

# Open Call for Creative Proposals

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For the Birmingham 2022 Cultural Festival

## SPORTS

Creative Brief for x 4  
commissioned artworks at  
£25,000 each



**BIRMINGHAM**  
**2022**  
commonwealth  
games

## ACCESS

Inclusivity is one of five values in the Birmingham 2022 Social Values Charter and we want the Games to be accessible to all.

We can provide access support with creative proposals.

Please contact Lashana Charles-Queely on [Lashana.Charles-Queely@Birmingham2022.com](mailto:Lashana.Charles-Queely@Birmingham2022.com) to let us know if there are any adjustments we can make to ensure this process is as accessible as possible to you, and / or if you require a large print or alternative accessible format version of this document.

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## BACKGROUND

In 2022 we welcome the world to Birmingham and the West Midlands with a global sporting event like no other, as we host the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

From March to September 2022, a 6-month arts festival will encapsulate and explore the spirit of the Games, and finally give Birmingham its moment in the global spotlight. It will be developed and presented by the artistic and creative communities of the West Midlands region. The festival will aim to double the reach of the sporting events of the Games themselves - reaching at least 2.5million audiences and participants from the region, UK and beyond.

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### Our Vision:

To present an ambitious arts festival that will harness a once in a lifetime opportunity to positively disrupt the region's cultural sector and inspire lasting change.

Collaborative and original work by artists and communities will connect people, time and place, as we host the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Audacious, playful and inclusive, over 6 months it will entertain, engage and embrace at least 2.5million people, setting Birmingham and the West Midlands in a new creative light.

Our approach is focused on creativity, collaboration and Commonwealth, always seeking equity in artistic partnerships.

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**Three simple curatorial lines** invite and embolden artists to make artworks for this specific context and moment in time. They represent a starting point – as threads that interweave and overlap, with each informing the other. **They are:**

- **Our place in the Commonwealth**

Celebrating Birmingham as the Commonwealth Games host and profiling the many communities of the city and region with roots in other Commonwealth nations, must go hand-in-hand with creating the space for honest conversations about the existence of the Commonwealth and its origins. This should include any perspective grounded in fact, allowing historic identities and traditional narratives to be questioned or overturned. We will seek to articulate a common ground across the festival programme, with projects built on lasting exchange, between communities of the city, region and Commonwealth.

- **The present moment**

The programme should speak to the present moment, addressing the timely and urgent issues of the world we live in, catalysing a collective activist spirit. The Games is an extraordinary moment, representing the coming together of over 6,500 athletes, most of whom are young people, in this place and time, representing the Commonwealth. It is a moment in which the positive disruption of our everyday experience of the city and region, can reveal and enable the collective and often unrealised power of youth and youthfulness.

- **Stories of Birmingham and the West Midlands**

This is a moment to shine a light on the rich, untold and living history of the host city and region, and to hear the stories that shape our identity and perspectives. These are stories that resonate with people, true and reimagined, that connect us to our place in the world, that come from here but are universal. We believe the expression of narrative can span all art forms and be delivered equally well through linear storytelling and non-linear experiences.

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We want to see creative risk-taking and ambition, with inclusion, representation and collaboration at the heart of each artistic idea. It is essential that the festival is created with, not just for, local residents, so that people can recognise themselves and the uniqueness of our region in the work. We will look for and promote new work that recognises the region's intersectional artistic and cultural practices – sensory concerts, runners' club art tours, building 'takeovers', contemporary carnival, Drag bingo and community-led architectural 'pavilions' – the festival will draw on all of this and more.

Artworks ranging from the playful to provocative will occupy the highstreets, neighbourhoods, parks, waterways, venues and civic spaces of the West Midlands, across traditional art forms and more experimental mediums. It will encourage people to explore and play in public spaces, to discover our region's heritage and offer opportunities for all ages to find the 'common ground' in Commonwealth, especially children and young people.

## CREATIVE BRIEF - SPORTS

For x4 commissioned artworks at £25,000 each

The Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee (OC) wish to commission four new public space artworks of any art form, responding to four sports that will be competed at the Games. The commissions will be presented in July 2022 as part of the Commonwealth Games Cultural Festival.

Birmingham 2022 is the biggest sport and cultural event in the UK since 2012, and the biggest ever held in the West Midlands. With 19 sports, including 8 para-sports, over 11 days of competition, the Games features the largest integrated para-sport programme at any Commonwealth Games, and will award more medals to women than men for the first time. The sports allocated to this Creative Brief are:

- AQUATICS – SWIMMING AND PARA SWIMMING
- ATHLETICS AND PARA ATHLETICS
- BASKETBALL 3X3 & WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL 3X3
- LAWN BOWLS AND PARA LAWN BOWLS

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### AQUATICS – SWIMMING AND PARA SWIMMING

#### SANDWELL AQUATICS CENTRE, Smethwick

Swimming and Para Swimming sees events comprising of four swimming styles – freestyle, breaststroke, butterfly and backstroke, together with medley events which include all four strokes.

With distances ranging from a breathless 50m to a lung busting 1500m, the variety of events will showcase the talent, skills and strengths of every athlete in the pool, each vying to claim a place on the podium.

As well as individual races, in Swimming and Para Swimming spectators will be able to marvel at the relay events, which see teams of four swimmers work together to outswim their opponents.

Swimming at the Commonwealth Games takes place in a long-course 50m pool – double the length you might find in typical leisure pool, and often referred to as ‘Olympic size’. For most events, heats will take place first, with the fastest swimmers or relay teams proceeding to semi-finals and finals.

The rules are simple: Swim faster than everyone else – the first to touch the wall wins.

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### ATHLETICS AND PARA ATHLETICS

#### ALEXANDER STADIUM, Perry Barr Birmingham

Athletics at Birmingham 2022 will comprise a packed programme of events that are certain to keep viewers in the stadium and around the world gripped.

On the track, you can enjoy everything from the relentless excitement of the 100m sprint to the nail-biting intensity of the 10,000m, while the action will also hit the streets of Birmingham in the Games’ ultimate test of endurance, the marathon.

On the field, throwers of javelins, hammers, the discus and the shot will look to go the distance in their own battles for supremacy, while athletes will make a leap for a podium place in the long jump, triple jump, high jump and pole vault.

If that wasn’t enough, the multi-event decathlon and heptathlon will see athletes look to emerge victorious from a range of events, testing their capabilities to the very limit.

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## **BASKETBALL 3X3 & WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL 3X3**

### **SMITHFIELD, Birmingham**

It only takes a look at the playing area to realise this is basketball, but not as we know it.

With only half a court and just one hoop for both teams to attack, gaining possession and using it well is the key to the game.

The court isn't the only thing that's been cut in half. With just 12 seconds on the shot clock instead of the 24 permitted in full court basketball, 3x3 offers high octane action at every turn.

Each team is made up of three players, plus one substitute. Shots scored from inside the arc-shaped scoring zone are worth one point each, while shots taken from behind the arc area put two on the board.

The first team to 21 points wins – if no team has reached that milestone after ten minutes, the team in the lead claims the win.

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## **LAWN BOWLS AND PARA LAWN BOWLS**

### **VICTORIA PARK, Royal Leamington Spa**

Matches are played on a Lawn Bowls Green within a 'rink' area – there are usually six rinks per green. The match begins with a coin toss, giving one competitor the option to roll a small ball called the 'jack' at least 23 metres down the green.

Competitors take it in turns to roll their bowls, aiming to ensure they are closer to the jack than any of those of their opponent. Points are awarded for each bowl that is closest to the jack.

In singles competition, the first to score 21 points will win, whereas in pairs, triples and fours competition, the team that has amassed the most points in total will secure the victory.

Birmingham 2022 will also feature Para Lawn Bowls events.

Lawn Bowls is steeped in tradition, but offers no shortage of exciting, combative action. There's always high drama as players use their own bowls to smash those of their opponents away from the jack, while ditches surrounding the green can prove to be the barrier between victory and defeat.

One thing is for certain – Lawn Bowls is unpredictable from the first minute till the last!

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## **We are looking for artistically-led projects which consider all or some of the following ideas**

- The parallels and connections between sports and the arts and common characteristics e.g. images, performance, skill, practice and training, personal expression, wellbeing, self-esteem, unpredictability and the mind and body engaged together
- The aesthetics and physical form of the sport
- Stories of people participating in sport, from the well-known triumphs to undiscovered stories of everyday participation, blood, sweat and tears. We are particularly keen to highlight the stories of underrepresented communities in sport and art, including, but not limited to, representation of d/Deaf, disabled or neurodiverse, Asian, Black, minority ethnic (from a UK perspective) and LGBTQI+ stories
- Sports heritage in Birmingham, the West Midlands and the Commonwealth

## Other considerations

- We welcome art works that will be presented outdoors or in the public realm
- The first presentation of the work should take place in close proximity to the sports venue used for the sporting competition, particularly in the case of Lawn Bowls and Para Lawn Bowls (Leamington Spa) and Aquatics (Sandwell).
- There should be at least one public manifestation/ presentation of the commissioned artwork, this could be a single performance, or an exhibition of work taking place over several weeks.
- We are interested to receive proposals that include a digital offer to ensure broad and accessible reach
- For the Athletics focused commission, we are interested to receive proposals that consider field events rather than track events
- This opportunity is open to individuals and organisations, but we want to particularly encourage proposals from individual artists who can access their own production/producer support
- The budget should include all creation costs, including producer support, production and presentation

**Each applicant (individual or organisation) may only submit one proposal for one of the sports above.**

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## AUDIENCES AND ENGAGEMENT

Each of these commissioned works should reach a minimum audience and/or participant base of 2,500 people across live and digital platforms. We are particularly interested in projects that will engage our priority groups, which are:

- Children and young people
- d/Deaf and disabled people (including neurodivergent people)
- People and communities that established cultural institutions do not regularly, or easily, engage
- People and communities with roots in other Commonwealth nations and territories

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## MAKING A PROPOSAL

We are happy to receive proposals in a range of formats, including written, audio or video files and will require an accompanying detailed balanced budget spreadsheet. Your proposal should cover the headings outlined in the 'how to submit a proposal' section below.

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Only artists and cultural organisations based in Birmingham and the West Midlands are eligible to make a proposal
- The commission amount requested from us (up to £25,000) must be between 70% and 100% of the total cost of the project
- The project must take place during the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Cultural Festival, with the first presentation in July 2022

## ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

This will be a one-stage process, as described in the section below. The selection will be made by the executive and senior producers curating the festival, in consultation with Commonwealth Games Sport Competition Managers, and based on the following criteria:

- The idea is ambitious, original and artistically-led
- The idea is a compelling response to the brief
- The idea fits with our **curatorial lines** (as described on Pgs. 2&3)
  - Our place in the Commonwealth
  - The present moment
  - Stories of Birmingham and the West Midlands
- The artists and/or organisations involved have the capacity and competency to deliver the project
- The budget is realistic and includes fair pay for artists
- The project will reach the minimum audience target specified in the individual creative brief including some or all of the named priority groups
- The approach to delivering the project will make a contribution to the delivery of Birmingham 2022's social value charter, which is as follows
  - **Sustainability** – ensuring environmental, economic and social aspects are considered in all key decisions
  - **Health and well-being** – maximising the opportunities to improve the levels of physical activity and wellbeing
  - **Inclusivity** – making the Games accessible to all
  - **Human rights** – having the [UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#) always in mind
  - **Local Benefit** – ensuring the Games contributes to the local economy and provides opportunities for local people

We will also consider the geographic spread and art form balance across the final choice of commissioned projects.

## HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

Interested parties should send a proposal that includes:

- A name or working title for the project
- A description of the idea, including proposed location/s for the work
- An explanation of how it fits the brief and its connection to one or more of the curatorial lines
- A list of participating artists with weblinks to previous work and/or credentials

This part of the proposal is to be a maximum 1000 words in Word or PDF format, or 10 minutes of audio/video.

In addition, we also will require

- a complete budget spreadsheet incorporating the following headings - *Birmingham 2022 Commission Income* (the ask from us) and *Other Income* (stating source and status); *Expenditure on Artistic fees, Marketing & Audience Development, Pre-Production & Rehearsal, Access & Inclusion costs*. Please also note if any secured or expected funding is applicable to this project. Please ensure your budget is balanced and any formulas are correct.
- a completed equal opportunities form which will be shared with you later in the application process.

All first stage proposals are to be sent to [culture@birmingham2022.com](mailto:culture@birmingham2022.com), with the subject line <SPORT PROPOSAL – [NAME OF CHOSEN SPORT] – [YOUR NAME] >.

**\*The deadline for proposals is 5pm on the 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021\***

## PROPOSAL SUPPORT SURGERIES

We will run a short series of Proposal Surgeries on the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> August for interested artists and cultural organisations to answer specific questions about meeting the brief and criteria.

To book a surgery slot, please contact Lashana Charles-Queely on [Lashana.Charles-Queely@Birmingham2022.com](mailto:Lashana.Charles-Queely@Birmingham2022.com)

## SPORTS CREATIVE COMMISSIONS OPEN CALL TIMETABLE

10 August 21	Open Call announced
23-25 August 21	Open Call Surgeries
14 September	Deadline for proposals
21-22 September	Meetings with shortlisted applicants
4 October 21	Notification of decisions
17 March 22	Commonwealth Games Cultural Festival begins
July 22	Sport Commissions presentation period

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## FAQs

### How are you defining West Midlands?

The West Midlands is one of nine official regions of England. It covers the western half of the area traditionally known as the Midlands. The region consists of the counties of Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire.

As Birmingham 2022, we have a geographic focus on

- the 7 constituent authorities of the West Midlands Combined Authority: Birmingham, Sandwell, Solihull, Dudley, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Coventry
- the locations outside of the West Midlands Combined Authority hosting Games sports competitions, namely Warwick, Leamington Spa and Cannock Chase.

### Can we apply in partnership with other organisations from outside of the West Midlands?

Yes. We welcome partnership proposals and collaborations with individual and organisations from the 72 nations and territories of the Commonwealth, including the four nations of the UK – England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

### If successful, can we use the commission as 'match' in funding applications?

Yes. It is acceptable to use the commission as match for funding applications and/or to use existing resources towards project costs. Please talk to us about other funding applications, we can provide letters of support.

The commission amount from Birmingham 2022 should represent at least 70% of the total project costs.



**Do you require 'match' funding?**

No

**What do you mean by 'any artform'?**

The Cultural Festival will be a festival of all artforms, the spaces between them and the new forms and ideas that emerge when art forms collide. We will incorporate dance, theatre, music, spoken word and literature, the visual arts, film, photography, digital media, craft and architecture. As one of the UK's test city/regions for 5G, we are particularly interested to see projects that creatively use and explore this new capability to reach new audiences. Similarly, we are keen to see the region's rich cultural heritage explored and expressed for new audiences.

The Birmingham 2022 Culture Programme is generously supported by



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