agenda and draw on the unique qualities of the natural environment and landscape in Swale
- Promote the quality of the public realm, including developing an appreciation of the built architecture in Sittingbourne
- Retain and nurture cultural talent in Swale, offering opportunities to locally based artists and arts organisations
- Develop partnerships with neighbouring festivals (Fuse Festival, Canterbury Festival, Whitstable Biennale) to maximise opportunities and local organisations such as Diversity House and Swale Arts Forum.
- Reflect a deep connection with place, but also help perform a realisation of such connections for the participants and communities who live and work in Sittingbourne
- Increase access and opportunities for young people and 'hard-to-reach' communities
- Contribute to regeneration and cultural tourism through the animation of Sittingbourne town centre
- Support for cross cutting agendas including community cohesion, economic regeneration and skills

Art at the Centre Swale

Art at the Centre will support the commissioned Festival Manager to develop opportunities for audiences and the creative community to participate and develop the programme, in line with the overarching vision for Art at the Centre. For further information on Art at the Centre please visit: www.swale.gov.uk/aatc

The successful applicant will be expected to attend a minimum of 4 project team meetings (in Sittingbourne), as well as maintaining regular contact throughout the project.

Costs

The budget is not expected to exceed £36,000. This budget is to include all fees and expenses, including travel and accommodation if required, marketing, and festival delivery costs.

Applications

Applicants should provide:

- An outline proposal for a weekend festival / event to be delivered in Sittingbourne town Centre in July 2010
- An outline of a programme of work and project plan which identifies the expected start and finish times of tasks, and the number of person-days required to carry out each task
- Details of relevant previous experience
- 2 referees
- CV
- A budget for the work not exceeding £36K with a breakdown defining fees for staffing and festival expenses

Procurement process

The choice of a Festival Manager will be via a competitive process. Swale Borough Council does not undertake to accept the lowest, or any bid. Prospective applicants should provide sufficient information with their proposal to assist with the evaluation based on the following criteria:

- Experience and capability of the applicant
- Capacity of the applicant to deliver the work within the proposed timescale
- Demonstrable understanding of the aims and objectives of the brief
- That the applicant has knowledge and experience of developing and delivering festivals

Interview date tbc

Submission of proposal

Please submit two unbound copies and one electronic version (on CD or flash drive).

Proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelope to

Sarah-Jane Radley
Summer Festival Commission
Economy and Community Services
Swale Borough Council
Swale House
East Street

Sittingbourne
Kent ME10 3HT

To arrive no later than 12.00 noon on Friday 26th February 2009

Please make sure that the envelope containing your submission does not bear any mark that could identify the tenderer.

Queries

Any queries about the submission should be raised by email to sarah-janeradley@swale.gov.uk

Responses will be provided (also by email) without delay. If Swale Borough Council considers a query may have a material effect on the tendering process, all tenderers will be notified of both the query and the response.

Annex - Key Strategic Documents

- Artlands: A North Kent Art in the Public Realm Programme strategy prepared by up projects, 2009 – on request
- Discovering Places - <http://www.heritagelink.org.uk/discovering-places-2012-cultural-olympiad/>
- ACE – outdoor arts plan / great art for everyone
- 'The Feasibility of Developing Cultural Infrastructure as part of Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration Scheme', August 2009 DPA and FEI (www.swale.gov.uk)
- Developing Swale's Festivals and Events Programme – FEI, April 2009
- Greening the Gateway Kent & Medway, March 2008, Green Cluster Study – Milton Creek. www.gtqkm.org.uk
- Urban Initiatives, March 2009, Sittingbourne Town Centre & Milton Creek Supplementary Planning Document – Consultation Draft
- Sheils Flynn, March 2009, Milton Creek Gateway Landscape Project – Costed Delivery Plan
- Swale Borough Council, March 2008, Swale Green Grid Strategy. www.swale.gov.uk
- Ambitions for Swale, Swales Sustainable Community Strategy 2009-2026. www.swale.gov.uk
- Swale Corporate Plan 2007-2011. www.swale.gov.uk
- Swale Cultural Strategy 2008-2011. www.swale.gov.uk
- Cultural Framework and toolkit for Thames Gateway North Kent. www.culturesoutheast.org.uk
- ACE SE Investment Plan. www.artscouncil.org.uk/SEregionalplan.pdf