

ENC 5:

From WSTG: To All in reference to Enc 4 - Briefing Note: Please find a detail response from Westside which reflects discrepancies in what is being reported here.

2.5 - There was no contact. This can be confirmed by businesses.

2.6 - Using Covid as a reason for lack of communication from the supposed contact in 2018 to when works commenced in 2021 is not a valid excuse

2.8 – Businesses had notice of the Bell Street/traffic management from the express and star article <https://www.expressandstar.com/news/local-hubs/wolverhampton/2021/07/07/work-on-wolverhampton-city-centre-transformation-to-start-next-week/> and no letters/leaflets were received by businesses

2.9 – Some businesses were visited by Megan (and a lady Rose) but was only given one letter and no contact numbers or anything like that. Also was given no specific detail as to what was going on, just that they were starting the work.

2.12 - The meeting on 9/5 was only arranged because of the Statement of Fact that was sent to the council in May. It states that work was to be undertaken by an independent party - SCA were not independent of the council. The tender specifications were not shared and still have not been shared. Actions PDF of this meeting was also not received.

2.15 - Reporting timeline period not agreed (we were getting clarification of this at the next council meeting as the meeting was Des/Owen/Sam/ Billy and Isobel - it was also on the 16th June, not 23rd)

2.16 - Dates were not agreed (in fact minutes/actions from meeting on 6/6 show Isobel checking with legal that comparison periods could be changed without having to re-tender)

2.17 -The meeting on 28th June was cancelled as Des had Covid, not because of the business meeting with consultant - the meeting with the consultant and traders had already happened on the 20th June, after the meeting mentioned in point 2.16

2.18 - No. SCA rep (Sam) met with traders on the 20th and gave out paper copies of the spreadsheet. There were insufficient supplied even though Sam new of the number of businesses involved. No electronic versions sent to traders as promised. There was no discussion about the dates - although this was challenged again at the time, and questions about business rates being involved were met by "it's up to the council" More importantly the traders sub-group did NOT at any time, set any dates!!!!

2.20 - Council met with the subgroup not the traders. We were not asked when we wanted to close off the activity - we were told that some businesses had not provided information by 15th July cut-off date and suggested to extend until the 29th - Please note, some meetings with SCA wasn't scheduled until the 13th July!!!! How much of the delay was caused by SCA - another failing on their part.

2.22 - The meeting on 22/8 went ahead as planned. It detailed was it stated in point 2.23. The council proposed a "Discretionary business disruption payment" Please note - regarding the agreement to pay all 52 businesses at that meeting, the Action PDF sent showed that letters were to be sent out by John Roseblade. **The September meeting was cancelled at that meeting because of the fact that the council had proposed the disruption payment, and this allowed them time to approach the relevant parties regarding this,** it was evident that no clear decision /direction could be made by the end of September and letters were set to be send by mid October (as per the action to JR)

2.23 - Not correct as there was no meeting - on 23rd September, Isobel emailed her "council response template" and we had a subgroup meeting. A formal response was sent to her about this on 4/10 and chased on 13/10

2.24 - The letters were hand delivered on 14/10 there were no details just two figures and a percentage

2.25 - Incorrect. Traders had a meeting of their own on 17/10 - council were requested to attend but declined.

2.25 - (again) At the council meeting on 18/10 subgroup advised council that while SCA had assured that all circumstances would be taken into account that this was clearly not the case. Tender information was requested again. No Action PDF was received from this meeting.

2.26 - Letters requested additional verified financial information by 10/11. Westside also sent in updated information showing revised window to save time and allow council to assess asap.

2.21 - (this is the number directly after 2.26) 7th November subgroup reps Billy, Des and Esme met with Isobel Woods and John Roseblade. We did not want the financial review to be re-done with any different information!! We suggested ways that used the information collected by SCA and some additional information to illustrate a fairer and more realistic viewpoint of losses. An email was sent to JR and IW detailing these! Concerns were raised about how SCA conducted the review/health check. (There was NO support received at all!!!) On the 14/11 the meeting set for 15/11 was delayed to the end of November and didn't take place until 5/12. Delay was by the Council.

2.22 - At the meeting between council and subgroup on 5/12 we were told by the council that they were commissioning a company to evaluate the work done by SCA and the process that was used. All of our suggestions were completely disregarded, and we were told that even moving the comparison periods was classed as a "material change" (see earlier regarding IW checking with legal about changing dates earlier, even though it was in the minutes that legal had said dates could be changed without implications) A formal response was sent to the council on 13/12. No Action PDF was received from this meeting.

WSTG raised the fact that westside was totally dark and appeared closed, still looking like a building site. We were informed no work will be done during Xmas period – suggestion for barriers to be rearranged in order to make it more welcoming and perhaps some Xmas lights as there was only 10 days of shopping remaining. It was disappointing as we were informed that event would be held to drum up Xmas trade, but delays in acquiring raw materials by contractor removed this possibility.

2.23 - Businesses were given less than 48 hours to respond to offer letters which stated initial payment. More importantly - businesses did not provide erroneous information! **SCA did not collate/present the information correctly! Errors are the responsibility of SCA and the fact that the council did not audit/check the work that they had done.**