

Meeting	Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee
Date	9 September 2024
Present	Councillors Fenton (Chair), Merrett (Vice-Chair), Ayre, B Burton, Coles, Crawshaw, Healey, Melly, Rose, Rowley, Waller and Widdowson
Apologies	Councillor Whitcroft
In attendance	Cllr P Kilbane, Executive Member, Economy and Culture
Officers present	Kathryn Daly, Head of City Development Regeneration Project Delivery Officer, Acomb Front Street

13. Declarations of Interest (5.33 pm)

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interest, or other registerable interest, they might have in respect of business on the agenda, if they have not already done so in advance on the Register of Interests.

In relation to item 4, Acomb Front Street, Phase 2 Update, both Cllr Coles and Cllr Waller noted, for transparency reasons, that they were the area's Ward Councillors.

14. Minutes (5.34 pm)

Resolved: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 8 July 2024 were approved as a correct record.

15. Public Participation (5.34 pm)

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

16. Acomb Front Street Phase 2 Update (5.34 pm)

The Head of City Development and the Project Officer introduced the report on Phase 2 of the Acomb Front Street project and gave a presentation, contained in Agenda Supplement 1, updating the Committee with the latest information since publication of the report. During the presentation they took the opportunity to thank the community for their high level of engagement whilst noting the competing needs of the different resident groups.

Officers highlighted the plans for a brand identity; a logo for Acomb, developed by the Greater Acomb Community Forum, had received positive feedback on social media and at the Joint Ward Committee meeting, it would be used on green coloured signage to create a community identity and cohesion throughout the scheme.

A breakdown of the timescales, subject to the Executive Member Decision Session, and costs was shared, and officers emphasized the spending deadline of 31 March 2025.

Cllr Kilbane, the Executive Member for Economy and Culture, noted that the funding for the project came from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF). He thanked the officers and community groups involved for their hard work.

Members asked a range of questions covering accessibility, including the trial of the wheelchair tactile paving, the type and quantity of seating and the proposed block paving. They also asked about the plans for the bollards once removed, the ongoing maintenance of the area, the proposed mural, the funding, the privately owned pavements, and the planned signage.

In response to Members' questions, Officers reported that:

- They would look at the suitability of the granite blocks proposed for the top of the raised tables and share the criteria for the planned evaluation of the wheelchair tactile paving trial once finalised.
- Offers had been received from the community to help with the future maintenance of the planters and they would look to formalise these arrangements where possible.
- They would liaise with Highways on the re-use of the bollards and the potential for a future budgetary saving on their re-use.

- The need to maintain the level of community interest and to increase engagement with young people aged between 18-24 was acknowledged.
- Officers confirmed their intention to continue council engagement with businesses, to maintain ongoing communication on the use and maintenance of the privately owned shop frontages.

[6.35-6.38pm, Cllr Merrett left the meeting.]

Resolved: That the above actions be included in the report to the decision session of the Executive Member for Economy and Culture.

Reason: To ensure that Members' comments from the pre-decision scrutiny are taken into consideration by the Executive Member.

[7.18-7.26pm, the meeting adjourned for a comfort break.]

17. Review of the Scrutiny Function (7.26 pm)

Members received a report outlining a possible review of the Scrutiny Function. The Chair asked Members to consider their preferred approach for a review, considering the financial implications.

Several different options were considered including commissioning an external review, making use of the training budget to develop a training programme and/or sharing best practice with and between other local authorities. Several Members commented on the lack of dedicated Scrutiny Officers as a barrier to improving the function.

Following discussion it was:

Resolved: That the Chair and Vice-Chair would meet with the Head of Democratic Governance to understand the plans for the workforce structure of Democratic Services, with a view to bringing a more detailed proposal back to the Committee.

Reason: To ensure that a review of the Scrutiny Function achieves the optimum outcome for the best value.

18. Work Plan (8.02 pm)

Members considered the Scrutiny work plan for the four scrutiny committees and the Committee's work plan for the municipal year.

Resolved: That the work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure an overview of the scrutiny work programme.

Cllr S Fenton, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.31 pm and finished at 8.07 pm].