



# KING'S LYNN, RAIL TO RIVER CREATIVE WAYFINDING TRAIL

## CONTEXT

King's Lynn is steeped in maritime trading history, has strong links with Europe and is a proud member of the Hanseatic League, which it has been part of for centuries. Situated on the Western edge of Norfolk with a population of 45,000, it functions as a sub-regional centre serving a wider area including Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire.

The town has an ambitious plan to realise its full potential as set out in the [Town Investment Plan](#), co produced by the Borough Council and [Town Deal Board](#). The priorities include;

- New opportunities for skills and jobs for our young people and all those affected by Covid-19 – addressing the need for reskilling and upskilling, linked to demand from local employers and opportunities in local sectors.
- Growing innovative businesses - attracted by our connectivity and high quality of life and supported by the networks and collaborative support that businesses need.
- A repurposed town centre with new experiences and businesses - increasing footfall, enhancing cultural opportunities, with its different parts better connected.
- A high-quality residential and leisure offer in the historic town core and riverfront - attracting new people to live and work in the town centre, whilst protecting our unique heritage.
- A sustainably connected town - through reduced congestion and better connectivity between the town, its catchment area and residential growth areas, creating safer walking and cycling routes and supporting remote working.

A key theme of the plan through is to engage, inspire, attract and retain young people in the town through a range of interventions. One of the Town Deal Board's aspirations is to engage young people in the design and development of projects and activities, to secure their buy in and contribution to the future prosperity of the town. We want to create a town that they feel proud of and is relevant to their generation.

## Enhancing the Public Realm – the Rail to River Project

As part of the focus to repurpose the Town, and to create a high quality environment that attracts people to live and work in King's Lynn, the Town Deal Board has allocated funds towards enhancing the public realm. One of these projects focuses on the route from our railway station to the riverfront.



The town's sense of space, fresh air rolling in off the river, its fishing community, and close proximity to untouched rural villages and unspoiled wildlands are all part of its identity. Our geographical location and environment is unique and our environmental heritage is as great a strength as the history of the town, although doesn't often feature as highly. We know that the environment, a connection with it and being in it is increasingly valued by young people and the wider population.

Our Town is steeped in heritage, with a high number of Grade 1 listed buildings and home to Britain's oldest working theatre, the 15<sup>th</sup> Century [Guildhall](#) and the only venue where it is alleged Shakespeare himself may have performed. The Town Investment Plan faces the challenge of ensuring that its projects respect and protect our historic heritage, whilst at the same time working towards creating an outward looking, modern and resilient Town that can withstand future challenges, including climate change.

Against this back drop, applications are invited to design and create 2 inspirational and impactful artwork pieces. The pieces, which will form part of the Rail to River Trail, need to be seen as another compelling reason to visit King's Lynn, whether as a tourist or short stay visitor or as a resident of the Town.

The 2 locations that have been identified for the art work are in areas of varying pedestrian traffic located at key east-west anchor points in the town. At present, there is no clear and obvious route between these two locations. Strengthening the link through creative and imaginative ways for visitors arriving at the rail station is a key objective of the Rail to River project – aiding the way finding for people new to the town to the town's best asset – the river.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- Create and install art pieces that are impactful and inspirational, not just for visitors but for our residents, business community and regular, wider catchment users.
- Enhance the town's offer and perception as a short break destination, increasing footfall and out of season visitors.
- Enhance and animate the connection between the Town and the riverfront
- Raise the aspirations of young people in King's Lynn, foster a sense of pride and connection with the Town.
- Raise awareness about the potential impact of climate change on the historic town.



## **TIMESCALES & PROJECT CALL RETURNS**

Fee: the total budget for the 2 art pieces is £50,000, inclusive of design, production/materials and installation. The selected artists will be paid 50% upfront in February/March 2023, and 50% on delivery and installation of the art pieces in Summer 2023, subject to lead times for the selected commissions. Further funding is being sought from Arts Council East.

Please return artwork concept designs and submissions to;

Louise Godfrey

Email: [louise.godfrey@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:louise.godfrey@west-norfolk.gov.uk)

Post: Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk  
King's Court  
Chapel Street  
King's Lynn  
Norfolk  
PE30 1EX

Deadline for submissions: **12pm on Monday 30 January 2023.**

Please include in your submission;

1. Artist CV
2. Project Methodology and approach to the commission
3. Estimated project costs (including design, production/materials and installation)
4. Timescale for production and installation

A Panel comprising local representatives and key stakeholders will be involved in the selection of the 2 art pieces. Selected shortlisted artists may be required to attend for interview (virtually).

A decision on the art work to be selected will be announced in February 2023.

Finalise landowner permissions – March 2023

Work carried out: April – July 2023

Final artwork delivered/installed: July 2023 or sooner if feasible.

The selected artists will be required to participate in any promotional activity, such as providing website and social media content, such as photos, text, or videos, as best fits the project.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Site 1 Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Site 2 Location Plan

Appendix 2 – Services Pack



## Annex 1

**SITE 1 LOCATION:** Rail Station, King's Lynn, PE30 1NX

**GRID REFERENCE:** TF 562279, 320064



### SITE 1 CONSIDERATIONS

- The Rail Station attracts people visiting on business and for leisure with footfall for 2021/22 estimated at circa **90,000 per annum**; this represents an opportunity to provide a visual impact and first impression of the town through art.
- The Rail Station is a grade I listed building.
- The Rail to River project has developed a public realm enhancement scheme for the area involving a range of interventions including new signage, street furniture and public art (appendix 1).
- The aim is to use the rail to river route to animate and accentuate the route and provide a means of directional wayfinding from the rail station through to the riverfront
- This is an accessible location immediately adjacent the town's gyratory system with high volumes of car and public transport traffic, and close to local retail, supermarket and associated car parking,
- The site is set back from Blackfriars Road immediately adjacent a pedestrian crossing and public transport connections



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- It's in easy walking distance to the bus station, Lynn Museum and town centre – but the route is not obvious and requires intuition of the visitor to find their way.
- [The Walks](#) historic urban park is within 50meters of the station, providing the green lung to the town centre and open space for recreation and enjoyment.
- There are public footpaths for wheelchair users and cyclists if approaching the location from the bus station to the west or public footpaths to the north and south. The other entry point is from the Rail Station building itself with stepped access.
- The council *Property Services* team have looked at the Gas, Water, Sewage and Electricity records for the site area and there are currently no issues of concern.
- [Explore West Norfolk](#) app could be used to promote the artwork locally and to tourists.

### SITE 1 ARTWORK BRIEF

- Create one permanent artwork (minimum of 10 years) on the Rail station forecourt
- The site has a clear viewpoint towards the bus station and the town centre beyond.
- The piece must not feel like it is 'forgotten' or 'ignored' but instead engage, intrigue, shock even (where appropriate), trigger emotions and questions about why it is there and what its background is.
- The artwork must create a much needed focal point for visitors to the area,
- The piece needs to be complementary and respectful to the setting of the Rail Station listed building.
- The dimensions of the space are xxx (as set out in appendix 1)



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**SITE 2 LOCATION:** St James' Pool, Blackfriars Street, King's Lynn, PE30 1NN [GRID](#)

**REFERENCE:** TF 562099, 319965



## SITE 2 CONSIDERATIONS

- Blackfriars Street located along the 'rail to river' route and is accessible to pedestrians from the Walks, London Road and New Conduit Street in the core town centre.
- St James Swimming pool is a municipal building with an adjacent public surface car park
- This is an accessible location immediately adjacent the St James multi storey car park, rail station and bus station with pedestrian traffic passing by. Its appearance currently detracts from the rail to river route.
- The street contains a number of small businesses including, barbers, an auction house, estate agents, take aways etc.
- It's centrally located in the town centre, in easy walking distance to the bus station, Saturday and Tuesday Market Places, [Town Hall](#), [St George's Guildhall](#) and commercial centre. From here, the route to the river Great Ouse and town's riverfront is not obvious and requires intuition of the visitor to find their way.
- The council *Property Services* team have looked at the Gas, Water, Sewage and Electricity records for the site area and there are currently no issues of concern.



**SITE 2 ARTWORK BRIEF**

- Create an artwork (minimum lifespan of 10 years) that engages, intrigues, inspires, trigger emotions and questions about why it is there and what its background is.
- The artwork must create a much needed focal point for visitors to the area.

**CONSENTS**

The final artworks may be subject to planning permission and consent from Network Rail (site 1) and the property owner (site 2). The Borough Council will work with successful artists to gain pre-application advice and prepare planning applications before the final application is made.



## Annex 2

### FURTHER BACKGROUND

- King's Lynn has a rich heritage. It was the UK's first [Hanse](#) town (one of only four in the country).
- During the 14th century, King's Lynn ranked as England's most important port with two rare [Hanseatic league](#) warehouses still in existence.
- [Blubber House Creek](#) where whale blubber and bones were processed, sits at the start of the town.
- The area has a multilingual community, with many Eastern Europeans living locally. Lithuanian, Polish, Hungarian and Portuguese are spoken. [Population report](#).
- Many factory workers live close by.
- There are a number of wayfinding sculptures along the riverfront that need to be considered in order to avoid duplication of ideas.
- There are a number of schools and College close to the proposed artwork site.
- Previously, the community was brought together to help create another piece of public art - constructing fish and crabs that were hung onto an artwork structure.
- Public Art is a key priority identified in the [King's Lynn Public Realm Action Plan \(2021\)](#)
- [Lynn Museum](#) tells the fascinating story of West Norfolk, hosting a life-size replica of [Seahenge](#), a prehistoric monument exposed on the beach at nearby Holme-next-the-Sea in 1998 and an astonishing Bronze Age timber circle.
- The commission site is close to [Lynn Museum](#), [Kick The Dust](#), [True's Yard](#) (independent museum for fishermen), [The Town Hall and Stories of Lynn](#), [Groundwork Gallery](#) and [Alive West Norfolk](#). The area has a number of different art form activities, [festivals](#) and events that operate during school holidays.

### ENGAGEMENT

Ongoing consultation and engagement throughout the development of the Town Deal programme of projects is a high priority for the Town Deal Board to ensure the proposals responds to the local views and needs. A series of working groups of the Board have been established with a wider range of stakeholder of theme specific areas, including Public Realm. The [Public Realm & Repurposing Working Group](#) comprises stakeholders from a variety of businesses and local organisations who have an interest and role in the development of public realm interventions. Public Art in the Rail to River project is viewed as critical to the group to promote intrigue and interest in the townscape. The Working Group will be the key stakeholder group involved to be consulted during the development of these art pieces.





## HM Government

The Town Deal Board commissioned a survey of [Young People](#) (aged 16-25) in October 2021. Over 167 young people took part and told us;

- **Sports / leisure facilities** – there is particularly high appeal of a trampoline park, adult soft play / climbing adventure and indoor go karting. And, to a slightly lesser extent, creative workspaces for art and crafts.
- **‘Other’ facilities** – there is particularly high appeal of free WiFi and fast broadband speeds, space to meet up with friends, and an escape room.
- **Retention** – there is a sense that King’s Lynn isn’t sufficiently ‘attractive’ to young people to encourage them to stay in King’s Lynn. There is a perceived lack of career development opportunities, such as work experience, opportunities for graduates and opportunities in the creative industries.
- **‘Somewhere for young people’** - there is a general sense throughout the feedback that young people would like a designated space they can call their own, where they can meet up with friends, study, and have fun.

### CHARACTER PROFILE & SURVEY RESPONSES

A number of consultations have been undertaken during the development of the Town Investment Plan in 2020-22. Reports are published on the [Vision King’s Lynn website](#).

The EXPERIENCE project lead by Norfolk County Council circulated a survey in 2021 to local people to ask them what they REALLY think about King’s Lynn & the wider West Norfolk area. These were their honest responses. We encourage you to explore local needs and desires when creating your design.

***If King’s Lynn & the wider West Norfolk area was a person, how would you describe them?***

Independent
Poetic
Loyal
Strong-willed
Ever-changing
Gentle
Attractive
Mystical
Anxious



## HM Government

**Write a short dating advert for King's Lynn & the wider West Norfolk area?**

*'Serene beauty who likes a quiet life seeks someone to get in a boat with her whatever the weather.'*

*'Friendly but timid...seeks partner... (that is) exciting, original and...encourages...fun new eco-friendly experiences.'*

*'Authentic...surprising and with a lot of character... quiet during the day and buzzing at night.'*

*'Super friendly...I'm sociable and looking for a social love. You must love history too!*

*'A love of community spirit is a must'*

*'A cold dark place....the highs, the lows, the ups, the downs make you feel so lonely....please help'*

*'Waiting, but ready, for some excitement!'*

### **UNTOLD STORIES**

- *"In the 13th century...Lynn Port (traded) with...Northern Baltic towns. (The) Hanseatic League formed a union of German towns...the ships from these countries brought furs, beeswax, fish, cloth & timber taking back with them corn, wool, skins, salt and lead."*
- *"The Downham Market bread riots... (a) workhouse in Downham Market (was) replaced by an old people's home...somewhat apt given workhouses worked old people to death."*
- *"The remains of WW2 Methwold airfield can be of interest"*
- *"Drug dealing and illegal activities"*
- *"[Cromwell's](#) men shelled Pentney Abbey from the Nar, now & again, stone cannonballs have turned up"*
- *"Its history dates back to the Bronze Age"*
- *"The people in our village actually talk to each other and say hello instead of only looking at their phones."*
- *"Bawsey is the most awesome place...the scenery is magical. There is...a man, mending bikes for the hospital and for people in town, he is my hero."*
- *"The lady down the road from us sells plants for a charity called Scotty's Little Soldiers which is for children whose parents have been lost in the forces."*

### **WHAT'S MISSING?**

- *"Quality free dinners in the village hall once a month for people... to... help with single older people loneliness"*
- *"Creative and imaginary seating arrangements on street corners"*
- *"More family friendly evening entertainment and venues"*



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- *"Diversity of art and cultural entertainment for everyone. Outdoor activity and (a) cultural programme"*
- *"A better bookshop"*
- *"A stronger art and craft community"*
- *"Things for children. There's very little to do in the local area...toddler activities"*
- *"More for teenagers to do at minimal/zero cost"*
- *"Entertainment, there is barely anything to do for young people who do not have a lot of money"*
- *"We currently have more 'pound' shops than anything else. I'd make a bigger deal of the local library and make the children's section a magical place to visit. I'd create community art/music spaces"*
- *"A desire to move into the future, instead of continuing to harp on about the past and the good old days"*
- *"Proper integration of Norfolk families with roots that go back many generations...from the UK and abroad"*
- *"Transform abandoned buildings into pop art galleries or stores. I would organise activities in the parks and develop youth activities in (deprived) areas"*

## ASPIRATIONS

- *"A thriving and adventurous place for tourism"*
- *"Eco-friendly projects, greener transport. Cleaner beaches. More cycle tracks"*
- *"Cycle lanes (like Holland!) and an ecological paradise that people can visit"*
- *"More cycling with electric drop off points...larger attendance of tourists"*
- *"Protect nature at Bawsey! Clean up the canals in Kings Lynn! Protect nature from fly tipping"*
- *"I would like to see schools where art, engineering and music were all on the syllabus"*
- *"Protect the nesting seals...bats and wildlife"*
- *"I think we do a really good job here and try to be balanced"*