

<b>Meeting:</b>	Executive Member Decision Session
<b>Meeting date:</b>	24 September 2024
<b>Report of:</b>	Interim Director of City Development (Claire Foale)
<b>Portfolio of:</b>	Executive Member for Economy & Culture (Cllr Pete Kilbane)

## **Decision Report: Acomb Front Street - Phase 2 Design & Costings**

### **Subject of Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to present the final designs and costings for the Acomb Front Street Phase 2 Project and seek the necessary approvals to proceed with implementation of the scheme.
2. In October 2023, Executive agreed that £570,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Fund monies (UKSPF) be allocated to the development and implementation of the Acomb Front Street Phase 2 project - including proactive engagement with residents and businesses.
3. In February 2024, the Executive Member for Economy & Transport approved the content of a programme of open public engagement, to seek feedback on costed designs and ideas for the Phase 2 scheme. As previously reported, all UKSPF monies must be spent by 31 March 2025.
4. Findings from the extensive engagement exercise (which included over 5000 comments via an online survey) and the high-level principles for the Phase 2 scheme were considered and approved by Executive on 18 July 2024. Executive agreed a number of recommendations to allow further progress to be made on the detailed design and costings, including authority on the

final scheme design being delegated to the Executive Member for Economy & Culture.

5. Ahead of this final design decision being taken, the project was considered at the meeting of Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee on 9 September 2024. Feedback from the Scrutiny meeting has been considered in the writing of this report and is summarised in paragraph 33.

## **Benefits and Challenges**

6. The benefits and challenges of the project are set out below:

### **Benefits**

- i. **Public Engagement** – The final scheme design is built upon extensive, open public engagement with a wide section of residents, businesses, local community groups, stakeholders, shoppers, traders, and young people. Costed ideas for phase 2 were tested with these groups to gain their feedback and crucially listen and learn from the local community to inform next steps.
- ii. **Engagement Response** – Over 5,000 comments were received across the full range of engagement. This quantum of feedback has provided a valuable insight into the local community priorities and aspirations for Acomb that has been used to inform the final design/costings for Phase 2 as well as future work.
- iii. **Quality of Design** - The appointment of external urban designers to inform Phase 2 designs, coupled with the quantum of feedback received has brought a high level of challenge at every stage to deliver; a better experience and more people friendly space for residents and visitors; to be bold and creative; to remove a significant number of bollards whilst enhancing the character and identity of the area.
- iv. **Accessibility** - Creating a more accessible destination is a key priority of the scheme. The recommended Phase 2 scheme includes wider, more generous pedestrian crossings; provision of two accessible toilet cubicles; improved blue badge parking, new crossing point linking with older part of Front Street and a trial of new wheelchair tactile

paving.

- v. **Identifying short term priorities that support longer term aspirations**– Following the previous Future of Acomb Front Street Study 2021, it was positive to see the bold ambitions and extensive ideas from the local community. However, the 2021 study also recognised that the level of ambition would take considerable time (c. 5-10 years) and resources to fully implement. The recent engagement work has focused on understanding what community priorities can be achieved within the time and monetary constraints of Phase 2, whilst also considering how best the investment can support progress towards the longer-term aspirations. For example, there has been a long-term desire by some parts of the local community to fully pedestrianise the main shopping area, however this is not achievable in the Phase 2 timescales or budget. The engagement has confirmed a range of differing views about this subject - particularly as the area is required to function as a working high street including deliveries for local businesses. The majority of people support a 'more people-friendly street'. Building on the engagement survey data, the recommended design outlined in the report for Phase 2 seeks to deliver positive steps towards achieving a less vehicle dominated space whilst also keeping options open to potentially progress pedestrianisation in the future, subject to further consultation and resources. As agreed by Executive in July 2024, work will now be undertaken to progress a feasibility study into the pedestrianisation/ reduction of vehicle dominance.

## Challenges

- i. **Timescale** – All Phase 2 works need to be completed by the UKSPF spend deadline of 31 March 2025. To achieve this, it is necessary for construction to commence by the start of October 2024. Work on final designs/costings has progressed over the past few weeks, including a pre-decision Scrutiny on 9 September 2024.
- ii. **Expectation** – Following the previous Future of Acomb Front Street Study 2021 there are bold ambitions and extensive ideas for the area, and high expectations from the local community. These cannot all be delivered via the Phase 2

project due to time and money constraints. The design/works recommended for approval in this report have been prioritised accordingly and are intended to complement the progression of a longer 5 -10-year plan for Acomb (subject to future funding).

- iii. **Highway** – Front Street currently has two “lives”. It needs to function as both a traffic free pedestrianised area when access is restricted, but also allowing for deliveries and parking at various times of day. This has brought challenges to the design process including the challenge/ discussion of shared spaces and national guidance on retaining a kerb to delineate the highway for visually impaired users. There are new wide generous crossings proposed in the recommended Phase 2 design to be introduced alongside a 20mph speed limit, however cycling access and current vehicle access would remain unchanged at the Phase 2 stage of works. These proposed works would not restrict the potential for full pedestrianisation in the future, subject to further consultation and funding.
- iv. **Return of illegal parking** – To deliver a more people friendly space, introduction of wide generous crossing points and removal of bollards there is a risk that the potential for illegal parking is increased, which may create a challenge to parking enforcement initially. There must be a focus on enforcing the highway regulations to deter any illegal parking and assist with the behavioural change required to drivers in the area.

## Policy Basis for Decision

7. The Phase 2 scheme for Acomb Front Street will contribute directly to the delivery of the commitments in the Council Plan (2023-27).
8. The scheme reflects the four core ‘EACH’ commitments in the Council Plan 2023-27 – One City, for all by:
  - **Equalities and Human Rights** – Creating a more accessible destination proposing level pedestrian crossings, achieved by the introduction of raised tables and 20mph speed limit. Upgrading the existing toilet block to provide two accessible toilets units and improving Blue Badge parking provision at

Front Street and Cross Street. Trial of new wheelchair tactile paving as part of introduction of the new wide raised crossing at the welcome entrance, final evaluation parameters are to be confirmed with Highways.

- **Affordability** – The creation of a more unified destination, including sign posting local amenities will support residents and visitors alike to better access and support local facilities. The monthly market operator enhances the retail offering of the area. The economic benefit to increasing footfall and supporting reinvestment in the local community will support a more resilient high street.
  - **Climate & Environment** – Introduction of more greenery via planters will provide welcome placemaking and biodiversity enhancements. The introduction of trees into the high street environment potentially will aid urban cooling in this area. The 20mph speed limit will slow vehicles down and therefore create a more family friendly area, which in turn will encourage more people to visit Front Street by foot/ cycle.
  - **Health and Wellbeing** – The creation of a more family friendly space that encourages people to dwell in, encouraging greater use of local amenities will help build stronger social interactions across the generations and reduce social isolation. The project team will continue to meet with community groups to build on the existing community links all parties want to see developed. Community groups have volunteered several event ideas, the coordination of an events programme will need resource and further input from all.
9. Strategic work to develop a pipeline of future projects for consideration by the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) highlights the importance of Acomb (and Haxby & Wigginton) as a key secondary centre within York and identifies that it should be treated in the same way as market towns in North Yorkshire in terms of access to future mayoral investment. Discussions are underway with the MCA to explore potential future funding opportunities in this regard.
10. The UKSPF funding has clear criteria for outputs and outcomes, the criteria against its funding are a key consideration

for the recommendations around Phase 2 spend. On completion of the phase 2 scheme, we are required to report against a range of outputs and outcomes including. Outputs delivered to date in Acomb include:

- Amount of public realm created or improved - 1202m<sup>2</sup>.
- Sqm of land made wheelchair accessible/step free -1202m<sup>2</sup>.
- Number of low or zero carbon energy infrastructure installed (numerical value) – TBC
- Number of neighbourhood improvements - 1(Market Trial)
- Number of projects successfully completed – 4 (Highway Improvements, accessible seating, adapted cycle rack trials & Christmas lights)

## Financial Strategy Implications

11. The council was awarded a sum of £5.5m for the Shared Prosperity Fund over the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. This allocation included £1.3m capital funding for city centres and key shopping centres, from which £570k was allocated to Acomb Phase 2.
12. The final costings for Phase 2 are included as Annex A and indicate that these should fit within the £570k budget available. This includes a contingency sum of c. £20k.
13. The costs for preparatory work, engagement, staff time etc are likely to total around £65k across the lifetime of the Phase 2 Project. There is a separate budget available to cover these costs, therefore ensuring that the full £570k can be allocated towards improvement works. Feasibility studies and traffic surveys to inform future work is identified under future work heading.

## Recommendation and Reasons

14. The Executive Member for Economy and Culture is asked to:
15. **Approve the designs and costings, set out in this report and the annexes, 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.

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

**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.

- 17. 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.

## Background

18. Front Street is a key shopping centre, especially for the local community, residents, and businesses. There has been long-standing desire to make improvements and boost the local economy, and gradually a change is organically taking place in Acomb with new businesses moving into the area. Building on this transformation the approach promotes tangible economic growth and will develop a unique high street environment for Acomb that enhances its character and sense of place to promote diverse community use.
19. Extensive engagement and consultation have been undertaken on Front Street; a 2020 consultation led to the 2021 Future of Acomb Front Street Study. This study outlined ten emerging ideas, the majority of which were long term ideas which would require further feasibility and viability work prior progression.
20. In December 2022, City of York Council was allocated UK Shared Prosperity Funding, part of the government's Levelling Up Fund intended to reduce inequalities between communities. At this time £395,000 was allocated to phase 1 Front Street highway improvement works.
21. A significant period elapsed between the 2020 community engagement and phase 1 highway improvement work completed in May 2023. The local community challenged the bollards installed as part of phase 1 work. Subsequently the What a Load Of Bollards WALOB Campaign Group presented a petition to Full Council in July 2023, titled "Get Front St bollards removed and re-design the scheme in line with what people asked for".
22. In October 2023 Executive agreed a further £570,000 of UKSPF funding to be allocated to Front Street phase 2 work.
23. In response to this petition and acknowledging the strength of community feeling the council engaged the original external consultants PWP Design and local urban designer, Urban Glow Design to work with the council, acting as critical friends to the design process and bringing creative expertise in developing a phase 2 scheme and longer-term ideas for Front Street.



24. The phase 2 design ideas were extensively engaged upon during February and March 2024, as presented to the community and to Executive in July 2024 and outlined in the Consultation Analysis section below.
25. To “kick start” the council’s regeneration work whilst the design of phase 2 and engagement began, a trial of a monthly artisan market was agreed with Make it York (MiY) and ‘Little Bird Made’ market on Front Street. The trial commenced in March 2024 for 3 months and following positive feedback from residents, businesses, and traders alike MiY have agreed to extend the monthly market until the end of December 2024. The new market has several (six and upwards) York traders taking stalls and the market is delivering increased footfall to the area and boosting the local economy. The high street retail offering is enhanced by the artisan market and the monthly road closure provides useful operational learning for future events/ activities.
26. The UKSPF funding will also support the upgrade to the public toilets, upgrading the existing accessible toilet and converting the old gent’s toilet block into a second accessible cubicle both with baby changing facilities. As there are two accessible toilets onsite, there will be both a left- and right-hand transfer provision. The contract with Healthmatic has been agreed and work has now commenced.

## **Consultation Analysis**

27. The Front Street public engagement commenced on 26 February and ran to 24 March 2024.
28. The programme of engagement that has now been completed included three drop-in events, six stakeholder meetings and an online survey. The community response was tremendous and generated 900 completed surveys, and more than 5,000 comments to be analysed. The project programme had to be extended to allow sufficient time to analyse the quantity of responses received, but the significant level of engagement data has better informed the Phase 2 scheme and demonstrates the Council’s commitment to listening to the local community to inform the next phase of work. Learnings from previous consultations as well as comments made in the press/on social

media have also been considered as part of the engagement work to help shape the project approach.

29. The report to Executive in July 2024 set out in detail the outcomes of the engagement activity to inform approval of the high principles for the Phase 2 scheme. The decision on the final costed scheme design was delegated to the Executive Member for Economy & Culture to be made at a public decision session on 24 September 2024. UKSPF spend deadlines are challenging and this approach has enabled the project to progress whilst also retaining full transparency of decision making.
30. Engagement responses produced a range of views however broad support for the phase 2 ideas was evident and caveated that further engagement on pedestrianisation of Front Street would be required, especially with local businesses.
31. Annex C “You said, we did” provides a summary of how the engagement has been taken in account as the scheme design and detail has progressed to its final stages.
32. It is crucial that Phase 2 work is seen as the start of 5 – 10-year plan for the continued investment into Acomb and should provide the “foundation” for future incremental improvements, to create a pipeline of projects that will seek to attract future funding. Based on engagement survey an initial plan for future work could include: -
  - Work with community on trial day events – programme for road closures and funding for events.
  - Seek funding to deliver adoption of main shopping area – including look to private owners for contribution.
  - Pedestrianisation study options reviewed, consult with businesses to assess impact to any change in road use.
  - Feasibility of School Street parking review with recommendations.
  - Work with Acomb Explore to extend pedestrian priority and compliment recent Library Arts/ council funding (Arts Council funding for Acomb Explore, completion deadline March 2026)
  - Review Morrisons junction.
  - Review WMC future plans, scope to enhance green open area.

33. The final draft designs and costing for the Phase 2 scheme were taken to the Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee on 9th September 2024, for pre-decision scrutiny. Scrutiny members were complementary of the proactive work undertaken with the local community and recognised that the Phase 2 proposals presented seek to reflect a balanced approach based on the engagement feedback received from different groups and stakeholders.

34. Specific feedback from Scrutiny members included questions and comments around the following key themes:

- Accessibility

Members welcomed the planned improvements to accessibility in Phase 2, asking a range of questions about seating, raised tables, surfacing and the wheelchair tactile paving trial. Officers agreed to look into a specific query about the robustness/suitability of the granite blocks proposed for the top of the raised tables, and share the parameters and evaluation planned for the wheelchair tactile paving trial once finalised.

- Planters

Members were keen to ensure that the planters and trees are suitably looked after to ensure that they can continue to thrive in future. They were pleased to hear that community members have expressed an interest in helping with future maintenance of planters but want to ensure that proper arrangements are in place as far as possible.

- Costings and ongoing maintenance

There was discussion around ongoing maintenance for different elements of the scheme. Officers agreed to liaise with relevant CYC colleagues to try and estimate any change to the existing (the impact on future) maintenance costs to the Council and ensure that the improved area can be properly maintained in the future.

- Bollard re-use

Scrutiny members were keen that the removed bollards were re-used where possible. Officers agreed to liaise with Highways colleagues to estimate whether this re-use would result in a future budgetary saving being made.

- Community Involvement  
Scrutiny members were keen to ensure that the momentum of community interest and enthusiasm is maintained. They stressed the importance of continued communication and engagement with businesses and residents. There was a keenness to try and increase engagement with young people aged 18-24, and to engage the community in the development of Acomb public artwork as well as any potential phase 3 work (subject to future funding)
- Pedestrian Feasibility Study / Adoption of private land  
There was recognition that businesses are key stakeholders in Acomb and that future work needs to include continued, proactive engagement with them – to ensure their input to the Pedestrian Feasibility Study and to continue discussions about the future use and maintenance of privately-owned shop frontages on Front Street

## **Phase 2 Design and Costings**

35. Since the Executive approvals in July 2024, officers have continued to proactively work on the Acomb Phase 2 scheme in order to finalise work on the design and costings of Phase 2, including:
- Commencement of work to upgrade Acomb toilet block to two accessible toilets.
  - Statutory consultation undertaken on the new Traffic Regulation Orders – 20 mph and formalise Blue Badge parking bay on York Road. No representations made.
  - Detailed design for scheme “highway” element completed with gateway entrances and accessible BB parking.
  - Further design work with Greater Acomb Community Forum on the Front Street ‘identity’ undertaken and shared with Ward Members and the community for feedback.
  - Road Safety Audit completed for the scheme

- Wheelchair tactile paving trial commenced
- Finalising electrical infrastructure for events
- Finalising design/ selection of planters, seating, totem and notice board
- Finalising wayfinding signage – locations/destinations
- Traffic Management Plan completed for Construction Road Closures
- Traffic count & GRP Survey commissioned

36. Table 1 below confirms the community priorities identified via the comprehensive public engagement work, together with a description of how these have been incorporated into the final designs for Phase 2 and potential longer-term work (subject to funding). It should be noted that the % ‘support’ figures shown in the Community Priorities column are included as a high-level indicator of community views only – the overall analysis of total community feedback is much more nuanced than considering survey responses against the simple headings in the table.

37. Table 1: Key components of Phase 2

	<b>Community Priority</b>	<b>Key components – Phase 2 Scheme (Final design) &amp; Longer Term (Subject to future funding)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Activities and Events</b>  (91% support in survey responses)	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>Finalised design includes infrastructure to enable future events via electrical point “event column” designed/ installed into scheme. Community notice board to advertise activities &amp; events.</p> <p>Finalise with Highway Authority multiple event TTRO’s.</p> <p><u>Longer term</u></p> <p>Ambition to arrange programme of community events – Agreed Community Development Officers will become contact point for work with Community groups post completion of phase 2 scheme.</p>

<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Welcome Gateway</b></p> <p>Maximise impact of new people friendly entrance</p> <p>(71% support identified in engagement responses)</p>	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>York Road entrance - finalised designs include 6m flush crossing (raised table), trial for wheelchair tactile paving, clear designated BB parking, new seating, planting and wayfinding. Improving visual impact, placemaking and decluttering are core aspects.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>New central space</b></p> <p>Creation of wide generous crossing that emphasizes pedestrian / community focus for large parts of the day</p> <p>(70% support identified in engagement responses)</p>	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>Finalised designs include 7.5m flush crossing (raised table) and accompanying 20 mph speed limit will build a greater sense that the main shopping area is a place for people and are intended to reduce the vehicle movements in the carriageway. A central place for community to meet. Permanent planters and seaters (not pop up). Electrical infrastructure located here to facilitate maximum usage.</p> <p><u>Longer term</u></p> <p>Over time this area could be used to host events</p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Bollard review &amp; Highway declutter</b></p> <p>(64%% support identified in engagement responses)</p>	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>Finalised design includes:</p> <p>Removal of c90 bollards and alternative street furniture used – including new bins, seating and planters – retained bollards in locations identified as essential.</p> <p>Removal of “Ahead only” from the carriageway and resurfacing the carriageway to promote greater placemaking, more people friendly space and reduced vehicle dominance of the space.</p> <p>Decluttering and optimised highway signage, in accordance with Highway Regulations in place.</p>

<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Feasibility study for people friendly street</b></p> <p>(70% support identified in engagement responses)</p>	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>Commission a feasibility study for people friendly street to inform future phases of project work, to be completed by April 2025. Scope being finalised. Input from Highway Officers for potential phased approach for more people friendly area.</p> <p><u>Longer Term</u></p> <p>Consider outcomes of feasibility study, undertake further consultation with businesses and identify next steps.</p> <p>Investigate funding options to deliver future adoption of main shopping area.</p> <p>Work with Acomb Explore to look at feasibility of extending pedestrian priority.</p>
<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>Improved Blue Badge car parking.</b></p> <p>(72% support identified in engagement responses)</p>	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p><u>Finalised design includes:</u></p> <p>At Halifax/Cooplans Blue Badge bays – two fully accessible, cross hatched parking spaces formalised.</p> <p>At Cross Street – three fully accessible spaces, one cross hatched space at the west end of Front Street, which sits alongside a new shared pedestrian/ cycle route through Cross Street to upgraded accessible toilet block.</p> <p>Within the layby on York Road –island to be extended to provide greater pedestrian access from the two additional inline accessible blue badge space.</p> <p>At School Street there will be one fully accessible cross hatched BB space which in turn facilitates easier cycling access than currently experienced.</p> <p><u>Longer Term</u></p> <p>Review of all parking on School Street with</p>

		recommendations for future improvements, subject to funding and potential consider other locations for Blue Badge parking.
<b>7</b>	<b>Place, identity public art</b>  (68% support identified in engagement responses)	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>First location for mural location agreed “in principle” subject to formal legal agreement.</p> <p>Develop a scope and procure specialist to deliver mural(s), public art including utility cabinets. Involve local schools and community for ideas. Continue to explore potential for alternative funding as UKSPF timescales are very tight to deliver this element of the work.</p> <p><u>Longer Term</u></p> <p>Consider further options for public art in Acomb</p>
<b>8</b>	<b>New crossing (near Morrisons junction) and seating (near Working Men’s Club)</b>  (82% support identified in engagement responses for crossing, 65% for seating)	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>Finalised design includes a new formal crossing point from the existing island across Front Street to connect main shopping area to the older section of Front Street.</p> <p>Create a much need rest point for pedestrians by locating bench seating outside the Acomb Working Men’s Club.</p> <p><u>Longer Term</u></p> <p>There is a desire to review Morrisons Junction and give greater priority to pedestrians in this area. This would be a significant undertaking and require discussions with Morrisons store to understand their plans for the store.</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>Signage &amp; Wayfinding</b>  (64% support identified in engagement responses)	<p><u>Phase 2 Proposal</u></p> <p>A design concept and colour palette for Front Street has been further developed over the last few weeks, building upon the initial Greater Acomb Community Forum design concepts – visuals for the updated design on wayfinding, seating and planters are included as Annex D for information. These were presented to</p>



		<p>Scrutiny on September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024, and subsequently approved for use in Phase 2 (in line with delegated authority provided by Executive in July 2024) – NB this approval was required ahead of 24<sup>th</sup> September due to supplier timescales.</p> <p>The new signage will be anchored from the two new entrance totems. From this the wayfinding signage will connect local amenities to inform both shoppers and visitors alike, although it is noted lower within overall priority rating.</p>
<b>10</b>	<p><b>Wide Crossing at west end of Front Street (Gateway Centre) – Raised Table C</b></p> <p><b>(63% support identified in engagement responses)</b></p>	<p><u>Phase 2 Proposal</u></p> <p>The engagement highlighted that the west end of Front Street is the entrance that most pedestrians use. As such the finalised design includes creation of a west end welcome gateway for those access the area on foot by introducing welcome totem and new seating area.</p> <p>The recently installed dropped crossing is sufficient – there was lower support for replacing this with a raised table in comparison to other community priorities. By retaining the dropped crossing, it was proposed that this location could be for the trial wheelchair tactile paving. Unfortunately, after closer examination of the trial parameters this crossing was found to be too narrow, therefore the trial paving will be located at raised table A. The crossing at the west end will not be altered. York Access Forum have been consulted and support the proposed trial. Consultation has included both wheelchair users and individuals that are registered blind. Final trial details are actively being confirmed with Highways Officers to ensure robust evaluation.</p>
<b>11</b>	<p><b>Planters / Seating/ Trees</b></p>	<p><u>Phase 2 Proposal</u></p> <p>From the engagement a third of responses made on alternatives to bollards wanted to see planters/ seating used to protect the kerb line. The balance to be struck is replacing sufficient bollards to declutter whilst not creating another barrier in the area through a row of seating and planters. Careful review of style and size of</p>

		<p>seating and planters has been undertaken in order to inform the final design and create cluster/ social seating locations.</p> <p><u>Longer Term</u></p> <p>Following completion of phase 2 work a design guide should provide useful reference to local amenities (York Explore, Working Men’s Club) that will enhance other schemes in the area.</p>
<b>12</b>	<b>Toilet Upgrade</b>	<p><u>Phase 2</u></p> <p>The tired existing and damaged toilet block is being upgraded to provide two new accessible toilets. The work has been commenced on site by the council’s toilet contractor Healthmatic.</p>
<b>13</b>	<b>Feasibility studies</b>	<p><u>Longer term</u></p> <p>Traffic Surveys – to better inform making the area a more people friendly area, a traffic count survey has been commissioned to quantify people / vehicle movements in the area before and during proposed construction. This survey will inform the feasibility study.</p>

38. Annex E is the General Arrangement Plan showing final design for Acomb Front Street Phase 2, taking in to account the engagement to date as outlined above. This design is recommended for approval by the Executive Member for Economy and Culture

## Options Analysis and Evidential Basis

39. Two options are available as follows:

**Option 1 – to approve all the report recommendations as follows:**

(A) Approve the finalised designs and costings set out in the report for key elements of the Acomb Front Street Phase 2 and instruct officers to implement the scheme, including

commencement of construction work

(B) Note that work is still ongoing to finalise some elements of the Phase 2 scheme (including public artwork and future approach to markets) and agree to delegate authority to approve the remaining elements to the Interim Director for City Development

(C) 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

**Option 2** – to reject one or more of the recommendations

## Analysis

40. **Option 1** - is the recommended option which sets out a deliverable plan to achieve the best use of UKSPF funding against spend deadline of March 2025. This option demonstrates clear commitment to future feasibility work and context within a 5–10-year plan for Front Street, Acomb.
41. **Option 2** - is not recommended because if report recommendations are rejected or amended to include significant changes to scheme design there will be an inevitable delay to commence construction and a high risk of missing the opportunity to incur project spend against UKSPF deadlines.

## Organisational Impact and Implications

42. The organisational impact and implications is set out below:

- **Financial**  
There remains funding within the overall allocation to fund the works at Acomb Front Street. As indicated within the report there is a short window between finalising the design of the scheme and the need to deliver the improvements. There can be no expectation that the funding will carry

forward into future years and therefore the works must be completed during the financial year.

The cost of consultation, design and construction for the scheme is to be funded from the £570k SPF allocation. With a separate budget for Project Management and other staff time estimated to total around £65k.

The major financial implication is that the money must be spent by 31 March 2025. So, the risk is that we start work and then if delays are encountered CYC would need to cover any costs incurred from 1 April 2025.

- **Human Resources (HR)**

There are no HR implications contained within this report.

- **Legal**

Any grant funding arrangements sought to deliver the proposals set out in this report will need to be reviewed to understand whether the Council's acceptance and use of any such grant funding will comply with the requirements set out within the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a duty on local traffic authorities to manage the road network with a view to securing, as far as reasonably practicable, the expeditious, convenient, and safe movement of all types of traffic. The Council, as a traffic authority, has the power to make Traffic Regulation Orders and temporary Traffic Regulation Orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with the procedures contained in the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 and the Road Traffic (Temporary Restrictions) Procedure Regulations 1992.

- **Procurement**

Any proposed works or services which are undertaken by external providers on the Council's behalf will need to be commissioned via a compliant procurement route under the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and where applicable, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (soon to be the Procurement Act 2023).

- **Health and Wellbeing**  
Public Health support the proposals. By making the Acomb Front Street more accessible, sociable, and family friendly the proposed Phase 2 development has the potential to make a positive contribution to people's health and wellbeing. The measures to make the area less vehicle dominant should have a positive impact on active travel and reduce pollution levels, which in turn impact health.
- **Environment and Climate action**  
The proposals for Phase 2 of Acomb Front Street development have the potential to contribute towards the Council's climate change ambitions. Design and delivery of any new initiatives and infrastructure should consider both embodied and operational carbon emissions and seek to minimise these as much as possible.

Consideration should be given to climate adaptation and risk resilience, ensuring that the scheme is suitably designed to account for more frequent extreme weather events and temperatures e.g., providing shading to avoid overheating and ensuring materials are used that can withstand higher extreme temperatures.
- **Affordability -**  
The creation of a more unified destination, including sign posting of local free amenities (Library, play spaces) will support residents and visitors alike to better access and use local facilities.

This will potentially reduce the need/ requirement for low-income groups to use public transport and incur additional expenditure to travel beyond the local shopping area as frequently as they might now.
- **Equalities and Human Rights -**  
A full EIA is included at Annex F. This highlights some positive improvements for some groups including disabled people and those on low income. Any further consultation will include groups outside of the York Access Forum when considering the views of disabled residents.

- **Data Protection and Privacy**

Data protection impact assessments (DPIAs) are an essential part of our accountability obligations and is a legal requirement for any type of processing under UK data protection and privacy legislation. Failure to carry out a DPIA when required may leave the council open to enforcement action, including monetary penalties or fines.

DPIAs helps us to assess and demonstrate how we comply with all our data protection obligations. It does not have to eradicate all risks but should help to minimise and determine whether the level of risk is acceptable in the circumstances, considering the benefits of what the council wants to achieve.

The DPIA screening questions were completed for this report, reference AD-06716, and as there is no personal, special categories or criminal offence data being processed for the options set out in this report, there is no requirement to complete a DPIA at this time. However, this will be reviewed where required, on the approved options from this report.

- **Communications**

The Communications team have been working proactively with the Regeneration team on the communication and engagement elements of this project and will continue to do so as it progresses to implementation stages.

- **Economy**

Acomb Front Street is a key secondary shopping centre within the City of York Council area. It is positive to see the proposed Phase 2 approach seeking to build on the 2021 Future of Acomb Front Street Study, which was commissioned to identify ways to support economic growth and drive footfall in the area. The engagement undertaken demonstrates a strong commitment to ensure that Phase 2 is based upon local resident and stakeholder views about how UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) monies can be invested to deliver positive outputs and outcomes for the local area.

## Risks and Mitigations

43. The principal project risks are:

- (i) The tight spending deadlines for UKSPF funding require all funds to be spent by 31 March 2025. To achieve this construction must commence no later than the start of October 2024. Discussions have been held with the Council's Finance Manager to ensure that financial recharge processes can ensure that any internal costs incurred (e.g., work delivered by highways team) will be completed to meet the UKSPF spending rules.
- (ii) Costings are now based (as far as possible) on the final scheme designs and include a contingency of c. £20k. However, there are still elements of the costings that have to remain as informed estimates until the work is procured, therefore there remains a risk that costs may increase. If cost increases do occur there may be a need to revisit elements of the work/look to further prioritise expenditure. Costings will be kept under regular review throughout project implementation.
- (iii) Community expectation/ response to phase 2 final designs by sections of community. There has been strong representation from the community on phase 1, during phase 2 the council has listened and responded to the engagement, however with regeneration schemes of this nature it will always be impossible to satisfy everybody's views. Stakeholder objection or campaigning by the community could delay the final scheme design and construction and jeopardise the UKSPF funding. This must necessarily be set against the risk of not delivering a scheme which has strong community support.
- (iv) Ongoing scrutiny by community and stakeholders is anticipated, the project team will continue to proactively share progress of the work through the council website Acomb Front Street. At implementation stage, this will highlight work completed, next fortnightly work plan and important road closures.
- (v) By replacing the bollards with alternative wide planters and seating the kerb line will continue to be protected and prevent illegal parking (within the adopted highway). By using large planters and seating to replace some bollards more pedestrians may be steered onto the non-adopted highway. Although some accommodation work was

completed as part of phase 1 work the condition of the non-adopted is not of a sufficient standard that the council would choose to adopt it. More pedestrians on non-adopted highway may accelerate adoption discussions with landowners.

- (vi) Project components that involve additional external procurement e.g., Community public art project, which involves liaison with local schools, needs to consider seasonality (when to paint the mural for best results) and could take longer to deliver than March 2025. Exploring alternative funding sources is recommended.
- (vii) The removal of a considerable number of bollards and introduction of wide speed tables for pedestrian priority could result in an increase in illegal parking on the pavements, which the phase 1 scheme had sought to address. This can be mitigated by the introduction of planters, clear signage, and reduced vehicle journeys through the area, and by parking enforcement.
- (viii) Front Street currently has two “lives”, it functions as both a traffic free pedestrianised area when access is restricted but allows deliveries and parking at different times of day. Sections of the community would prefer the existing road to be “filled in” / levelled off and have cited examples nationally where this has been done, including Uttoxeter, Winchester and Tadcaster. Examples have been reviewed by Highways and Access Officers and at this time the Department of Transport (DoT) national moratorium and guidance shared spaces / retaining a kerb to delineate the highway for visually impaired users prohibit this. The measures taken as part of Phase 2, to change the feel of the area and reduce the “highwayness” of the existing road, are proposed to create a better sense of place and maintain the council’s commitment to accessibility for all. It is recommended that a feasibility study be undertaken into the long term pedestrianisation of Front Street will build on the phase 2 development with potential incremental / phased approach to any potential Front Street enhancements.



## Wards Impacted

Acomb, Westfield & Holgate Wards

## Contact details

For further information please contact the authors of this Decision Report.

### Author

<b>Name:</b>	Katie Peeke Vout
<b>Job Title:</b>	Head of Regeneration
<b>Service Area:</b>	City Development
<b>Telephone:</b>	01904 553364
<b>Report approved:</b>	Yes/No
<b>Date:</b>	12/09/2024

### Co-authors

<b>Name:</b>	Julie Stormont-Dawber
<b>Job Title:</b>	Regeneration Project Delivery Officer
<b>Service Area:</b>	Regeneration
<b>Telephone:</b>	07517464939
<b>Report approved:</b>	Yes/No
<b>Date:</b>	12/09/2024

## Background papers

Executive April 2022: 'Future of Acomb Front Street – Enhancing Economic Growth for Secondary Shopping Areas'

Executive – October 2023: 'UK Shared Prosperity Fund

Executive Member Decision Session 20<sup>th</sup> February 2024 - Acomb Front Street Phase 2 – open public engagement on costed designs and ideas for the scheme.

Executive 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 – Acomb Front Street – Phase 2 update

## **Annexes**

- Annex A: Costings for Acomb Front Street Phase 2
- Annex B: Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)
- Annex C: “You Said, We Did” Summary Document
- Annex D: Wayfinding, Seating and Planter Visuals
- Annex E: General Arrangement Plan Acomb Front Street Phase 2

## **Abbreviations**

York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority - MCA

UK Shared Prosperity Fund - UKSPF

York Access Forum - YAF

Greater Acomb Community Forum - GACF