



## Stevenage Bus Interchange – artist’s commission brief

### Introduction

Stevenage Borough Council and Junction 7 Creatives are seeking to commission an artist (or a group or collective of artists) to create a new, 3-D, permanent piece of public art located at the Stevenage Bus Interchange – a major transport hub and part of the town’s extensive £1bn regeneration programme.

The new artwork will be situated outside the main entrance to the Interchange – a highly prominent location where it will be seen and experienced by hundreds of people every day as part of their journeys through the town.



### Background and context

The Stevenage Bus Interchange opened in June 2022, providing a brand new home for bus travel in the town. The development has modernised every aspect of bus travel, with the

emphasis on passenger comfort, accessibility and experience (e.g. an extensive external canopy and a climate-controlled waiting area).



External works include new pathways that link the Bus Interchange with the railway station, town square and cycle network, ensuring clear connections between Stevenage's main transport links and positioning the Interchange as a hub for all kinds of journeys through the town.





The artwork itself will be located outside at the specific point where these various pathways intersect (see 'the specific location' below), making it a key point of interaction in people's day-to-day travels through Stevenage.

Stevenage Interchange builds on a history of highly innovative and interconnected transport links in the town. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century Stevenage was well known as a staging post on the Great North Road, making it a key 'coaching town' for those journeying into and out of London. Indeed, the Bus Interchange is located on the former site of Great North Road leading into the Old Town. The arrival of the railways in 1850 put the town within even easier reach of London (something commuters still value today). As the UK's first 'New Town', designated in 1946, pioneering transport links were fundamental to its design, with Stevenage being home to the first pedestrianised town centre in Britain and the largest dedicated cycle network in the country.



Stevenage continues to evolve, with a major £1bn regeneration programme underway to transform the town centre and make it [Stevenage Even Better](#). As well as the Interchange itself, this regeneration programme includes plans for an expanded Arts & Heritage trail, which will build on the [existing artworks & heritage](#) around the town, promoting greater cycling and pedestrian connectivity. The Stevenage Bus Interchange commission is intended as a pilot for a wider series of public art commissions to follow.

### **About the commissioning partners**

[Stevenage Borough Council](#) is the local authority for the Stevenage non-metropolitan district of England. The council has a strong interest in and commitment to arts and culture as a vital part of public life in the town, as set out in its 10-year [Arts & Heritage Strategy: Stevenage Re:Imagined](#). Public art is a major component of this cultural strategy, to enhance the town centre, wider public spaces, and the overall creative profile of the town.

### **Junction 7 Creatives**

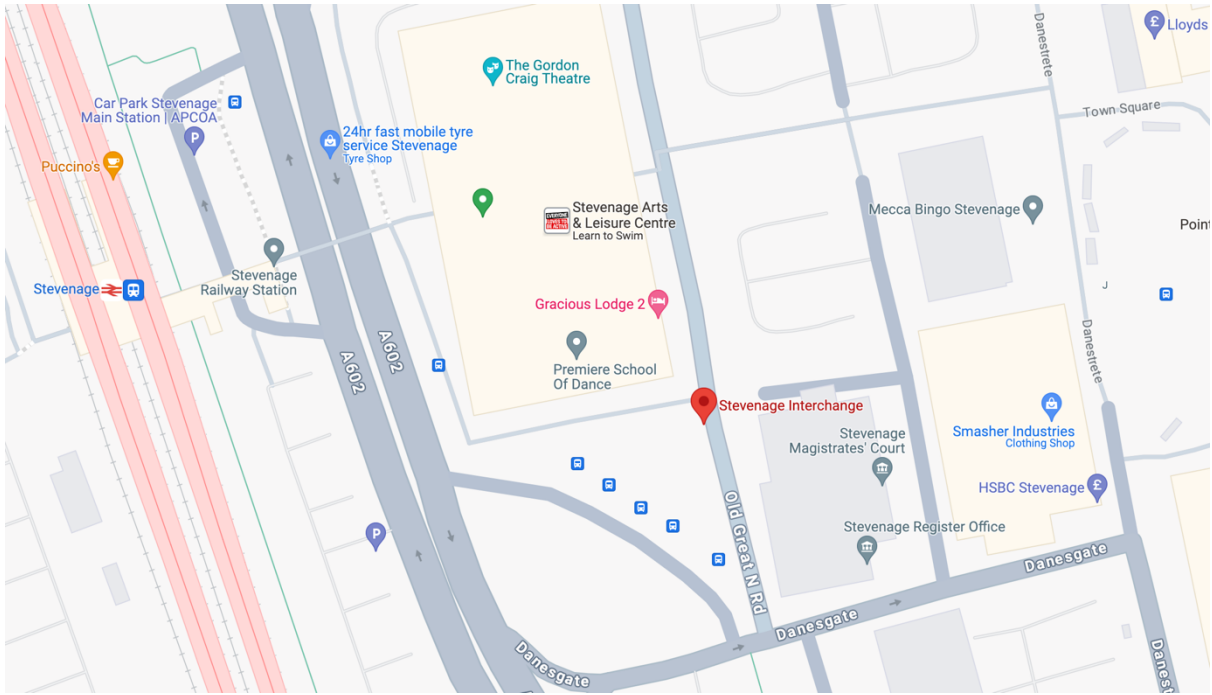
[Junction 7 Creatives](#) is a community of artists and creative individuals of all ages and levels of experience in Stevenage. We work together to make all kinds of creative things happen in our town – at our home of 17 Town Square and beyond. We also act as co-producers with Stevenage Borough Council and other partners on projects such as this Stevenage Interchange commission, to bring together artists and members of our community in meaningful and highly creative collaborations.

### **The specific location**

A very specific location has been identified for this artwork. It will be situated outdoors, directly in front of the entrance to Stevenage Bus Interchange, bordered by two public thoroughfares running north towards Six Hills Way and east towards the rail station.







The adjacent car park to the west will also be developed into a public thoroughfare in the near future, becoming the main boulevard into the town centre for people arriving into Stevenage by bus and train.

The artwork will therefore become even more significant over time, with the potential to act as a marker and point of familiarisation for everyone visiting Stevenage town centre.

### Specifications and constraints

The specific nature of this location necessitates various considerations and constraints in terms of the design of the artwork:

- It is important the artwork can be viewed and enjoyed from multiple angles and perspectives.
- The artwork should be highly durable and weather resilient, allowing it to become a familiar feature at Stevenage Interchange – the prime gateway into the town – for decades to come.
- Minimal maintenance should be required to keep the artwork in an optimal condition. Maintenance will be the responsibility of Stevenage Borough Council once the artwork has been completed, and the artist will need to provide detailed guidance on any long-term maintenance and/or specialist cleaning requirements.
- Given the busy public use of the site, the design should avoid any points, sharp edges or other potential safety risks.
- Associated signage should be installed in close proximity to the completed artwork (as part of the overall production budget), enabling the public to learn about the artwork/artist when passing by.

## Theme

Whilst we are not specifying a theme for this commission, we are looking for proposals that will resonate with and enhance the unique nature and use of the the Stevenage Bus Interchange site, as a hub for hundreds of people's interconnected journeys through Stevenage each day. As such, artists may wish to consider ideas of travel and interconnection within their concepts for the artwork.

## The role of the artist

In this commission, we are looking for an artist with the skills, vision and experience to design and create a piece of public art that will resonate with and enhance this key Stevenage location for decades to come. The commissioned artist will be responsible for the artistic idea and design of the piece, along with its production, in a way that takes account of all practical considerations and constraints of the site, budget and other factors.

The artist will work closely with co-producers Stevenage Borough Council and Junction 7 Creatives over the course of the project, who will seek to work in a highly supportive and collaborative manner, sharing information and conversations at any point that enable the artist's work and ensure effective installation of the piece and communications with the community. Key contacts and collaborators will be Samantha Daisley – Museum and Cultural Development Officer, Stevenage Borough Council, and Liam Manson – Co-Director, Junction 7 Creatives.

## Community engagement

There is an opportunity for the commissioned artist to work with [Junction 7 Creatives](#) on a supporting programme of community engagement over the course of the project. This activity will open up opportunities for members of the community to engage with, learn about and connect with the artwork, its context and ideas. A particular group we will be working with is the [Stevenage Bus Users Group a.k.a. 'SG1 BUGS'](#), who champion high quality bus travel for all in the town. Junction 7 Creatives will be responsible for devising and facilitating this activity, through careful conversation with the commissioned artist. This activity brings with it a modest additional budget and does not need to be funded out of the design, production and installation budget outlined below.

## Budget for design, production and installation

£26,000 is available for the Stevenage Interchange commission. This is inclusive of:

- Artist's fee and expenses
- Production costs and materials (including any presentational structures e.g. plinth if required)
- Fees to any collaborators or sub-contractors brought on board by the artist (if required)
- Artist's travel costs and related expenses for site visits and installation

- Transport of completed work to site
- Installation costs (N.B. Stevenage Borough Council's Engineering Team will support and advise on the project, but any practical installation costs will need to be paid for out of this budget).
- VAT

### Timeframe with key dates

Activity	Date
Open call to artists	4 <sup>th</sup> March – 19 <sup>th</sup> April
Open Day – in person	Mon 25 <sup>th</sup> March 11am-1pm
Open Day – virtual	Thurs 28 <sup>th</sup> March 11am-12.30pm
Close of applications	Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> April (5pm)
Shortlisted artists informed and initial proposals invited	w/c 6 <sup>th</sup> May
Presentations and discussion with shortlisted artists in Stevenage or online if required	w/c 27 <sup>th</sup> May
Decision and appointment of successful artist	w/c 10 <sup>th</sup> June
Development of detailed proposal, including design, budget, plan for production and installation, and risk assessment, with support and input of co-producers	June-August
Production of artwork	August-October
Installation of artwork on site	November
Launch of artwork with celebratory event, press coverage etc.	By early December
Evaluation to inform wider Arts & Heritage Trail	December -January

### Invitation to apply

#### Essential experience/skills

- Demonstrable experience of delivering art commissions or projects of a similar / relevant kind.
- Quality of design and work in relevant medium/media
- Understanding of technical requirements in the production, installation and long-term maintenance of the work
- Ability to work in a collaborative manner with different partners
- Openness to community engagement, and to supporting public communications of the project (e.g. press & media)



## Open Days

Artists interested in the Stevenage Interchange project are invited to visit the site on the Open Day on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> March, 11am-1pm, or the Virtual Open Day on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 11am-12.30pm. Both offer opportunities to familiarise yourself with the location and to meet the Co-Producers.

Please RSVP for these events by email to Liam Manson, Junction 7 Creatives: [liam.j7cs@gmail.com](mailto:liam.j7cs@gmail.com). You will then be sent instructions for joining the event.

Attending either of these events is not essential and Artists should only attend one or the other.

## How to apply

Please submit an Expression of Interest by email to Liam Manson, Co-Director, Junction 7 Creatives by **5pm on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2024**: [liam.j7cs@gmail.com](mailto:liam.j7cs@gmail.com). Late submissions cannot be considered.

Your expression of interest should include (as a single document):

- Your name/the name of your company, or group/collective of artists
- Contact details including email, phone number and current address
- Links to your website, professional social media accounts and/or any other online platform showcasing your work.
- A short statement (approx. one side of A4) outlining your proposed approach to this project, including an indication of materials to be used
- Up to 8 images relevant to your proposal or previous work
- Your CV

If you would prefer to submit your Expression of Interest in another format such as audio or video please contact Liam Manson at least one week in advance of the deadline:

[liam.j7cs@gmail.com](mailto:liam.j7cs@gmail.com).

## Selection procedure

### Shortlisting

Representatives of Stevenage Borough Council and Junction 7 Creatives will review all submissions received by the deadline and determine a shortlist of up to three Artists.

The shortlisted Artists will be paid £500 each to prepare an initial proposal for the commission. The proposal should include key themes and concepts; a description and

drawings of physical artworks; a breakdown of how the budget would be spent; details of any collaborators or subcontractors and a draft timeline of production/delivery.

Shortlisted artists will be invited to present their proposals for discussion with the decision panel, made up of:

- Councillor Richard Henry, Leader, Stevenage Borough Council
- Councillor Loraine Rossati, Executive Member, Culture, Leisure and Information Technology, Stevenage Borough Council
- Ishbel Brierley, Senior Regeneration Officer, Stevenage Even Better
- Samantha Daisley, Museum and Cultural Development Officer, Stevenage Borough Council
- Liam Manson, Co-Director, Junction 7 Creatives

### **Selection Criteria**

All applications will be reviewed with interest and will be assessed on how well they respond to this brief, particularly with regard to:

- Artist's track record and relevant experience
- Artistic quality of the proposal and how it would resonate with and enhance the Stevenage Interchange site
- Practical viability of the proposal and the artist's ability to create work within stated budget, timeframe and other parameters.
- Artist's ability to work collaboratively, and to contribute to community engagement and public communications of the project.

Stevenage Borough Council and Junction 7 Creatives are committed to equality of opportunity and to supporting a diverse range of artists to work in Stevenage. We encourage anyone who feels they can respond to this brief to apply.

If you have any questions regarding this brief or making an application, please feel free to contact Liam Manson, Co-Director, Junction 7 Creatives on [liam.j7cs@gmail.com](mailto:liam.j7cs@gmail.com) or 01438 487017.

***Thank you for your interest in the Stevenage Interchange artist's commission.***