

PUBLIC ART PROJECT BRIEF – OUR SHIELDS ROAD

Newcastle City Council, High Streets Project
August 2026

INTRODUCTION

Newcastle City Council is looking to commission artist(s) to deliver a public realm art project next to Hadrian Square in Byker, Newcastle. The aim of the project is to redesign and retrofit the guardrail at the front of the square, running along Shields Road.

The commission is open to individual artists and/or collaborative teams, who are encouraged to share roles and responsibilities to best support the project's delivery. The commission will include community engagement with key stakeholders with designs developed collaboratively during the project, that informs the final artwork which should enhance the area and celebrate Byker's distinctive character.

Key Objectives:

- Engage the local community in the design and creation of the artwork.
- Create an imaginative piece that helps create a sense of pride in the area.
- Be responsive to the context of the space.
- Ensure the final artwork is safe, robust and easy to maintain.

Key Outputs:

- Regular engagement with key stakeholders (at the start, during the process and in the final stage of the commission).
- Redesign and retrofit of the guardrail at the front of Hadrian Square.

We have tried to keep the application process for this opportunity as simple and flexible as possible. However, if you require this information in a different format or have any specific access requirements, you can contact Noor Jan-Mohamed for a conversation.

Email Noor at noor.jan.mohamed@newcastle.gov.uk.

PROJECT CONTEXT

Project Background

This public realm art project is being delivered as part of the Council's efforts to improve the look and feel of Shields Road, Byker. We are wanting to implement small, tactical interventions that aim to foster more positive associations with the area, strengthen community pride and help reduce anti-social behaviour. It builds on the work of the Council's [Newcastle – Inclusive, Healthy, Vibrant High Streets Project](#).

The High Streets Project has delivered a number of events on Hadrian Square alongside some public realm improvements to the surrounding area. The guardrail redesign and retrofit provides the opportunity to landmark the square and create a more welcoming and community friendly public space that reflects the character and aspirations of the people of Byker. It is hoped that by involving the local community in the project it will encourage ownership and pride in the area and further enhance this public space.

Our High Streets Projects

A collection of images of the events programme and public realm improvements delivered in Byker as part of the Newcastle High Streets Project.



On the Square Events © Steve Brock



Addison Road Artwork © Andy Robson



Byker Underpasses © Public Practice

Project Location

The existing guardrail is located at the front of Hadrian Square, running along Shields Road. It is a standard pedestrian guardrail and its extent and location provides the opportunity to drastically influence the look and feel of the square.



Site Location Map



Google Street View Image of Hadrian Square and part of the existing guardrail



Google Street View Image of Hadrian Square and some of its unique features including bespoke metalwork, mosaics, and, the preserved foundations of Hadrian's Wall

ARTIST'S ROLE

We are keen to hear from artists who have completed similar projects before, and who have tried and tested approaches to improving public spaces. Any proposed approach must be robust, have longevity and be developed in collaboration with the local community and relevant stakeholders.

Design Themes

Hadrian Square already has a number of unique features, including bespoke metal railings, mosaics on both the ground and a surrounding building, and the preserved foundations of Hadrian's Wall. The artwork should complement these items and respond to the existing context while also helping to identify the square.

Site Assessment

Before commencing design work, the artist(s) should undertake a site visit to assess the proposed location and existing guardrail for potential artwork installation. Following this assessment, the artist(s) can contact the Newcastle City Council team with any specific questions or clarifications relating to the site conditions or installation requirements.

Engagement Process

The commissioned artist(s) will be required to develop the final artwork design in close collaboration with the local community. Newcastle City Council will support the artist by identifying relevant community groups and can facilitate introductions. This engagement process should involve a series of creative workshops to explore the themes and ideas for the artwork(s). The artist should then translate the outcomes of these sessions into a cohesive design that is appropriate for the site. The final artwork must be robust, durable and reflective of the unique character of Byker.

Design Development

Following the engagement sessions final design(s) should be developed. The artwork should be imaginative, appropriate for its location and informed by the outcome of the engagement session(s). Once the design has been suitably developed, it should be shared with the Newcastle City Council team for final approval and sign off before fabrication.

Installation Process

The artist(s) will be required to liaise with the Newcastle City Council team to coordinate installation of the artwork. Prior to installation, an installation plan must be submitted. This plan should include:

- A clear timeline for installation, including any surface preparation and post installation clean up.
- Identification of any specialist equipment or additional support required.
- Details of any sub-contractors to be engaged.
- All relevant health and safety requirements and risk assessment.

Please note: any sub-contractors employed by the artist(s) must be funded within the artist's allocated budget

Precedent Projects

A collection of reference images sourced from different locations and artists.



Please note: The final commission does not need to replicate these designs in style or scale. We welcome creative proposals that are unique to the artist and the site and shaped by the engagement process.

COMMISSION INFORMATION

Budget

An all-inclusive budget of up to £20,000 has been agreed for the project. This budget covers but is not limited to; artist fees, engagement sessions, site visits, materials, fabrication, installation and contingencies.

The artist(s) will need to submit a budget breakdown showing allocation of monies to each part of the commission. This should include a contingency sum to cover unforeseen work and costs.

Commissioning

The Newcastle City Council team will commission the artist(s), who will report to them directly throughout the project. The team can help manage relationships with relevant stakeholders including community organisations and local businesses, and, facilitate any necessary introductions.

If required, the artist(s) can work with the Council to select a manufacturer. In this instance, the artist(s) should be an active part of the development and fabrication process, taking part in meetings as required to deliver the project successfully.

Upon installation, the artwork will become the property of Newcastle City Council. Therefore, we would like artist(s) to ensure that the finished artwork is robust and lasts with minimal intervention, including a protective finish.

Newcastle City Council will reserve the right at any stage not to proceed with the project, or to proceed on a different basis than anticipated within this document.

Objectives and Outputs

The commissioned artist(s) will be required to engage with key stakeholders and the local community to redesign the guardrail at the front of Hadrian Square which clearly:

- Connects to the local area, surrounding context and identifies Hadrian Square.
- Engages key stakeholders and the local community at all stages of the project – at the start, during the process and in the final stage of the commission.

As part of the commission, the artist(s) will be required to:

- Arrange fabrication of the artwork.
- Provide a detailed installation plan.
- Retrofit the existing guardrail with the final artwork.

The commissioned artwork will need to:

- Be original and of a high quality.
- Include the designs/ideas/concepts provided through engagement session(s).
- Consider environmental/sustainable methods.
- Be fit for purpose including being safe, robust and easy to maintain.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Artist Selection Criteria

Expressions of interest are invited from artist(s) with experience of developing external art works for the public realm working with local communities.

Your application will be assessed against the following criteria:

- Track record in producing and installing high quality, innovative public art which is appropriate and relevant to its local area/setting.
- Understanding and experience of engaging the community.
- Experience of working creatively and constructively with key stakeholders.
- Experience of delivering projects on time and on budget.
- Ability to carry out risk assessments and ensure health and safety requirements are met during all stages of the project.

How to apply

Please supply the following:

- An expression of interest indicating your relevant experience and general approach/stages to the commission including engagement sessions, meetings, prep and artwork (max 2 pages).
- Current CV (max 3 pages) and 2 referees contact detail.
- 5 images of relevant work, with image details.
- A high level cost breakdown and timeline (e.g. artist fee, workshops, materials, fabrication & contingency etc.). This will be refined and developed during the design process.
- Proof of current DBS.
- Copy of Public Liability Insurance Certificate.

Timescales

Commission Advertised	17 August 2026
Application Deadline	6 September 2026
Shortlisting Interviews + Artist(s) Appointment	7 - 21 September 2026
Installation	February 2027
Commission Period	September – February 2026

*Commission Period includes project kick off with NCC team, community engagement sessions and artwork installation.

** Please note that we are working to a tight deadline to ensure that the artwork can be completed by March 2027.

If you have any general queries or access needs, please email Noor Jan-Mohamed at noor.jan.mohamed@newcastle.gov.uk

Please send your applications to:

Noor Jan-Mohamed | Planning + Project Officer: noor.jan.mohamed@newcastle.gov.uk

Application Deadline is 06 September 2026