

Report of the Cabinet Member for Transport, Planning and Sustainability

Improving York's City Centre - Reinvigorate York public realm Improvement Projects: outcome of consultation and proposals for Fossgate

Summary

1. Public consultation for three of the six priority Reinvigorate York public realm improvement projects took place in January/February this year. The projects are the Exhibition Square and linked Theatre Interchange scheme; Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction; and Fossgate. The Theatre Interchange Scheme is part of the Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) programme.
2. The main purpose of this report is to provide an overview of consultation undertaken with high level feedback on the outcome; and to provide detailed feedback on the consultation and the preferred junction improvement option for the Fossgate scheme. An analysis of comments and feedback from consultation for the Fossgate scheme is set out in Annex 1. Proposed junction improvement plans are outlined in Annex 2.
3. An overall Community Impact Assessment (CIA) for the Reinvigorate York projects has also been carried out (see Annex 3). Project specific elements of the assessment have also been included for the Fossgate scheme where appropriate.
4. Members are asked to approve the preferred design and budget for the Fossgate scheme.
5. The intention is to bring an update report to Cabinet in June. This will provide detailed feedback on the outcome of consultation and seek Member's approval for the proposed

Exhibition Square & Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction schemes.

Background

6. The quality of York city centre is vital to the economic future of the city. Reinvigorate York objectives are aimed at significantly improving key public spaces and movement within the city centre to create a high quality public environment. This investment will help to underpin the city's economic future and maintain its local and competitive position with other regional and sub-regional shopping centres and with other major visitor attracting cities within the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe.
7. A suite of six priority public realm improvement projects was agreed by Cabinet on 4 September 2012. The final phase of work for the Kings Square project started at the beginning of March and will be completed by mid-May. Public consultation for Reinvigorate York projects at Exhibition Square and linked Theatre Interchange scheme; Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction; and Fossgate, took place in January/February this year. The Theatre Interchange Scheme is part of the Better Bus Area Fund (BBAF) programme.
8. The intention is to implement these three schemes by spring 2015 and to carry out public consultation on projects to improve Micklegate and the junction of Parliament Street with Coppergate and Piccadilly this autumn, 2014.

Fossgate scheme

9. Fossgate is a very popular destination for restaurants and a mix of independent retailers. However, the street also suffers for example, from a lot of parking (not necessarily linked to visits to Fossgate itself), signage and road markings, and vehicles speeding through the area. Local businesses have also expressed concerns that Fossgate is perceived by visitors and residents as being set apart from the city centre shopping area.
10. The vision is to make the pedestrian experience for residents and visitors to Fossgate more attractive, to improve the link from Fossgate to the city centre shopping and footstreet area, and to encourage increased footfall. The aim is to change the character of Fossgate from a vehicular dominated through road to a

quieter, more pedestrian friendly street, and to improve the attractiveness of Fossgate as a destination in its own right.

11. Proposals are aimed at encouraging regeneration of the street and promoting cultural change at the gateway junction with Pavement. The two main proposals which were the subject of recent public consultation are:
 - 1) To convert Fossgate into a daytime footstreet; and
 - 2) To carry out physical improvements to the gateways/junctions at either end of the street.
12. Specific interventions include: improving legibility and accessibility for pedestrians, widening footpaths to reduce conflict with vehicles; rationalising/providing parking on alternate sides of the road to reduce the perception of simply being a traffic route; and converting Fossgate to a daytime footstreet. Providing new paving in high quality natural stone materials to help to create a visually more attractive entrance into the street.
13. This report feeds back on the outcome of public consultation for the Fossgate project (see Annex 1) and sets out the preferred option for junction improvement work at the northern end of the street (see Plan1 and Plan 2 in Annex 2).
14. It is anticipated that work to carry out environmental improvements at Fossgate will start on site in late spring this year. This timescale, however, will be subject to ongoing monitoring and review. Work to progress the footstreet designation element of the project is linked to this but will be progressed separately and is ongoing.

Exhibition Square /Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/
Blake Street junction schemes

15. The intention is to bring an update report to Cabinet in June 2014 to provide feedback on public consultation and seek approval for scheme proposals for the Exhibition Square & Theatre Interchange scheme and Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction scheme. It is anticipated that work for both projects will start on site after the Tour de France event in July and finish by Spring 2015.

Consultation

Consultation - General

16. A four week public consultation was held between 24 January 2014 and 21 February 2014 (see Annex 1). Key events included:
 - i) A stakeholder workshop event at West Offices on 30 January 2014. The event was attended by 29 representatives from groups, organisations, key stakeholders and businesses.
 - ii) Two staffed exhibitions in the Mobile Exhibition Unit at St Sampson's Square on Saturday 25 January and Thursday 11 February 2014. It is estimated that between 175-200 people attended each event.
 - iii) A special meeting of the Guildhall Resident Forum on 3 February 2014.
 - iv) A staffed exhibition at West Offices on 5 February 2014. It is estimated that between 175-200 people attended the event.
 - v) Presentations to: the Conservation Area Appraisal Panel on 4 February 2014; and the Quality Bus Partnership on 13 February 2014.
 - vi) Attendance at meetings with: the York Museums Trust on 8 January 2014; the Retail Forum on 16 January 2014; Rushbond on 17 January 2014; the Civic Trust on 20 January 2014; the City Team on 24 January 2014; and York@Large on 12 February 2014.

17. Following the close of formal public consultation further meetings were held with the Equalities Advisory Group on 5 March 2014 and York University on 6 March 2014. A Fossgate User Group has also been set up to enable the council to discuss key stages of the Fossgate project with businesses and residents and keep them informed as the scheme progresses. The first meeting of the Group was held on 26 February 2014 to feed back on the consultation and to discuss the emerging preferred entry treatment option for the scheme. The meeting was attended by 22 people.

Consultation Structure and Analysis - General

18. Approximately 100,000 leaflets were issued to all households/businesses in York to signpost people to information about the projects and explain how to get involved. Key information was made available online and via drop in exhibitions including an exhibition at West Offices which ran for the duration of the consultation. A consultation survey/questionnaire was available online and in paper copy. Responses could be made online on the Reinvigorate York web site, by email at the Reinvigorate York address, by mail or handed to the council at West Offices.
19. A press release, “Reinvigorate York – Improving York’s City Centre” was made on 20 January 2014 and regular communications were made through Tweets/Facebook and CYC’s internal message screens in the customer centre. Information about the consultation was also circulated via an electronic newsletter for York based alumni (York University).
20. Direct questions were asked for each of the three projects which were the subject of consultation. The questions were specific to, and varied with, each project. Respondents were also encouraged to comment on specific issues and to make general comments for each project. General views about the overall aims of Reinvigorate projects were also sought.
21. A total of 651 responses have been received. These comprise:

Email:	54
Letter:	4
Questionnaires (paper):	136
On-line (surveymonkey):	<u>457</u>
Total	651
22. A number of general comments which cross-cut all three projects were made in writing and verbally at consultation activities. These included concerns, for example, about:
 - i) Disabled parking provision
 - ii) Enforcement issues (for example, footstreets, disabled parking and cycling)
 - iii) Cycling provision
 - iv) Funding and expenditure on Reinvigorate York projects

Consultation Structure and Analysis – Fossgate

23. For the Fossgate project, four direct questions were asked. These related to: the proposal to convert Fossgate to a daytime footstreet; the proposal to improve the junctions at the northern and southern ends of Fossgate; proposed options for the entry treatment at the junction with Pavement; and the proposed type of paving. It should be noted that the 'total' figures for the questions relating to Fossgate vary from the total overall consultation figures as not everyone answered every question (Q15-18) in the survey.

Analysis of proposal to convert Fossgate to a daytime Footstreet

24. Responses to the direct Question 15 relating to the proposed conversion of Fossgate to a daytime footstreet are summarised in Table 1 below. Further detailed analysis of comments, grouped by theme, can be found at Annex 1.

Table 1

Question	Answer	Responses	%
Question 15 Do you agree with the proposal to convert Fossgate to a daytime Footstreet	Agree	303	56
	Disagree	195	36
	Don't Know	45	8
	Partially Agree	1	0
	Total	544	100

25. A significant proportion of respondents supported the proposal to convert Fossgate to a daytime footstreet (56% agree; 36% disagree). This reflected the findings of a previous consultation which was carried out at the request of traders in July 2012 where 57% of respondents supported the principle of Fossgate operating as a footstreet.
26. Work to progress the proposed conversion to a footstreet is ongoing. A number of issues were raised through the consultation process and require further investigation and consideration. These include, for example, consideration of:
- i) Access implications for residents as well as businesses.
 - ii) Implications for the commercial operation of businesses, including deliveries.
 - iii) Parking implications, including private off street parking.

- iv) Possible introduction of a two-way access for the southern section of road from Merchantgate.
 - v) Enforcement of restrictions.
 - vi) Provision for cyclists.
27. A bespoke meeting to enable in depth discussion on the emerging proposal will be arranged with the Fossgate User Group at the appropriate time.

Analysis of Proposed Junction Improvements - Fossgate

28. Responses to the direct questions relating to proposed physical improvements to Fossgate are summarised in Table 2 below. Further detailed analysis of comments, grouped by theme, can be found at Annex 1.

Table 2

Question	Answer	Responses	%
<u>Question 16</u> Do you agree with the junction proposals at the northern and southern ends of Fossgate?	Agree	232	44
	Disagree	206	39
	Don't Know	90	17
	Total	528	100
<u>Question 17</u> Which entry treatment do you prefer at the junction of Fossgate with Pavement?	Option A	97	20
	Option B	134	27
	Don't Know	230	47
	Neither	13	3
	Other*	14	3
	Total	488	100
<u>Question 18</u> Do you agree with the proposed type of paving for Fossgate?	Agree	268	52
	Disagree	168	32
	Don't Know	81	16
	Other	2	0
	Total	519	100

29. There was overall agreement with the principle of carrying out physical environmental improvements at the northern (Pavement) and southern (Merchantgate) ends of Fossgate (44% agree; 39% disagree). However, there was no clear preference for which entry treatment option to take forward at the junction of Fossgate with Pavement (47% Don't Know; 20% Option A; 27% Option B). A significant proportion of people agreed with the proposed type of paving for Fossgate (52% agree; 32% disagree).

30. Strong views were expressed by people attending a number of consultation events (and in particular, the Guildhall Resident Forum meeting) that investment should be concentrated on improving the northern end of Fossgate and that proposed improvements at the southern end should not be carried out at this time. Written comments from respondents supported these views. The main emphasis of improvement work would, therefore, be to attract people from the city centre into Fossgate whilst keeping flexibility at the southern end.
31. Officers have subsequently reviewed the proposed entry treatment options at the northern end of Fossgate. Feedback from the public consultation has informed the preparation of a further option, which provides an extended table top arrangement (see Annex 2, Plan 1 and Plan 2). This option, the Preferred Option, was discussed and endorsed by the Fossgate User Group at a meeting on 26 February 2014.

Consultation Structure and Analysis - Exhibition Square/Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/ Blake Street junction schemes

32. Information on these schemes will follow later.

Options for Proposed Junction Improvements - Fossgate

Option 1

33. This is the Preferred Option (see Annex 2, Plan 1 and Plan 2) and has been prepared in response to the public consultation. Key proposals include:
 - i) Localising physical improvements to the northern end of Fossgate from the junction with Pavement to the junction with Lady Pecketts Yard.
 - ii) Raising the surface of the road to footpath level to provide a shared surface between No. 5 (Terrace PH) to No. 14 (Masons Bar & Bistro) with a ramp at either end.
 - iii) Reducing the roadway in width and gently sweeping the alignment of the road. This will allow widening of footpaths, whilst keeping the lines of paving simple, and will help to reduce vehicle speeds.

- iv) Amend the status of a short length of the existing overnight parking bays in Fossgate to create 2 parking bays exclusively for use by blue badge holders. These bays would be longer than normal (8m rather than 6m) to allow easier access to the rear of the vehicles by people with wheelchairs. It should also be noted that additional dedicated disabled parking bays have already been provided in near by Piccadilly car park where the Shopmobility scheme operates from.
- v) Relocating the existing parking spaces at the southern end of Fossgate to the other side of the road. This will help to control vehicle speeds.
- vi) Surfacing the roadway in dark grey granite setts (to provide a durable and robust surface for delivery vehicles) and edging with new granite kerbs. The footway will be paved in yorkstone flags. This will maintain a clear visual distinction between the road and footpath. Visually the new granite kerbs will appear 'flush' with the road but will be laid with a slight upstand (this will help blind and visually impaired people to navigate the street).
- vii) Locating new bollards to protect cellars and over hangings from properties and direct traffic whilst still allowing deliveries to businesses.
- viii) Keeping the existing wide granite kerbs, which are unique to Fossgate and are a heritage asset. The existing stone setts and paving to the bridge will also be kept.
- ix) Providing new seating in locations subject to consultation with businesses and residents.

Option 2

34. This is Public Consultation Option A (see Annex 2, Plan 3). Key proposals include:

- i) Raising the surface of the road to footpath level to provide a small length of raised 'table top' between No. 5 (Terrace PH) and No. 8 (Connolly's Homestyle) with a ramp at either end.
- ii) Resurfacing the carriageway between the finish of the new table top up to the start of the existing stone setts and paving to the Bridge.

- iii) Removing the existing traffic island at the junction of Fossgate with Merchantgate and building out the footpath between No. 2 (Alms Houses) and No. 6 (Quantum Sales & Lettings) to enable provision of cycle parking and seating as required.

Other key proposals as for Option 1 above.

Option 3

- 35. This is Public Consultation Option B (see Annex 2, Plan 4). Key proposals include:

- i) Providing a granite sett ramp at the northern entrance into Fossgate from Pavement and widening the footpath between No. 5 (Terrace PH) and No. 8 (Connollys Homestyle).
- ii) Retaining the existing road levels and resurfacing the carriageway between the new ramp to the start of the existing stone setts and paving to the Bridge.

Other key proposals as for Option 1 above.

Analysis of Proposed Junction Improvements- Fossgate

- 36. Option 1 is the preferred design and has been based on a thorough analysis of public consultation results and discussions with the Fossgate User Group and specialist council officers. Although this option is focused on the northern end of Fossgate, the proposal meets the aim to create a more visually attractive and accessible space for pedestrians and attract increased footfall for businesses in Fossgate. The design is compatible with the introduction of a daytime footstreet and will proceed first. The estimated cost of the scheme is £310,000. With this scheme it will be possible to monitor and control costs during the construction stage of the scheme by reducing the scale of the project.
- 37. There was no clear preference by respondents to either Option 2 (Public Consultation Option A) or Option 3 (Public Consultation Option B) and the benefit of carrying out work to the southern end of Fossgate was questioned. The estimated cost of Option 2 is £345,500. The estimated cost of Option 3 is £312,000. Opportunities to control scheme costs during the construction phase by reducing the scale of the project will be limited.

Options and Analysis - Exhibition Square/Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/ Blake Street junction schemes

38. This information will follow later.

Community Impact Assessment

39. An overall Community Impact Assessment (CIA) for Reinvigorate York public realm projects is attached at Annex 3. The CIA is a live document and will be updated on a regular basis as projects are progressed. Project specific assessments will be included as appropriate.

Council Plan

40. Delivery of the proposals will help to achieve a number of the themes of the Council Plan, including :-

- a. **Create jobs and grow the economy** – it is considered that the wider aims to improve the quality of York City Centre will contribute to the economic attractiveness of the city and boost investor confidence.

Substantial pedestrian and public space improvements on key links in the city for tourists and shoppers will improve the amenity of York City Centre and increase the number of visitor trips to the city, and therefore increase visitor spend.

- b. **Get York Moving** – improvements to streets and spaces will improve safety for pedestrian and cyclists, and local businesses, and will help to create a better environment for people to consider using alternative modes of transport.
- c. **Build Strong Communities** – Providing better public spaces will improve public interaction and the extra footway space will reduce conflict.
- d. **Protect vulnerable people** – York's streets and spaces need to work for everyone, and there are many significant issues that need to be resolved involving communities of interest as defined by the 2010 Disability Act. More space for pedestrians, higher quality paving, more considered repairs and re-bedding of surface materials, increases in seating and better quality seating,

improved lighting, and a new approach to wayfinding will all help to improve physical and intellectual access to services and facilities for all. The additional pedestrian space at junctions will ease problems for vulnerable people using the area.

- e. **Protect the Environment** – proposals will be delivered in accordance with the Council’s sustainable objectives, and will enhance the public realm, heritage and townscape of the city centre which will support the sustainable growth of the city and coordinate with the vision and objectives of the Reinvigorate York initiative. Modal shift as a result of improving bus facilities and services and improved conditions for active modes will reduce carbon emissions by the city and improve the amenity of the city centre.

Implications

- 41. The following implications have been considered:

- (a) **Financial**

Members approved £3,000k capital for the Reinvigorate York programme in 4th September 2012. A sum of £600k has been set aside for Access to Footstreets, Wayfinding project and general projects leaving £2,400k to fund the named projects. A release of £490k was approved on 2nd April 2013 for King’s Square which leaves unallocated funds of £1,910k.

The estimated cost of the Fossgate project is £310k. This will be primarily funded from the agreed £3m Reinvigorate York Economic Infrastructure Fund (EIF) Capital Budget (£305.5k), supplemented with £4.5k funding from the Capital Maintenance Budget 2014/15 for carriageway patching. The allocation from the Reinvigorate York budget of £305.5k for Fossgate will leave a balance of £1,604.5k.

The estimated cost and proposed funding for Exhibition Square /Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction projects will follow later.

- (b) **Human Resources (HR)** No implications

- (c) **Equalities** A full community impact assessment is being carried out as part of an ongoing process for all Reinvigorate

York schemes with a specific updated version for this scheme attached at Annex 3.

(d) Legal

Fossgate

Any change to the current traffic management at Fossgate, including conversion to a daytime footstreet, will have to go through a formal Traffic Regulation Order process. A public enquiry may be triggered if any objections are made.

Exhibition Square/Theatre Interchange & Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction projects

Listed building consent will be needed for any proposal to relocate the statue at Exhibition Square. Scheduled Monument Consent will be needed for works affecting the city walls adjacent to Exhibition Square.

(e) Crime and Disorder

(f) Information Technology (IT) No implications

(g) Property No implications

(h) Risk Management An individual risk assessment will be undertaken for individual projects.

Recommendations

Fossgate

42. Members are asked to approve the preferred design Option 1 and a proposed budget of £310k. This will be funded out of the £3m Capital budget already agreed for the Reinvigorate York programme (£305.5k) and supplemented from the Capital Maintenance budget 2014/15 (£4.5k) for carriageway patching. This will leave a balance of £1,604.5k unallocated across the Reinvigorate York programme.

Reason: To ensure delivery of the Fossgate project within the overall Reinvigorate York project programme.

Exhibition Square /Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction projects

43. Recommendations to approve the preferred design and proposed budget for the Exhibition Square/Theatre Interchange and Duncombe Place/Blake Street junction projects will follow later.

Reason: To keep Cabinet updated on these Reinvigorate projects.

Contact Details

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Specialist Implications Officer(s) <i>List information for all</i>			

Wards Affected:	All	Guildhall
For further information please contact the author of the report		

ABBREVIATIONS

SM - Surveymonkey (online response)

Q – Questionnaire (paper response)

E – Email

L – Letter

SE - Stakeholder Event

GRF - Guildhall Residents Forum

Background Papers:

Better Bus Area Fund Bid (York 2012)

<http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200206/buses/382/buses/4>

York City Centre Movement and Accessibility Framework (JMP 2011)

http://www.york.gov.uk/site/scripts/google_results.aspx?q=York+City+Centre+Movement+and+Accessibility+Framework+&btnG=Go

York New City Beautiful (Prof Alan J Simpson 2010)

http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200406/ldf_evidence_base_documents/465/ldf_evidence_base_documents/36

Annexes

Annex 1: Fossgate – Summary Analysis of Comments

Annex 2: Fossgate – Plans of Proposed Junction Improvements

Annex 3: Reinvigorate York Community Impact Assessment