

## **Acomb Front Street Phase 2 Update**

### **Summary**

1. The purpose of this report is to update Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee on the Front Street phase 2 project, ahead of a final decision on design by the Executive Member for Economy and Culture on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2024. This covering report will be supplemented by a short PowerPoint presentation/verbal update at the Scrutiny meeting itself, to capture any final design updates that were not available at the time of writing this report.

### **Background**

2. 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.
3. 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 and completed May 2023.
4. The UKSPF spending deadlines are extremely challenging, all works must be completed by 31 March 2025 otherwise the funding could be clawed back by central government.
5. 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".

6. 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.
7. 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 further engagement with residents and businesses.
8. 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.
9. Findings from the engagement exercise and the high-level principles for the Phase 2 scheme were [reported to Executive on 18 July](#). A number of decisions were taken to allow officers to make further progress on the detailed design and costings (given the tight spend deadlines) – these decisions are detailed in the Executive minutes at Annex A (see page 9, Item 18 Acomb Front Street)
10. As part of the Executive Report, it was also agreed that Scrutiny be asked to consider the project ahead of a final design decision being taken on 24 September 2024 by Executive Member for Economy and Culture. This pre-decision scrutiny programme enables greater public awareness of the proposed scheme prior to sharing with Executive Member for determination.
11. An updated presentation will be given by officers at the Scrutiny meeting to illustrate what has happened since the high-level principles were shared with the community and approved by Executive in July, particularly in relation to detailed designs and costings.

## **Consultation**

12. The phase 2 design ideas were engaged upon during March 2024. The engagement was designed to be far reaching and comprehensive in order that all sections of the community could share their opinion and provide feedback through in person public meetings/drop-in events, stakeholder meetings and online survey, plus paper-based format.

13. 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 were also considered as part of the engagement work to help shape the project approach.
14. An executive summary of Engagement Feedback accompanied the July Executive Report and is attached separately to this report as Annex 2. 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. The feedback received for each of the initial ideas that were tested through the survey and accompanying wider engagement events and meetings. Respondents were also asked to prioritise these ideas when considering the phase 2 proposals in the whole, and those community priorities shaped the Executive report in July 2024.
15. Ahead of the Executive decision in July, a Ward Member Committee was held at the Gateway Centre in Acomb (10 July 2024), which was well attended by members of the local community. A presentation was given to update the community on the engagement analysis and the next steps for the project. A copy of this presentation is attached as Annex 3. NB It was not possible to feedback to the community any earlier than this date due to restrictions relating to pre-election period.

### **Options**

16. This section is not applicable to this covering report as there are no options being presented to the Scrutiny meeting.

### **Analysis**

17. This section is not applicable to this covering report as there are no options presented.

### **Council Plan**

18. The Phase 2 regeneration scheme for Acomb Front Street will contribute directly to the delivery of the commitments in the Council Plan (2023-27) as addressed in the original report to Executive.

## **Implications**

19. There are no implications from this report as it is only a project update for Scrutiny at this stage.

## **Risk Management**

20. This is a pre decision update report to Scrutiny only, with no decisions required. A decision report will be taken to Executive Member for Economy and Culture on 24th September, which will include a full assessment of risks relating to the decisions being taken at that stage.

## **Recommendations**

21. That Corporate Services, Climate Change and Scrutiny Management Committee receives the Front Street Phase 2 update and provides any comments/feedback to the Executive Member for Economy and Culture ahead of his decision session on 24 September 2024.

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### **Report Approved for Publication:**

Frances Harrison  
Head of Legal

**Date:** 28/8/24

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)** Not applicable

**Wards Affected:** Acomb, Westfield and Holgate

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## **Background Papers:**

[Executive Meeting 21 April 2022](#): Future of Acomb Front Street – Enhancing Economic Growth for Secondary Shopping Areas

[Executive Meeting 12 October 2023](#): UK Shared Prosperity Fund

[Executive Member Decision Session 20 February 2024](#): Acomb Front Street Phase 2 – open public engagement on costed designs and ideas for the scheme

[Executive Meeting 18 July 2024](#) : Acomb Front Street – Phase 2 update

## **Annexes**

1. [Minutes from Executive 18 July 2024](#)  
[\(NB minute for Item 18, Acomb Front Street is on page 9 of this document\)](#)
2. Executive Summary Engagement Feedback July 2024
3. Presentation to Joint Ward Committee 10 July 2024

## **Abbreviations**

Not applicable