

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Economy and Culture
Date	24 September 2024
Present	Councillor Kilbane (Executive Member)
Officers in Attendance	Claire Foale - Director of City Development Katie Peeke Vout – Head of Regeneration Julie Stormont Dawber - Regeneration Project Delivery Officer

1. Declarations of Interest (10:01am)

The Executive Member was asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any disclosable pecuniary interests, or other registerable interests he might have in the respect of business on the agenda, if he had not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests. None were declared.

2. Public Participation (10:01am)

It was reported that 2 Written Representations had been received under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

The Executive Member read out a written representation from Gwen Swinburn requesting costings and details of government approvals for both Phase 2 of the Acomb Front Street Scheme and the removal of previously funded assets under Phase 1. The Executive Member noted that he had forwarded a copy of this enquiry to the Monitoring Officer.

The Executive Member read out a written representation from Vicki Hill on behalf of the "What A Load Of Bollards" campaign group stating their view that a better use of the funding would have been to level the street and pedestrianise the area; this remained their goal and while they were frustrated not to achieve this, they were glad to have made progress and to have the council acknowledge the views of the local community.

3. Decision Report: Acomb Front Street - Phase 2 Design and Costings (10:08am)

The Executive Member considered a report introduced by the Director of City Development and presented by the Head of Regeneration and the Regeneration Project Delivery Officer.

The report included a recommendation for a Traffic Regulation Order and 20mph speed limit to create a disabled parking bay in the York Road layby, adjacent to the main shopping area of Front Street. Officers noted that this had gone unopposed when presented in the consultation process.

Officers acknowledged that while the highways team did not currently have a specific reuse project to utilise these bollards, the stock from Front Street would be stored and reused over time to replace and replenish existing bollards in the city.

Officers stated that maintenance could be undertaken at no additional cost for the two remaining toilet blocks and the new planters to be installed; the additional litter bins would be added to existing waste routes so there would be minimal additional cost here.

In response to a question from the Executive Member, officers additionally clarified that they were trialling tactile paving to provide accessibility for everyone; incorporating passing places which reduce vibration for people with wheelchairs or pushchairs in addition to indicating crossings for visually impaired people.

The Executive Member stated that he had been asked “why can’t this money be spent on potholes” and responded by explaining that funding for this project is drawn from a UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation for the regeneration of high streets which would otherwise be “clawed back” by central government in March 2025 if not utilised for this specific purpose.

Responding to points raised in the public participation section, the Executive Member stated that within the recent consultation, 64% of respondents had said they wanted the bollards removed, and the Executive were responding to this community concern.

The Executive Member further responded to public participation by stating that full pedestrianisation of Front Street was something the executive may still consider in the future, and it could be beneficial to businesses, but the majority of businesses on Front Street would not currently be in a position to receive deliveries as usual were this to be instated today.

The Executive Member thereby

Resolved:

- i. To approve the designs and costings, set out in the Decision Report, for key elements of the Acomb Front Street Phase 2 and instruct officers to commence construction work and undertake implementation of the scheme.

Reason: In July 2024, Executive delegated authority for this decision to the Executive Member for Economy and Culture, recognising the tight timescales involved in UKSPF funding and to enable the scheme design and costings to be finalised in time for a planned start on site by the end of September 2024. The designs presented in this report have been informed by extensive public engagement and have been developed and prioritised in line with the feedback received.

- ii. To delegate authority to approve the remaining elements of the Phase 2 scheme to the Interim Director for City Development; noting that work is still ongoing to finalise some elements (including public artwork and future approach to markets).

Reason: Due to tight funding timescales, some elements of Phase 2 still require further officer work in order to finalise design and/or costings. Delegated authority to the Interim Director for City Development will allow these elements to be finalised and implemented without the need for a further written report.

- iii. To approve the making of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the proposed new disabled parking area at York Road layby and 20mph speed restriction in main shopping area of Front Street noting that no representations were received during the TRO consultation period.

Reason: Authority for this decision was delegated by Executive in July 2024 to the Executive Member for Economy and Culture (in consultation with Executive Member for Transport). No representations were received during the statutory TRO consultation period; therefore, it is recommended to proceed with making of the order. Consultation has been undertaken with the Executive Member for Transport prior to this decision being formally made.

Cllr P Kilbane, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 10.01 am and finished at 10.29 am].