

Broadmead visual storytelling and design commission

Total project budget: £10,000

Submission deadline: 10am, Wednesday 15 April 2026

Bristol City Council (BCC), working in partnership with local stakeholders, is seeking an experienced Bristol-based designer or creative agency to develop a visual storytelling campaign for the streets of Broadmead in Bristol's city centre.

Focusing on The Horsefair and Penn Street, two streets on the cusp of change, we require a bold and imaginative visual identity for the area - one that brings community and story to life in the public realm and sets the scene for an inclusive, sustainable and re-connected place for everybody. This will take the form of a stable of visual assets to be used on street dressings e.g. banners, window vinyls. The designs will incorporate original artwork by three Bristol-based artists (to be commissioned separately).

This work forms the first part of a wider arts and culture delivery programme in The Horsefair and Penn Street. Later phases, beyond the scope of this commission, involve cultural activation and events in public spaces. More information on the planned transport changes in The Horsefair and Penn Street can be found in Appendix 1.

The project is being funded by the UK Government through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, secured by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

Detailed brief

Aims of this commission

- Help to communicate to the public the message 'From disruption to transformation', while changes are made to traffic on The Horsefair and Penn Street, such as the removal of bus stops
- Develop one clear identity for the area, unifying residents, future residents, businesses and visitors
- Tell the story of a place on the brink of change, drawing out the local distinctiveness of Broadmead
- Increase awareness and attractiveness of the area as a shopping and leisure destination, and a community; attract footfall and increase dwell time.

Elements of the commission

Part 1, RESEARCH: The appointed designer or creative agency will carry out research about and in the Broadmead area, to draw out the stories and character of the place. This is likely to include discussions with key cultural stakeholders and independent businesses, and consultation of archival published material about the area. Information will be collated into a visually-led report which will guide the creation of a clear visual identity for this creative commission and beyond. This research will also be useful in guiding future phases of the art and culture work in The Horsefair and Penn Street (beyond the scope of this commission).

Part 2, DESIGN: Create a stable of 10 digital assets, incorporating original work by three local artists (the successful designer or creative agency will be involved in the process of commissioning these artists and will take responsibility for their day-to-day management). We envisage that over approximately two years, these designs will be used:

- in communications about the transport project on The Horsefair and Penn Street
- realised as physical 'street dressing' and interventions
- on transport hoardings
- by developers to cover hoardings in the area.

The design should present a clear visual identity for this location. Artwork (separately commissioned with budget held by Bristol City Council) might reference key features of The Horsefair and Penn Street identified by local residents, businesses, and visitors or discovered through another means, such as archival material, published research and accounts. This might, for example, focus on historic or notable buildings or businesses; local people who work, live and play here; nature; local stories; events or people who form part of the collective memory. This can be done in a creative or abstract way.

These assets will be deployed in various 'street dressings' which stand out against the backdrop of a busy commercial street (e.g. projections, banners, window vinyls). Fabrication and installation will form a separate commission, with budget held by Bristol City Council. As part of this commission, the designer or agency will identify opportunities for deployment of street dressings on The Horsefair and Penn Street.

Outputs

- A short visually-led report (between 1000-2000 words) collating findings of the research phase, which will inform design of digital assets and may also be used to inform cultural activation and events in the Broadmead area (Phases 2 and 3 – beyond the scope of this commission).
- A stable of 10 licenced digital assets which incorporate the work of three artists and use visual design techniques to create a unified identity and branding. Designs could also incorporate licenced archival images. These will later be used on a fixed number of physical

‘street dressings’ e.g. banners, window vinyls (fabrication and installation of these will be commissioned separately).

Who we are looking for

We are looking to commission a designer or creative agency to research and design a stable of digital assets which tell the story of place. This will include working with Bristol City Council Arts Development Team to commission the three local artists to create artistic content for assets. The final work must deliver aims of the commission, stated above.

We are looking for a designer or creative agency who:

- has a passion for place-based storytelling
- is interested in collaborating with local artists
- has a track record of engaging a mixture of stakeholders, such as residents and businesses, in the creative process
- has an innovative and sustainable practice involving placement in the public realm
- has experience of creative, innovative and situation-specific approaches
- has experience of working with existing assets and place

Total project budget: £10,000.00

Total project budget of £10,000 is inclusive of:

- all designer or agency fees
- stakeholder and business engagements
- research into local area
- selection of artists (with Bristol City Council)
- management of artists
- digitisation of artists’ work
- design development, production, and all associated costs
- Reasonable requests to adjust size and scale of designs to fit specific locations (approximately five days up to end of March 2027)

The fee excludes Value Added Tax, which shall be added where the designer or creative agency is registered for VAT. It is the responsibility of the designer or creative agency to inform the client if they are registered for VAT purposes and to supply a VAT invoice.

Artists’ fees, fabrication and installation fees, are held by Bristol City Council and will be commissioned and paid separately.

Eligibility criteria

The commission is open to designers or agencies based in Bristol or the surrounding area.

Interested designers or agencies should be confident that they can meet the project timetable set out below.

Your submission should be no more than three pages of A4 in total and should include the following:

- Your name, contact details, address, and preferred pronoun
- A statement of no more than 800 words which demonstrates through concrete examples:
 - Your ability and experience of carrying out research (e.g. archival, with the cultural and business sectors).
 - Your ability and experience in creating high quality, innovative designs for use in public spaces on ‘street dressing’ e.g. banners, window vinyls, projections.
 - Your connection to, working knowledge of, or motivation to work in Bristol.
 - Your engagement and involvement of stakeholders in the design process.
 - Your experience of working with artists
 - Your ability to work within a given timeline and budget.
- Your day rate and number of person days you would allocate to the project (please indicate number of days on each element, e.g. local area research, artist management design).
- Confirmation you can deliver in the timeline set out below.
- Three examples of previous relevant projects. Examples should between them cover the research and design elements of the commission, as well as projects with artists. Please describe the work or project in your own words, rather than sending links.
- A referee who can talk about a commission you have carried out in the public realm or a public setting.

Completed submissions should be emailed to artsdevelopment@bristol.gov.uk by 10am, Wednesday 15th April.

We aim to hold conversations with shortlisted candidates on 20-21st April.

Anticipated programme and timetable

w/c 20 April	Designer/ agency engaged
April-May	Two-week research phase: stakeholders, residents, business consultation, archival
May	Artists commissioned
May-June	Design phase
July	Final sign-off of designs

A more detailed timeline will be agreed following commissioning.

Management and support:

The designer or creative agency will be commissioned and contracted by Bristol City Council Arts Development team. We may co-opt local business and cultural stakeholders to act as advisors on this commission.

Day-to-day project management and liaison will be with Bristol City Council Arts Development officers who will support you from briefing, introducing you to key stakeholders, overseeing milestones for delivery such as research completion, concepts, and detailed design sign off.

Commissioning of three artists will be done jointly with Bristol City Council Arts Development team, with the appointed designer or creative agency responsible for day-to-day management.

Selection criteria

- Your ability and experience of carrying out research (e.g. archival, with the cultural and business sectors).
- Your ability and experience in creating high quality, innovative designs for use in public spaces on ‘street dressing’ e.g. banners, window vinyls, projections.
- Your connection to, working knowledge of or motivation to work in Bristol.
- Your engagement and involvement of stakeholders in the artistic process.
- Your experience of working with artists.
- Your ability to work within a given timeline and budget.

Score	0	1	2	3
Rationale	Unacceptable - not been answered or the answer raises serious doubts.	Partially answered but reservations remain about the clarity / robustness / credibility of the answer.	Acceptable – answered to a satisfactory standard.	Excellent – fully answered and exceeds satisfactory standards.

Appendix 1: Planned changes in The Horsefair and Penn Street

Pedestrianisation of The Horsefair and Penn Street will happen in two phases:

1. **Winter 2026/27:** The first phase will leave the street looking very similar to its current appearance, specifically kerb lines (the height and position of kerbs) will not change. Buses will stop using the street, taxi ranks and on-street disabled parking will be removed. Loading bays will have time restrictions added to them. The redundant bus shelters and signs will be

removed. The street will become access only, meaning only authorised vehicles can use it. It is anticipated that this will reduce the amount of the traffic on the street.

2. **Timing TBC:** The second phase will remove the kerb lines and create a level street. Permanent art, seating, landscaping will be added. The times at which authorised traffic can use the street will be reduced.

Appendix 2: Examples of city-wide street dressing elsewhere



Colouring Memory by Dennis Golding adorning hoarding as part of City of Sydney's creative hoarding program. Image: City of Sydney.



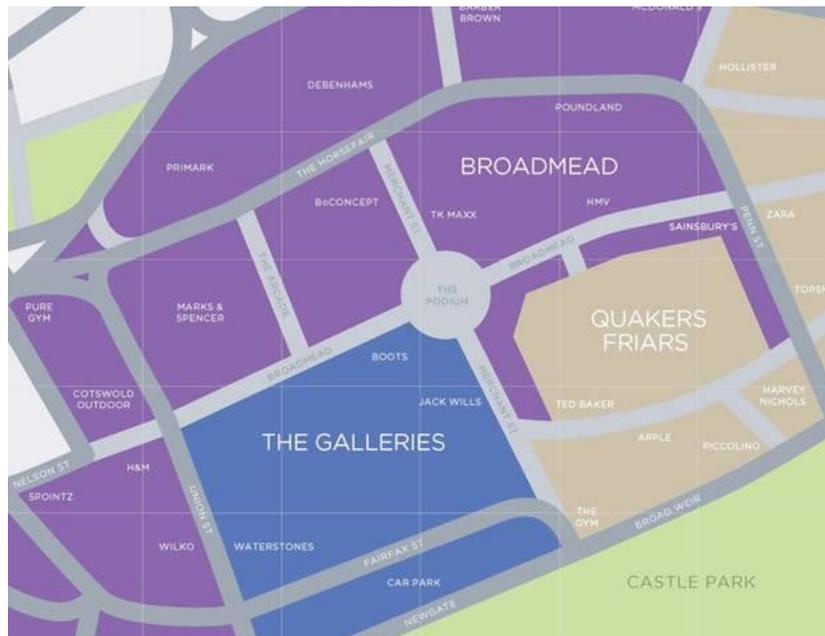
Molly Hawkins, Beaufort Road, East Bristol Liveable Neighbourhood



Camille Walala, South Molton Street, London

Appendix 3: Broadmead local information

Broadmead map, showing The Horsefair and Penn Street



Cultural and historical information

Broadmead is located at the eastern end of the central city, bounded on one side by Castle Park and close to Bristol Royal Infirmary and Bristol Bus Station. It is a principal shopping district of the city and part of Bristol's Shopping Quarter, which includes Broadmead, The Galleries, the Arcade and Cabot Circus.

The name 'Brodemeade' was first recorded in 1383. The name either means "broad meadow" or refers to *brodemedes*, a type of woollen cloth woven only in Bristol. At this time, the area lay just to the north of the town walls of historic Bristol.

In 1227, Blackfriars was founded as a Dominican priory in the area. After the dissolution of the monasteries the site had various secular uses, and in 1749 became the location of a Quaker meeting house, now known as Quakers Friars. In 1671 local dissenters, including Dorothy Hazard, opened the Broadmead Baptist Chapel near the junction of Broadmead and Union Street; and in 1739 John Wesley built his Methodist chapel, known as the New Room. Shops were also built in the area at this time, and in the 18th century a covered arcade was built between The Horsefair and Broadmead, which still survives.

In 1761, Joseph Fry and John Vaughan purchased a small shop from an apothecary, Walter Churchman, and with it the patent for a chocolate refining process. In 1777, their chocolate works moved to Union Street. Over time, factory techniques were introduced into the business and by 1847 the Fry's factory moulded a chocolate bar suitable for large-scale production. Over 220 products were introduced in the following decades, including the first chocolate Easter egg in the UK and Fry's Turkish Delight. The company was one of the largest employers in Bristol and in 1919 merged with Cadbury's chocolate. In 1923 the joint company named the British Cocoa and Chocolate Company moved to Keynsham.

In 1845, Bristol baker Henry Jones invented self-raising flour from his bakery in Broadmead. This ground-breaking new product enabled the production of bread without the fermentation process of yeast and helped food keep well, especially on long sea voyages. Henry had received a British patent for his product and Queen Victoria had appointed him as Royal Purveyor of self-raising flour and biscuits. The family business continued successfully, with the shop and factory at Broadmead still operating until the 1950s.

The old shopping district of Castle Street and Wine Street was heavily damaged in the Bristol Blitz, and it was decided to redevelop the Broadmead area as the main shopping district of the city. Rebuilding began in 1950. The existing street, which ran between Union Street and Merchant Street, was extended north to include the former Rosemary Street. Like most 1950s buildings in Britain, affordable and architecturally interesting utilitarian buildings form the bulk of the Broadmead area.

In the 1960s, Broadmead Baptist Church sold their ground lease for shops and built a new church above. The new church was designed by the influential architect Ronald Hubert Sims and opened in 1969. It features many brutalist elements, with the widespread use of raw concrete alongside timber panelling. When first opened, it featured an elegant, laminated timber spire, but this was removed because of decay leading to it becoming unsafe.

In the 1980s, some of the 1950s architecture was destroyed to make way for The Galleries shopping centre, which is a three-level covered street. Broadmead and several of the surrounding streets were pedestrianised. A regeneration project completed in 2010 extended the shopping district adjacent to Broadmead, creating a new shopping centre, Cabot Circus, which opened in September 2008. This area had been named Merchants Quarter, but the name was abandoned after a campaign to change the name because the Bristol Merchant Venturers dealt in the trade of enslaved Africans.

Today, the main shopping area of Broadmead houses various national retailers, including Boots, TK Maxx and Primark, as well as smaller independents, together with several banks and a cinema. It includes a large, pedestrianised area which hosts seasonal markets and events. Broadmead has been hit in recent years by the closures of major stores including H&M (2020), Debenhams (2021) and Marks and Spencer (2022), and there are currently a number of vacant retail spaces. Recent and forthcoming retail openings include a new Marks and Spencer (November 2025) and Uniqlo (spring 2026).

Recent business and community feedback includes a feeling that Broadmead is run down and grimy, with too much concrete, too many empty shops and increasing issues of homelessness and anti-social behaviour.

Further information about the post-war development of Broadmead can be found in [a story map by Pete Insole](#), Principal Historic Environment Officer at Bristol City Council and co-director of [Myers-Insole Local Learning CIC](#).