

Meeting	Decision Session - Economic Development and Community Engagement (Deputy Leader)
Date	12 April 2016
Present	Councillor Aspden

12. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal, prejudicial or pecuniary interests he may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

13. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the last Decision Session held on 8th March 2016 be approved and signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

14. Public Participation

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

It was reported that a late written submission in relation to agenda item 4 'Acomb Front Street' had been received from Councillor Stuart Barnes outlining a number of points. The submission is attached to the online agenda for this meeting. It was noted that in conjunction with Officers, the Executive Member would provide a written response to Councillor Barnes.

15. Acomb Front Street

The Executive Member considered a report which requested the transfer of the fund to improve the economy of Acomb Front Street to the Acomb Alive group.

Officers gave a brief update to advise of an amendment to paragraph 4 of the report to state that it would be the Director for City and Environmental Services who should receive details of Acomb Alive as an accountable body.

The Executive Member sought clarification on what the funds to date had been spent on. Officers confirmed that the largest spend had been £8.5k on benches. Christmas trees and lights and planters had also been purchased. There was also a desire for the creation of a website to p[romote the area. It was also confirmed that the fund was a one off investment rather than an ongoing one.

Resolved: That the Executive Member agreed to:

- (i) Transfer the remaining Acomb Front Street budget to Acomb Alive

Reason: To empower the business community in Acomb to improve the area.

- (ii) Appropriate governance arrangements being adopted by Acomb Alive to include the Council receiving regular updates on how the money has been spent and the outcomes achieved.

Reason: To ensure that Acomb Alive will be adequately placed to manage the budget on the specific purposes outlined in the original paper to Executive in October 2013.

16. Business Friendly Council

The Executive Member considered a report which provided an update on the Council's ambition to become a Business Friendly Council.

Officers outlined the report and advised that there were 3 main areas of work with different themes – communication, consultation and behaviours.

Following further discussion, the Executive Member agreed that the three main focus points should be the Council's website, developing a charter and a review of the current business support arrangements.

Resolved: That the Executive Member:

- (i) Noted the work that has been undertaken to reach the objective of becoming a Business Friendly Council.

Reason: To ensure that the administration is aware of the work being carried out towards becoming a Business Friendly Council.

- (ii) Advised that the following options be preferable as next steps:
 - Audit of the Council's existing business support arrangements
 - Look at the Council's website to check it provides easy to use channels through which businesses can access what they need.
 - Business Friendly Charter.

Reason: To develop options agreed by the Executive Member within a structured initial timescale, and to provide an update report for discussion by the Executive Member in Autumn 2016.

Cllr Aspden, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 1.30 pm and finished at 1.45 pm].