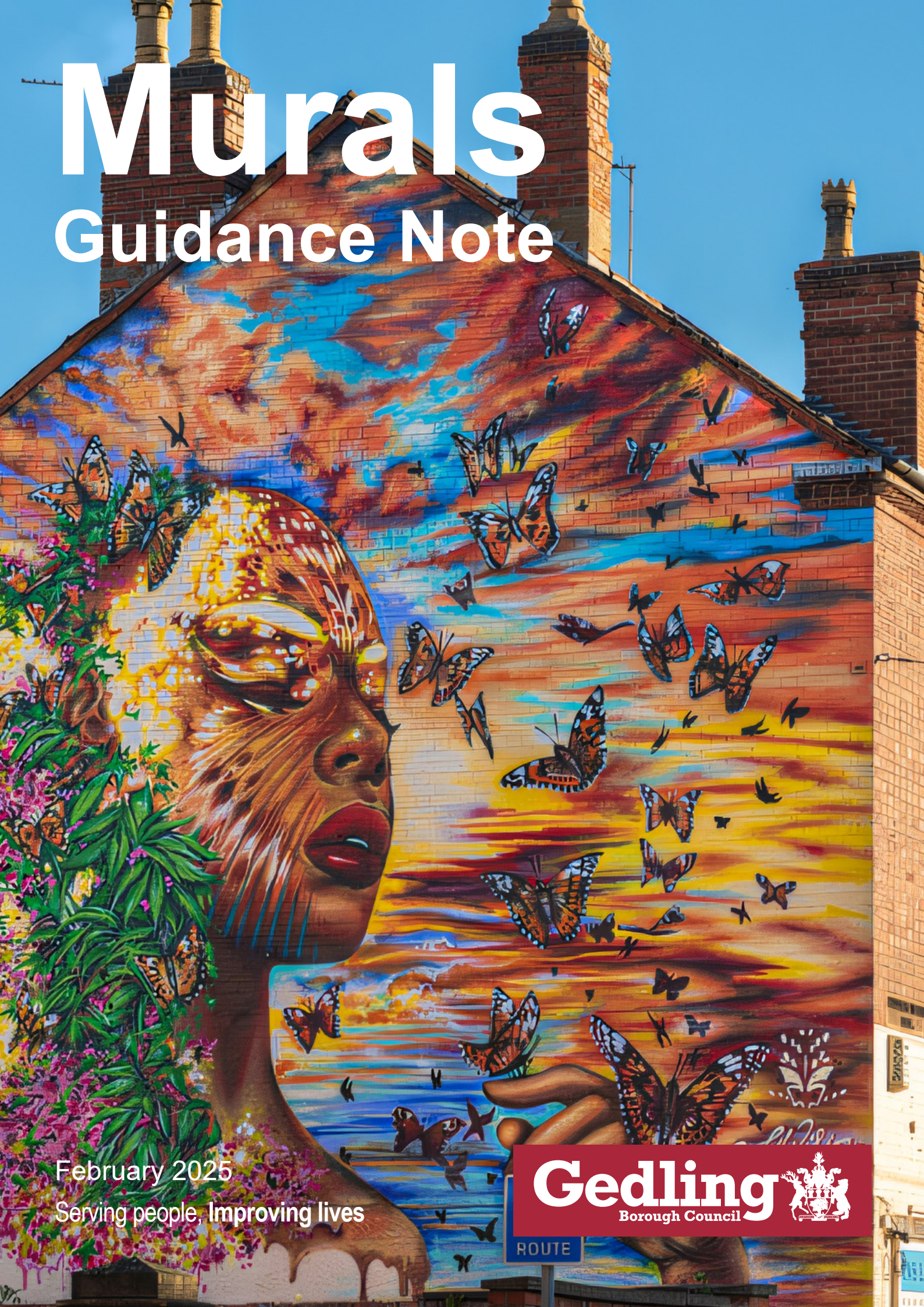


# Murals

## Guidance Note



February 2025

Serving people, Improving lives

**Gedling**  
Borough Council



ROUTE



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## Murals

## Guidance Note

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# Introduction

This document sets out guidance for the provision of murals within Gedling. It provides advice on the requirements for approvals, outlines best practice for commissioning artwork, the roles of different parties involved and potential locations for murals across the borough.

## 2 Definition of a mural

2.1 A mural is a large piece of artwork that is painted or applied directly onto a wall, ceiling, or other permanent surface, often as a form of public art. Murals can be found in both indoor and outdoor spaces, and they typically cover a wide area, transforming a plain wall into a vibrant artistic expression.

2.2 Murals can depict various subjects, including social or political themes, landscapes, abstract designs, or scenes from history (guidance on themes is provided later in this chapter). They have been used for centuries as a means of storytelling, beautifying urban spaces, and creating a connection between the community and the art. Techniques for creating murals range from traditional painting methods, such as using brushes and paint, to modern forms like graffiti and digital projections.

2.3 Gedling Borough Council aspires to be regarded as an excellent Council by enabling a safe, attractive, clean and culturally vibrant Borough and making a positive difference to people's lives. The Council's vision for public art and murals is to enhance the aesthetic quality of its public spaces, foster communities and their cohesion and cultivate local identity.



A disused shopfront hoarding on Derby Road, Nottingham.

### 3 Support for murals and their benefits

3.1 Appropriate and effective implementation of public art and murals can result in benefits by:

- » Attracting investment for both public and private sectors.
- » Making Gedling Borough a more appealing place for businesses to locate to.
- » Stimulating the local economy through creating employment and developing skills.
- » Encouraging tourism by giving Gedling Borough a competitive edge in relative to competing destinations.
- » Contributing to local distinctiveness by giving a voice to artists and designers and enabling them to utilise their creative skills and vision.
- » Helping to reduce levels of crime and vandalism by creating a sense of ownership.
- » Reclaiming spaces lost to deprivation or disuse.
- » Humanising environments, involving the community and creating a cultural legacy for the future.
- » Introducing innovation and experimentation into the process of how we develop spaces and places and create environments which meet the needs of the inhabitants and visitors.

3.2 Public art is about good design which is supported in local and national planning policy. Good quality attractive public spaces play a key role in urban regeneration and attracting residential and commercial occupiers. Implementing these principles does not necessarily mean more expense and public art and murals can be cost-effective ways to transform public spaces, reinforce a sense of place and encourage community engagement with the town centre.



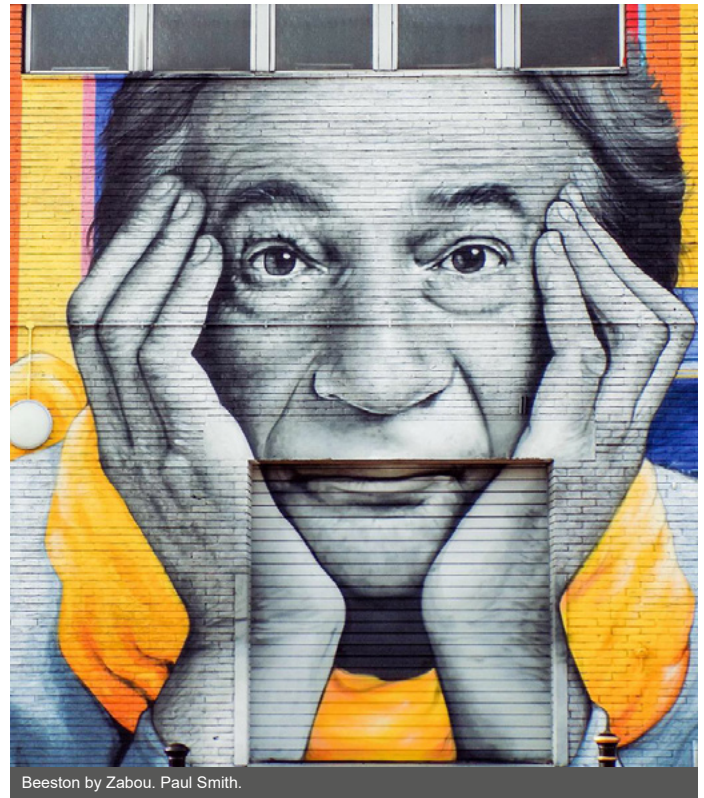
Derby Road, Nottingham by SozMate.



## 4 Key requirements for murals

### 4.1 All murals should:

- » Be developed in consultation with the community in which it is located;
- » Protect and enhance local character;
- » Ensure that it does not compromise the delivery of sustainability or inclusive design policy objectives;
- » Be site specific in terms of the design and concept (guidance provided in chapter 5);
- » Be visible and able to be enjoyed from a publicly accessible location; and
- » Require minimal maintenance and (where necessary) decommissioning works.





## 5 Guidance on themes for murals

5.1 Artworks will only be permitted where they are appropriate in terms of the history, context and purpose of a site. The history or context of a space may make siting of artworks inappropriate even when it may be acceptable for design or aesthetic considerations. The significance of heritage settings needs to be carefully understood and murals should work to preserve or enhance this significance.

5.2 Commissioning art may also provide an opportunity to enliven existing areas of public realm, help generate community ownership and become a source of local identity and pride. Residents and stakeholders should be involved in the development of designs.

5.3 When commissioning murals, they should:

- » Be original and not an off-the-shelf reproduction of an original artwork.
- » Be intrinsic to the location or place they are proposed to be installed.
- » Conserve locally and nationally important heritage assets and preserve or enhance their setting.



Beeston by Zabou. Commissioned by Broxtowe Council: Portraits of three local celebrities: Paul Smith, Richard Beckinsale and Edwin Starr, surrounded by sights from the canal and the old town.

## 6 Need for planning permission

6.1 A planning application will generally be needed for painting a mural if the site is prominent in the public realm, is in a conservation area or will change the character of the local area in accordance with the [Town and Country Planning Act 1990](#).

6.2 Murals will seldom be acceptable on a listed building and any proposal for a mural on a listed building should be discussed with the Planning Department.

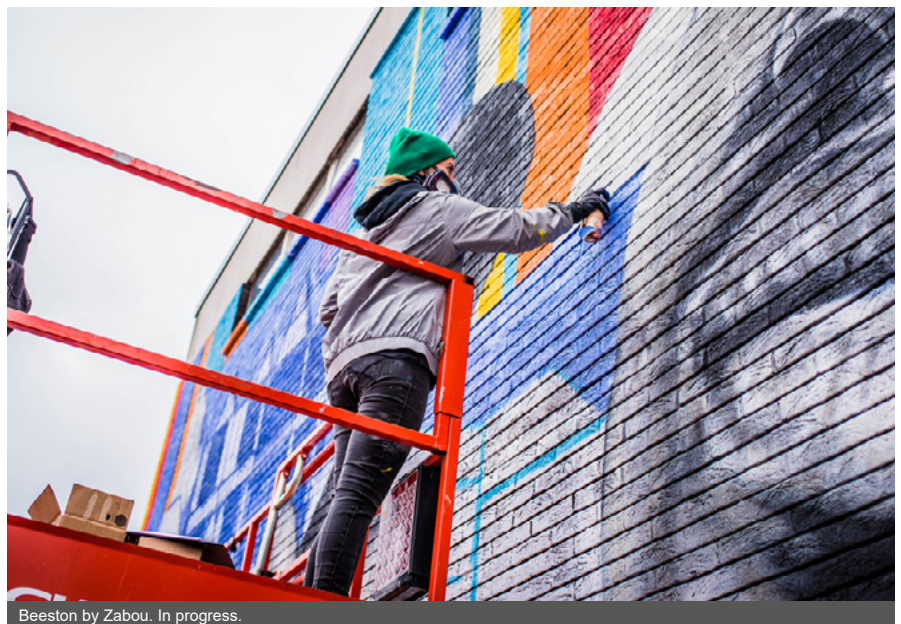
6.3 Before making an application, you can seek [pre-application advice](#) from the Council.

6.4 When making a planning application, you will be required to serve notice on the site owner so the permission of the owner of any building or structure (and not just a tenant) must be sought.

6.5 The Council will not agree to any painting, writing, marking or other application method, on its property without its prior express permission being obtained. Where graffiti or any other form of marking is found on council-owned properties or street furniture, it will be removed and the Council may take legal action.

### Advertisement Consent

6.6 If a mural contains reference to a business, commercial activity, logo etc. then it may be deemed to be an Advertisement, and an Advertisement application will be required instead of a planning application in accordance with the [Town and Country Planning \(Control of Advertisements\) \(England\) Regulations 2007](#). The criteria for determining these applications are broadly similar to planning applications but judged against different planning policies and legislation.





## 7 Existing murals

7.1 In some cases, existing murals or ghost signs (painted advertising signs on buildings that have been preserved for an extended period of time) may be protected because of Article 4 Directions in conservation areas or through being part of a listed building. This means that they may not be painted over or removed without express permission.



'Ghost sign', Lower Parliament Street, Nottingham.



## 8 Possible funding sources

8.1 The Arts Council [website](#) provides information on funding opportunities for the provision of public art.

8.2 A comprehensive list of alternative funding sources for public art can be found on the Public Art Online [website](#).



'Funky Bird' by SMALLKID for Arts Fest Nottingham on the side of a coffee shop in Fletcher Gate.



## 9 Commissioning process

9.1 Commissioning processes should be as open as possible regarding content to allow artists to use their creative ability and knowledge to inform the process, allowing the artist to 'lead' in their response to the brief. Further guidance is available from the Public Art Online [website](#).

9.2 Any public art commissioning should sit within a rationale and agreed criteria for commissioning. The aims of the commission should be clearly set out from the outset with a clear strategy or commissioning plan. It is recommended that professional advice is sought at the earliest stage such as involving a public art consultant, agency or lead artist. Specialist advice can help identify the conceptual framework for the commissioning plan, methods of selection, implementation and the budget required, as well as possible funding sources and project management functions. Key aspects of the commissioning process include:

- » Establishing the aims of the commission.
- » Consultation with all stakeholders.
- » Ownership of, and all permissions and restrictions of the site.
- » Appropriate scale and materials for the site.
- » Required preparation of the site.
- » The budget of the commission, including:
  - » Advertising and selections costs;
  - » Artist's design fees;
  - » Artist's commission fee;
  - » Costs including, but not limited to, insurance, installation, transport, security. Professional fees, consultation, publicity, maintenance and VAT if applicable; and
  - » A contingency.
- » The timescale and any key milestones.
- » The role of the artist.
- » The selection process to be used and eligibility criteria for competing artists.

9.3 In terms of advertising a commission, Arts Council England offer a service called [Arts Jobs](#): a free online service which details current vacancies and opportunities in the arts community. Other options include: [a-n magazine](#), [Axis](#) and local papers. The use of studio networks, artist-run organisations and membership organisations is also supported.

9.4 Look at the opportunities to involve the community in consultation; what are the aims behind involving the community? Are they to:

- » Involve them directly in the concept and/or design and making of work;
- » Create educational workshops linked to the commission?;
- » Involve them in identifying the artist and/or sites, informing the brief through sourcing ideas for work?;
- » Give opinions on various designs and be involved in the final decision-making process?; and/or
- » Inform of them of the process and gain informal feedback?

9.5 Some form of consultation is always necessary. A commission should not exist as an isolated process, which then suddenly appears on site. The location itself will very much define the sort of consultation. Consultation can:

- » Result in wider sense of ownership and understanding of the project;
- » Create a sense of pride and raise awareness/appreciation of the locality;
- » Provide opportunities to develop and utilise local skills; and
- » Provide a means by which the community can have control over its environment.

9.6 More detailed information on consulting for the provision of public art in general can be found on the Public Art Online [website](#).

9.7 It is important to build in some sort of documentation and evaluation process. This not only ensures that a detailed record of the project is available for future reference, it also helps promote the project wider afield.

9.8 To celebrate the final product, it is also important to plan some form of 'unveiling' or inauguration. This recognises all the hard work which has gone into the project and celebrates what has been achieved. It also provides an opportunity to publicise the project and gain, through media publicity, some recognition and feedback on the scheme.



Girl with Sunglasses by Buber Nebz. The artwork on the walls of Roundhill Primary School in Beeston can be seen from Glebe Street / Foster Avenue or from the Lidl car park nearby.



