

Selby Park Improvements Project

Artist's Brief

1. Introduction

North Yorkshire Council (NYC) wishes to commission an artist to create a new site-specific artwork or artworks integrated into a programme of small-scale improvements projects planned for Selby Park. The Park is located in the centre of the town, between Selby Abbey and the railway station (YO8 4PW). This commission will entail working with Parks officers, landscape architects and the regeneration team at NYC. Please see a location map of the park attached.

2. Background – Selby Park and Regeneration in Selby

Selby is a focus for a number of regeneration schemes, developed in partnership between NYC and local partners. The Abbey Quarter scheme seeks to revitalise key town centre locations around Selby Abbey including Selby Park. The park has a long history, and is held in great affection by local residents, having been the site of the old swimming baths and dance hall. It retains its Victorian character particularly in the northern edge, close to the Abbey, but is in need of some key upgrades and improvements, with larger scale projects planned for the future.

The current improvement scheme includes work to the drainage and paths, planting areas (removing older trees, bringing in new planting and revitalising small woodland areas) and providing new recreation facilities including bouldering and new mini golf.

3. Artist Brief

The artist is required to research and develop a series of proposals linked to the projects planned for Selby Park. We are particularly interested in elements which are:

- Sensory
- Interactive
- Playful
- Well integrated into the fabric of the park, and use natural materials
- Encourage exploration and investigation into the ecology and nature of the park

The artist should spend an initial period of time researching and developing ideas, working on site and with the project team. They should then present their proposals, with a method statement and costs, for approval from the team before moving onto implementation.

The artist is welcome to carry out consultation with the public and park users during this project, although we recognise that the overall budget is not large to allow for a meaningful participation programme. However, if the artist does wish to create any workshops, consultation or participative element to their research, the team will assist where at all

possible with contacts, and resources. In particular we have good contacts with a local youth group who have already worked on projects linked to the Park.

There is potential additional funding for an activation/launch event, possibly working with a Friends of the Park group, which we would like the artist to plan for as part of the implementation phase of the commission.

4. Background Information

Selby today is a small market town on the river Ouse, with the beautiful Selby Abbey at its centre. It hosts a weekly market, independent and chain shops, a library, leisure centre, town hall venue and has excellent transport links. There is a small amount of mixed industry in and around the town, and it is surrounded by agricultural land. Selby Park is in the centre of the town, between the station and the Abbey

The artist might like to research the rich history of the town, from the highly colourful founding story of the Abbey, to the short-lived coal mines of the late 20th Century – as well as the surrounding landscape and connections, both natural and man-made, and the communities that have shaped the area. The town was originally a ship building hub, and although the Ouse is mostly hidden behind buildings and walls, the river has invaded the town on a number of occasions as the area is prone to flooding. The town no longer has a museum, but the building which housed it sits close to the park, and there are archive pictures of a varied typical Victorian collection.

The project team can direct the artist to resources and contacts to investigate many aspects of Selby's history and stories, including Selby Library, the Abbey, the Civic Society, local historians and archaeologists who have conducted investigations around the town.

Selby is an Arts Council Priority Place, and there have been a number of significant cultural programmes here, most recently the Place Partnership programme Now Then! which brought a diverse programme of festivals, light nights, workshops, exhibitions and participative projects to the town. There is a small and growing cultural community in the area, including visual artists, dance and drama schools and clubs, as well as the award-winning performance venue at Selby Town Hall.

5. Timescale and Stages of Work

The commission is offered on a self-employed (freelance) basis and will run approximately from December 2026 to May 2027.

- 5.1 **Artist appointment** – November 2026. Application and selection during October and November 2026, artist interviews on 30 November 2026. See below for artist appointment process
- 5.2 **Commission designs/proposals** – to be completed by 31 January 2027

The artist should research and develop their designs and proposals working closely with the project team for presentation and approval by 31 January 2027. The proposals should provide enough information for the management team to make a reasonable judgement as to their aesthetic quality, practicality, affordability and being deliverable within the programme.

The proposals should include

- images and/or a model/maquette
- written rationale
- description and samples of materials, research and suggestions into suppliers and sources, information on makers/fabricators if applicable
- outline technical information
- outline costings
- outline programme for fabrication and installation
- outline of maintenance requirements
- proposals for community engagement/participation/activation or launch

5.3 Implementation- to be completed by May 2027

The implementation phase may involve the artist making and installing the artworks/installations themselves, or they may nominate or subcontract others to make and/ or install to their designs. The details of implementation/procurement will be agreed once the proposals have been received and approved.

6. Fees and Budget

The total budget for the commission is **£10,000**. This is exclusive of VAT and includes all fees, travel and expenses, materials, transport and installation.

This budget will be split into an initial fee of **£2,000** to research and develop the commission, and produce a full proposal document.

The remaining **£8,000** will be used to implement the proposals, and should include all fees, materials, transport and installation as noted above. There may be cost effective ways of working with the Parks maintenance and suppliers, to help with getting best value from the budget, which can be investigated during the commission process.

7. Contract

The artist will be appointed on a contract agreement with North Yorkshire Council, on a self-employed basis. They will be responsible for their own tax and National Insurance contributions. This brief will form part of the contract.

8. Management and Working Relationships

The project will be managed on a day to day basis by Hazel Colquhoun, Creative and Cultural Development Officer and Jade Weaver, Locality Manager – Parks & Countryside Selby.

There will also be a management group made up of the following, which the artist will have regular contact with:

- Sarah Fenwick, Principal Regeneration Officer
- Jade Weaver
- Hazel Colquhoun

9. Insurances

The artist should have Public Liability Insurance in place of at least £5 million, and Professional Indemnity Insurance of at least £1 million.

10. DBS

The artist should have, or be willing to undergo, an Enhanced DBS check if required

11. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

NYC has a commitment to make its works and projects as inclusive and accessible as possible to everyone. This commission should consider people with different abilities, experiences and requirements. Support materials and guidance will be available to the artist if required.

12. Evaluation

The artist will be expected to work with the management team on evaluation of the commission, and input into the gathering of feedback, information on attendance, participation and experience at any events or workshops.

13. Ecological Responsibility

The artist will be expected to include Ecologically responsible considerations in their practice and proposals. Support materials and guidance will be available to the artist if required.

14. Climate Change

NYC is committed to its Climate Change strategy, working within the organisation and its partners. We aim to achieve the ambition to be a carbon negative region by 2040 and encourage residents, businesses and visitors to take climate responsible actions. The key actions are

- reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- preparing for the changing climate
- supporting nature to thrive

The artist is encouraged to consider all aspects of their work in this commission that might influence climate change and choose materials and processes accordingly.

15. Risk Assessments

The artist will be required to support the completion of Risk Assessments for appropriate parts of their activity, in partnership with the management team.

16. Artist appointment process

This is an open commission opportunity. Artists are invited to apply to the project with the information detailed below.

The management team, with assistance from the Culture and Archives team at NYC, will assess the applications received against agreed criteria and produce a shortlist for interview. The shortlisted artists will be invited for an informal interview with the management team, with the option of a site visit. Appointment will be made on the basis of the interview.

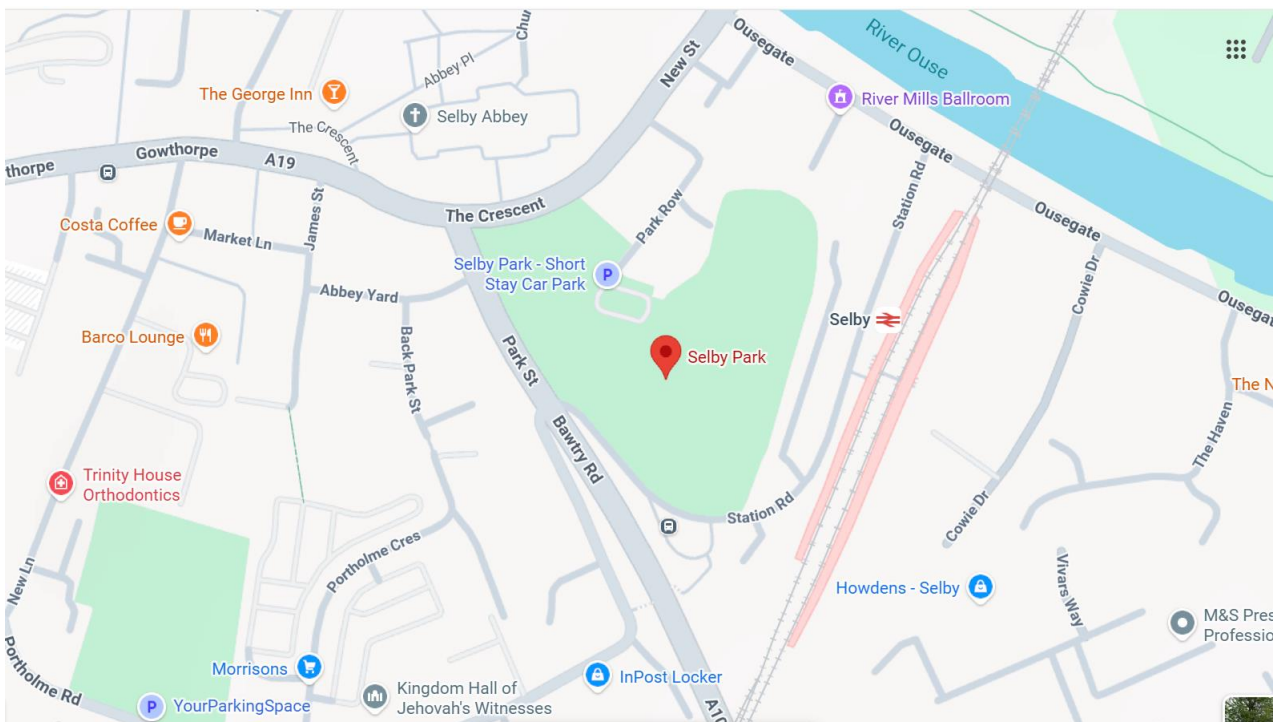
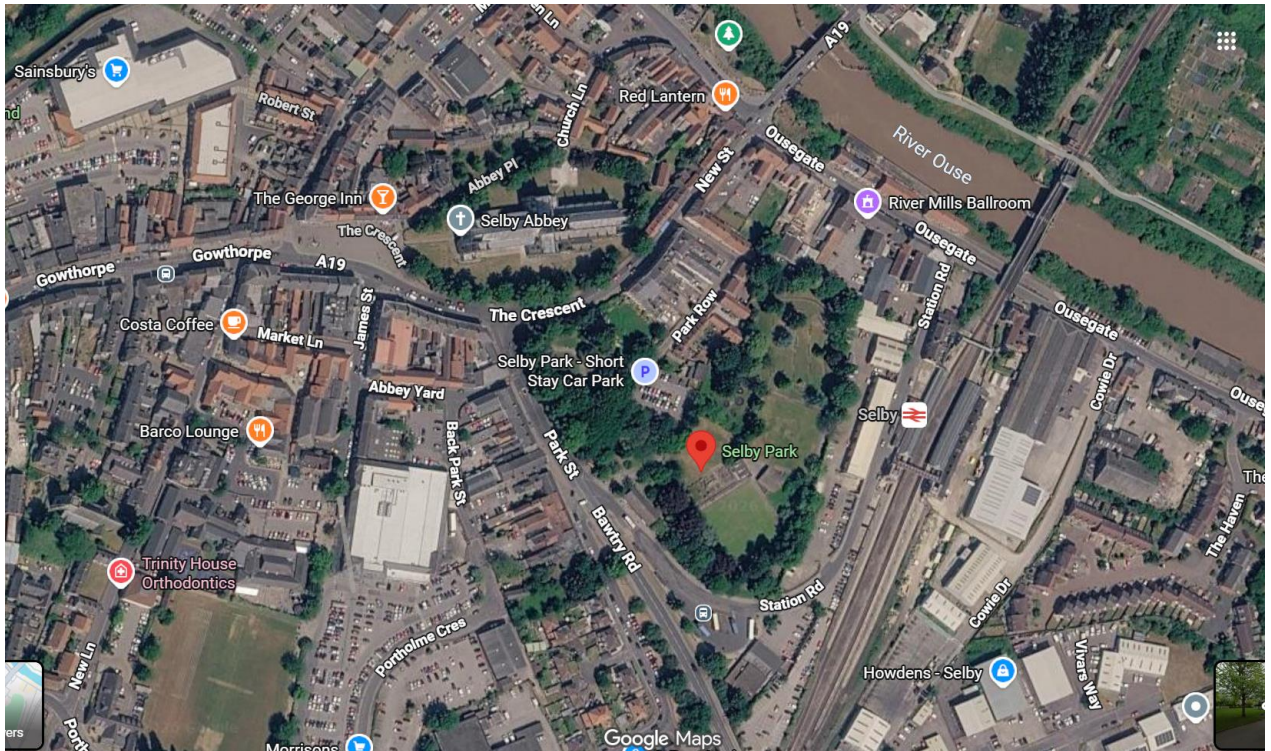
17. To Apply

- Please submit a CV/practice profile, with images and information on at least 3 relevant projects, or a link to your website with the same information, detailing your relevant experience and skills
- Please also submit a short response to the brief, with an indication of how you might approach this commission and how your skills and experience fit the requirements. This should be **no more than 500 words**, or one page of A4.
- We can accept a video submission in place of a covering letter/response, of up to 5 minutes in length, if this suits you better.

Send your submission by email to culture@northyorks.gov.uk by **5pm on 16 November 2026**

The subject title of your email should include “Selby Park Improvements Project”. Emails and attachments should not exceed 10MB.

If you have any questions about the appointment or the submission, or if you need this document in another format please contact us on the email above.



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