

Report of the Head of Economic Growth

SECONDARY SHOPPING AREAS FUND - UPDATE

Summary

1. Work to support the economic health of our District retail centres in Haxby and Acomb has now begun. This report updates the Economy and Place Policy Development Committee on progress.
2. Projects in Acomb have been commissioned, with some work already completed.
3. In Haxby, a fledgling traders association has been established and held its first meeting last month. Further detail is awaited on its intended activities.
4. Research on the future needs of both areas with regard to public realm and infrastructure has yet to be commissioned.

Background

5. Economy & Place Policy Development Committee have asked for an update report on the work to Enhance Economic Growth for Secondary Shopping Areas which was approved by the Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement on 3rd July 2018.
6. That decision outlined work to seek the establishment of a Haxby traders' association, fund a range of projects in Acomb, provide a capital fund for additional projects for both areas, and commission external consultants to report on the impact of trends in retail on District centres and recommend actions to improve their resilience. A total budget of £100,000 was available.
7. In Acomb, there were 5 projects approved:

- Improving the street scene on Acomb Front Street through improved planters - Acomb Alive (£3,000)
 - Increasing footfall on Acomb Front Street - ADAM festival (£2,500 in 2018/19, £2,500 in 2019/20)
 - Improving the street scene on Acomb Front Street through environmental improvements to the bin store area – Friends of Acomb Green (£5,000)
 - Improved wayfinding on Acomb Front Street – Acomb Alive (£2,000)
 - Enhanced Xmas lights on Front Street – Acomb Alive (£5,000)
8. In Haxby, it was agreed to begin by seeking to establish an independent traders' association. This body, together with other organisations such as the Town Council, would then be able to bid for further funds. £5,000 was allocated to support the establishment of the traders association.
 9. £50,000 was allocated for activities to support the longer term economic health of district centres. In the first instance, this will be used to procure specialist consultants to report on the potential impacts of long-term trends in retail on Haxby and Acomb centre. This will in turn be used to inform work to establish whether more substantial public realm investment in both areas might be of value, and what form that investment might take. Any remaining funds will be offered to the two centres for further short term measures.
 10. The remaining £23,000 capital funding was unallocated. This money remains available for further bids for short term measures in Haxby or Acomb.

Progress on agreed activities

11. The projects in Acomb have been proceeding over the summer. Acomb Alive have arranged for the watering of their planters on Front Street, and Friends of Acomb Green ran their ADAM festival, which included elements to encourage the use of Front Street shops.
12. The Christmas Lights work is just beginning, and initial discussion on the improvement of the recycling area at Morrisons have taken place.
13. The Acomb wayfinding project will take place over the autumn.

14. In Haxby, the original plan had been to employ consultants to make contact with local shopkeepers and seek to convene a meeting to establish a traders association. We were contacted soon after the decision session by a local business owner who was keen to establish such an organisation.
15. This person had already contacted 80 businesses in Haxby and Wiggington, and had taken advice from Easingwold traders' association on how to get started. An initial meeting was held in July 2018 which was attended by 21 local businesses who agreed to establish Haxby & Wiggington Traders Association and elected a committee to take the work forward. Cllr Johnny Hayes presented on his experience of setting up Bishy Road Traders and Indie York, offering further advice and encouragement if needed.
16. The committee has now met and is formulating proposals for activity. Traders are being asked for a fee of £45 for their first year membership, and part of the allocated £5,000 will be used to match membership contributions up to a limit of £2,500.
17. It is hoped that this fledgling traders association will become a strong voice for local businesses. We are keeping its development under review at this stage, but are encouraged by the start that has been made.
18. The consultancy work on the impact of retail trends on Haxby and Acomb will be commissioned in the next month. A similar study, focusing on the city centre and out-of-town retail is required for a separate project, and it is hoped that by commissioning both studies together we will reduce duplication and free up more budget to support practical work.

Conclusions

19. Work has begun on the project, although there is little yet to report on. The work in Haxby is progressing well, and we hope it will be the start of a useful organisation which can help to ensure the economic vibrancy of the area.

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Wards Affected: *Westfield, Acomb, Haxby & Wiggington*



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Enhancing Economic Growth for Secondary Shopping Areas: paper to Decision Session Executive Member for Economic Development and Community Engagement, 3rd July 2018.

<http://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s124616/Report.pdf>