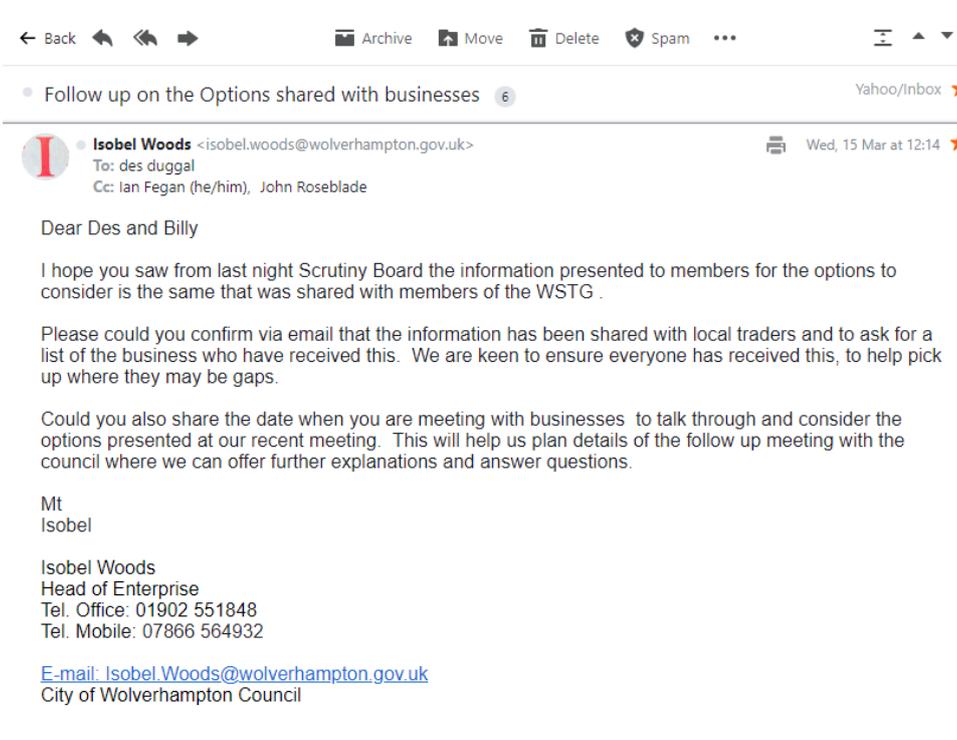
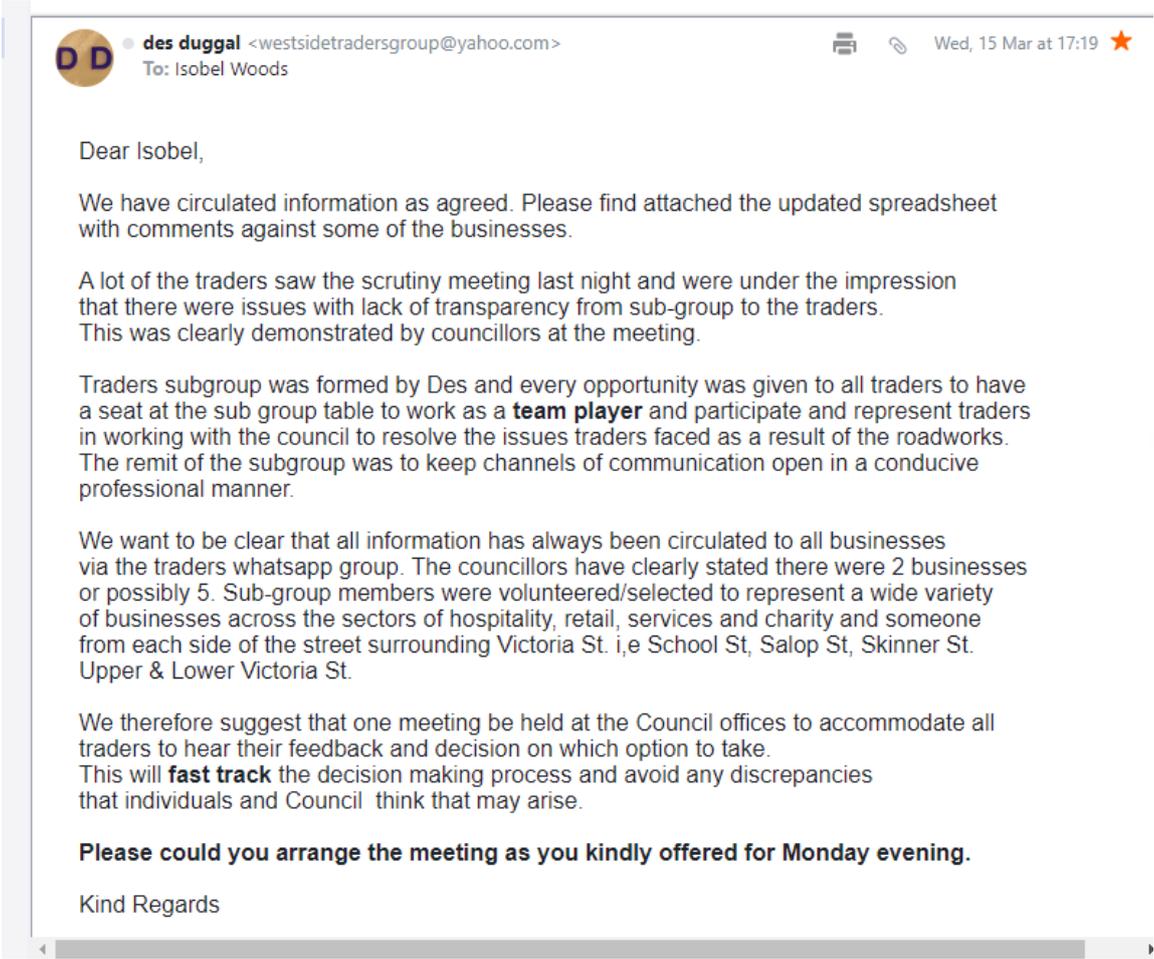


**WSTG-Followup-Scrutiny2May23-Detailed-Log**

<p>13<sup>th</sup> March Meeting held Council Offices</p>	<p>First insight of presentation of options where WSTG were informed of 2 options on the table. Either RSM or Relaunch. WSTG saw this as a <u>directed choice</u>, where so much time and money had been wasted (almost 18 months at present) and the delays culminating to ignoring hardship relief and presenting an option which was seen as “take it or leave it”. No figure was disclosed to WSTG as amount for Relaunch as Council knew this would have been categorically rejected.</p> <p>WSTG stated that we would ask businesses and feedback to Council concerns etc. The council agreed that they would host a meeting to present options to Westside businesses and answer any questions. This was supposedly to be a must as businesses are independent and WSTG could not make a decision for independent businesses.</p> <p>Councillor Simkins suggested attendance of WSTG/businesses to Scrutiny meeting or view online for 14<sup>th</sup> March.</p>
<p>14<sup>th</sup> March Scrutiny Panel held meeting to approve Relaunch amount.</p>	<p>This was viewed and attended, but not received well by WSTG.</p>
<p>15<sup>th</sup> March</p>	<p>Response from Isobel:</p>  <p>Dear Des and Billy</p> <p>I hope you saw from last night Scrutiny Board the information presented to members for the options to consider is the same that was shared with members of the WSTG .</p> <p>Please could you confirm via email that the information has been shared with local traders and to ask for a list of the business who have received this. We are keen to ensure everyone has received this, to help pick up where they may be gaps.</p> <p>Could you also share the date when you are meeting with businesses to talk through and consider the options presented at our recent meeting. This will help us plan details of the follow up meeting with the council where we can offer further explanations and answer questions.</p> <p>Mt Isobel</p> <p>Isobel Woods Head of Enterprise Tel. Office: 01902 551848 Tel. Mobile: 07866 564932</p> <p><a href="mailto:Isobel.Woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk">E-mail: Isobel.Woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a> City of Wolverhampton Council</p> <p>The City of Wolverhampton Council works flexibly to meet the needs of the services we provide, so you could be receiving this email at any time. However, we do not expect you to read and respond to this email outside of your own working arrangements.</p>

<p>WSTG Acknowledged Council with response 15<sup>th</sup> March</p>	<p><b>Council suggested a meeting to be held following our request on 13<sup>th</sup> March</b></p>  <p>Dear Isobel,</p> <p>We have circulated information as agreed. Please find attached the updated spreadsheet with comments against some of the businesses.</p> <p>A lot of the traders saw the scrutiny meeting last night and were under the impression that there were issues with lack of transparency from sub-group to the traders. This was clearly demonstrated by councillors at the meeting.</p> <p>Traders subgroup was formed by Des and every opportunity was given to all traders to have a seat at the sub group table to work as a <b>team player</b> and participate and represent traders in working with the council to resolve the issues traders faced as a result of the roadworks. The remit of the subgroup was to keep channels of communication open in a conducive professional manner.</p> <p>We want to be clear that all information has always been circulated to all businesses via the traders whatsapp group. The councillors have clearly stated there were 2 businesses or possibly 5. Sub-group members were volunteered/selected to represent a wide variety of businesses across the sectors of hospitality, retail, services and charity and someone from each side of the street surrounding Victoria St. i.e School St, Salop St, Skinner St. Upper &amp; Lower Victoria St.</p> <p>We therefore suggest that one meeting be held at the Council offices to accommodate all traders to hear their feedback and decision on which option to take. This will <b>fast track</b> the decision making process and avoid any discrepancies that individuals and Council think that may arise.</p> <p><b>Please could you arrange the meeting as you kindly offered for Monday evening.</b></p> <p>Kind Regards</p> <p>Again, we requested a date for the meeting with all traders of Westside. Again, the council ignored the request.</p> <p>This request again repeated that we should hold a meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March at council offices.</p>
<p>16<sup>th</sup> March</p>	<p>Response from Isobel Woods agreeing to host meeting with all businesses. Date moved from 20<sup>th</sup> March as this was not acknowledged.</p>

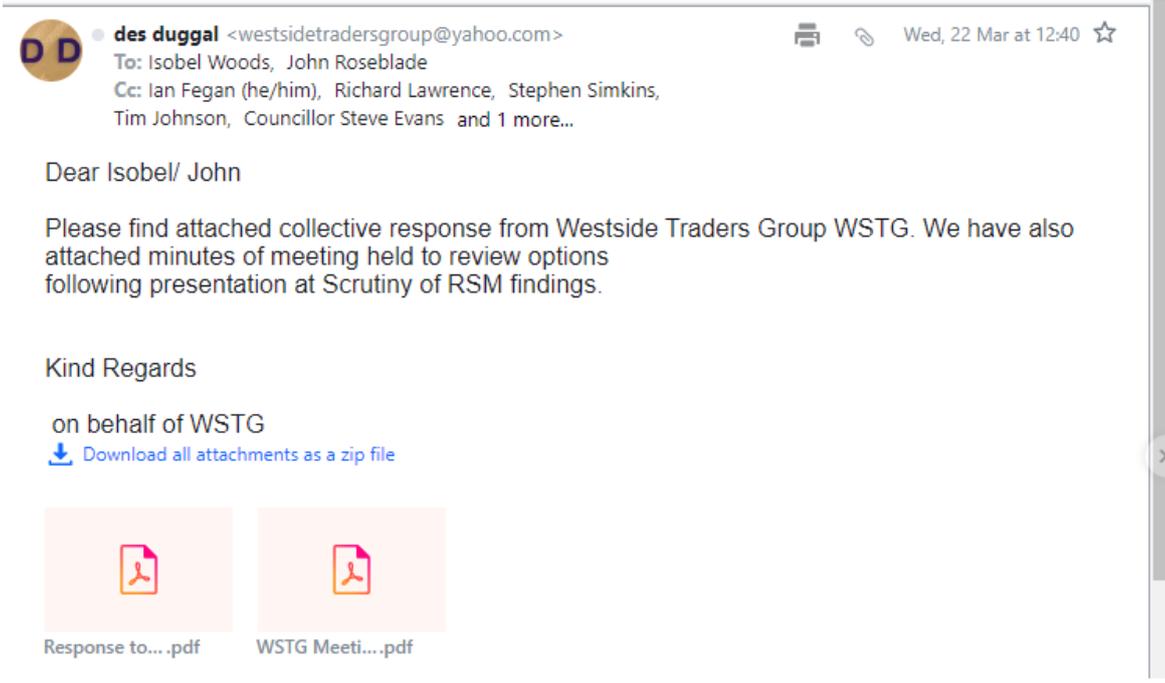
	<div data-bbox="343 224 406 291"></div> <p><b>Isobel Woods</b> &lt;isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt; <span style="float: right;">Thu, 16 Mar at 11:40 ★</span>  <b>To:</b> des duggal  <b>Cc:</b> Ian Fegan (he/him), Councillor Stephen Simkins, Councillor Steve Evans, John Roseblade</p> <p>Dear Des and Billy</p> <p>I would like to share that from an officers perspective and the cabinet members, Councillor Evans and Councillor Simkins we know the Traders group have been working closely with the council throughout this time.</p> <p>The views expressed at Scrutiny came from opposition councillors and don't represent those of the council. We are aware information is coming from one business in the area.</p> <p>Officers have provided regular updates to members and a detailed report on the joint working and business support was presented at the recent Economy and Growth Scrutiny panel 15 February. This is a public meeting and the report was received by councillors from both parties.</p> <p>Today, officers are out on Victoria Street delivering the presentation that will also be sent via email, to ensure every business has received this information. We have asked for responses to be received by Wednesday 22 March, which will be captured as part of the consideration for the council.</p> <p>Across the council officers are working to prepare the required approvals for the council, that will inform this process. This work will involve officers time next week, they must ensure they satisfy the councils governance arrangements. The council is happy to host a meeting with all the businesses and I will come back with details and a date.</p> <p>Mt Isobel</p> <p>Isobel Woods  Head of Enterprise  Tel. Office: 01902 551848  Tel. Mobile: 07866 564932</p> <p><a href="mailto:Isobel.Woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk">E-mail: Isobel.Woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>  City of Wolverhampton Council</p>
<p>16<sup>th</sup> March</p>	<p>Councillor Simkins acknowledged WSTG as being transparent with all traders.</p> <div data-bbox="319 1467 383 1534"></div> <p><b>Councillor Stephen Simkins</b> &lt;stephen.simkins@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt; <span style="float: right;">Thu, 16 Mar at 13:58 ★</span>  <b>To:</b> Isobel Woods, des duggal  <b>Cc:</b> Ian Fegan (he/him), Councillor Steve Evans, John Roseblade</p> <p>Dear Des / Billy, I know that the information has been passed on. I know that this group is transparent, in fact I did say so at the meeting.</p> <p>However, we have now got the right to make a case to the finances to give the support of the reopening grant.</p> <p>Steve</p> <p>Sent from <a href="#">Outlook for iOS</a></p>
<p>20<sup>th</sup> March  <b>response  from WSTG</b></p>	<p>WSTG expressed concerns and stated that a formal response will be forwarded to council and will need consideration.</p>

	<p> <b>des duggal</b> &lt;westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com&gt; <span style="float: right;">Mon, 20 Mar at 15:56 ★</span> To: Isobel Woods, Councillor Stephen Simkins Cc: Ian Fegan (he/him), Councillor Steve Evans, John Roseblade, Tim Johnson, Richard Lawrence</p> <p>Dear Stephen,</p> <p>Thank you for your response and bringing to our attention that you have the "right to make the case to finances to give the support of the reopening grant".</p> <p>The right for the case is just one aspect. The criteria for making the case to finances is where a clear understanding has to be transparent to businesses as well as how the "reopening grant" will be applied for by them and administered. Following the scrutiny link that was shared to all traders, there have been a number of concerns/points which we will follow-up in a formal response, which will need consideration.</p> <p>We have our traders meeting and will forward outcome of the vote for option 1 or 2. This will enable Council &amp; WSTG to have a clear understanding of the direction in how and what council will need to consider when making case for finances.</p> <p>Also a gentle reminder for Council to hold a meeting with all traders at a mutual agreeable time at their council offices as agreed at the meeting 13th March by Isobel and Cllr Simkins.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Des &amp; Billy on behalf of WSTG</p> <p><a href="#">Show original message</a></p>
<p><b>17<sup>th</sup> March</b></p>	<p>Minutes from 13<sup>th</sup> March Meeting sent which was not a true reflection of meeting. Clear omissions of what WSTG stated. It does not express that we stated that feedback will need to be considered. The council had agreed to speak to WSTG with options. Minutes received 17<sup>th</sup> March from council.</p> <p> <b>Sati Raju</b> &lt;sati.raju@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt; <span style="float: right;">Fri, 17 Mar at 16:05 ☆</span> To: westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com</p> <p><b>Sensitivity: PROTECT</b></p> <p>Hello Des and Billy,</p> <p>Please find attached the actions for your review following the Westside Traders subgroup Monday 13 March 2023.</p> <p>Please let Ian and Isobel know if you have any queries.</p> <p>Kindest Regards</p> <p>Sati Raju Executive Officer Executive Support Team City of Wolverhampton Council</p> <p>Tel. Office: 01902 556153</p> <p><a href="mailto:ExecutiveSupportCity@wolverhampton.gov.uk">ExecutiveSupportCity@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a> <a href="mailto:ExecSupportCentralResources@wolverhampton.gov.uk">ExecSupportCentralResources@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a></p>

See minutes below.

**Westside Sub-Group 13 March 2023**

Item	Action	Owner
<b>Works update</b>		
Issues with deliveries	Look at parking for lorries for deliveries Health & safety issues – double parking Public use bays for parking for free parking, there's a broken-down car and a warden told a member of the public they could park in the bays.	MP
	Parking permits required What furniture can Owen keep outside his premises – needs licensing to pick this up asap please P3's	CH
<b>Events</b>		
10 June Pride	Council to share Pride 23 promotional material with traders	KS
28 August Krazy Races	Find out what restrictions are on outdoor space from Krazy Races/how much space will business have to put furniture out etc.	IF
Christmas market events	Ian Fegan to pick up with Jo Huntbatch / events team re market providers to see what we can do with budget and also involve perhaps some live entertainment	IF
Victoria Street party for Kings Coronation	Look at potentially providing bunting across streets, street decorations and use small grants fund	IF
<b>Options appraisal</b>		
	Cllr Simkins requested everyone digest the options and comeback with feedback on way forward	Traders
<b>Next steps</b>		
	Report is published at 5pm for Scrutiny 14 March	
	How the slides/options documentation will be shared with all 47 traders: - Send email to Billy/Des who will hand deliver if they need to those without email address - Traders to check their junk folders	IW/Traders IW Traders
	Traders to meet Friday 17 March to discuss options and feedback	Traders
	Timeline setting out way forward to be developed Discussions with legal/finance and Cabinet on allocation of funding pot	IW IW
	Review and improvement plan to be produced at end once scheme has been delivered	JR/IW

<p><b>22<sup>nd</sup> March</b></p>	 <p><b>des duggal</b> &lt;westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com&gt;  <b>To:</b> Isobel Woods, John Roseblade  <b>Cc:</b> Ian Fegan (he/him), Richard Lawrence, Stephen Simkins, Tim Johnson, Councillor Steve Evans and 1 more...</p> <p>Dear Isobel/ John</p> <p>Please find attached collective response from Westside Traders Group WSTG. We have also attached minutes of meeting held to review options following presentation at Scrutiny of RSM findings.</p> <p>Kind Regards</p> <p>on behalf of WSTG  <a href="#">Download all attachments as a zip file</a></p> <p>Response to... .pdf      WSTG Meeti... .pdf</p> <p><b>2 attachments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Response to Council Options-2</li> <li>- WSTG Meeting 200323</li> </ul>
<p><b>22<sup>nd</sup> March</b></p>	<p><b>Received response from Tim Johnson -Documents received by all. Expected response from John Roseblade &amp; Isobel Woods, however, no response was received to WSTG feedback.</b></p>

	<p> <b>Tim Johnson</b> &lt;tim.johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt;  Wed, 22 Mar at 17:22 </p> <p>To: des duggal, Isobel Woods, John Roseblade Cc: Ian Fegan (he/him), Richard Lawrence, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Tim Johnson, Councillor Steve Evans and 1 more...</p> <p><b>Sensitivity: RESTRICTED</b></p> <p>Thank you.</p> <p>We are able to open these documents. So John and Isobel will respond.</p> <p>Kind regards</p> <p>Luce</p> <p>Lucy Spedding Executive Officer – Chief Executive Theme Executive Support Team City of Wolverhampton Council</p> <p>07901 643048 01902 554500 <a href="mailto:lucy.spedding@wolverhampton.gov.uk">lucy.spedding@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>23<sup>rd</sup> March</p>	<p><b>WSTG Feedback from traders meeting held Monday 20<sup>th</sup> where we requested council to attend and present options. No responses from council to date. Hence why it was raised at the Scrutiny 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.</b></p> <p><small>Forwarded message</small></p> <p>From: <b>Tunwalls</b> &lt;<a href="mailto:tunwallsenglishkitchen@gmail.com">tunwallsenglishkitchen@gmail.com</a>&gt; Date: Thu, 23 Mar 2023 at 16:00 Subject: Feedback Report To: &lt;<a href="mailto:Business.Development@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Business.Development@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>&gt;, &lt;<a href="mailto:john.roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk">john.roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>&gt;</p> <p>Dear John and team,</p> <p>The attached report is a compilation of feedback, comments and queries that traders have raised since the meeting held on Monday 20<sup>th</sup>.</p> <p>Hopefully this will assist you at the meeting when you speak to all the traders as I'm sure some of these questions will be asked again.</p> <p>If you have any queries or comments, please get in touch.</p> <p>Thanks again,</p> <p>Esme</p> <p> WSTG - FEE... .pdf 147 KB</p> <p><b>Attachment: WSTG-Feedback</b></p>

<b>24<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<p> ● <b>John Roseblade</b> &lt;john.roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt;  Fri, 24 Mar at 18:26 ☆</p> <p>To: des duggal, Isobel Woods Cc: Ian Fegan (he/him), Richard Lawrence, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Tim Johnson, Councillor Steve Evans and 1 more...</p> <p>Hi Des</p> <p>Thank you for the confirmation below and the unanimous decision to pursue option 2. Over the last few days we have been working up the proposals on that basis which we will put forward for approval. This will be done over the early days of next week and so I will be in touch again once I have this confirmation. I will address the further questions you have raised at that time.</p> <p>Rest assured that we will be working as quickly as possible to move this forward.</p> <p>I hope you have a good weekend.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>John</p> <p>John Roseblade Director of Resident Services Tel. Office: 01902 555755 Tel. Mobile: 07825 530368</p> <p><a href="mailto:John.Roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk">E-mail: John.Roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a> City of Wolverhampton Council</p>
<b>24<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<p> ● <b>des duggal</b> &lt;westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com&gt;  Fri, 24 Mar at 18:46 ☆</p> <p>To: John Roseblade</p> <p>Hi John Thank you for the update looking forward to a timely response. You enjoy your weekend too . Kind Regards Des</p>
<b>29<sup>th</sup> March</b>	<p> ● <b>Isobel Woods</b> &lt;isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt;   Wed, 29 Mar at 08:23 ☆</p> <p>To: des duggal Cc: Ian Fegan (he/him), John Roseblade, Councillor Stephen Simkins</p> <p>Hi Des and Billy</p> <p>Along with the information on the options for business support that have been shared with businesses on 16 March, please find attached the slides that from our meeting on 13 March, on the programme of works and the events programme.</p> <p>Mt Isobel</p> <p>Isobel Woods Head of Enterprise Tel. Office: 01902 551848 Tel. Mobile: 07866 564932</p> <p><a href="mailto:Isobel.Woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk">E-mail: Isobel.Woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a> City of Wolverhampton Council</p> <p><b>Isobel attached:</b> <b>13<sup>th</sup> March 2023 Victoria St Traders Comms and works.pptx</b></p>

<p><b>3<sup>rd</sup> April</b></p>	<p><b>WSTG Requested a copy of the RSM Report</b></p> <hr/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p><b>des duggal</b> &lt;westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com&gt; To: John Roseblade</p> </div> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>Mon, 3 Apr at 16:15 ☆</p> </div> </div> <p>Hi again John , Please can we have a copy of the RSM Report of findings. Kind Regards Des</p> <p><a href="#">Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone</a></p> <p><a href="#">Show original message</a></p>																																				
<p><b>4<sup>th</sup> April</b></p>	<p><b>WSTG came across following document:</b></p> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;"> <p>This report is PUBLIC [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]</p> </div> <div style="margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> <p style="text-align: center; margin: 0;">CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL</p> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; flex-grow: 1;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Special Urgent Decision</h2> </div> </div> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 30%;"><b>Report title</b></td> <td colspan="2">Urgent decision relating to City West Relaunch Grant Scheme</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Decision designation</b></td> <td colspan="2">AMBER</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b></td> <td colspan="2">Councillor Steve Simkins Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Key decision</b></td> <td colspan="2">Yes</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>In forward plan</b></td> <td colspan="2">No</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Wards affected</b></td> <td colspan="2">St Peters</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Accountable Director</b></td> <td colspan="2">Richard Lawrence Director of Regeneration</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Originating service</b></td> <td colspan="2">Enterprise</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Accountable employee</b></td> <td>Isobel Woods Tel Email</td> <td>Head of Enterprise 01902 551848 Isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Report to be/has been considered by</b></td> <td>Directorate Leadership Team</td> <td>27 March 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Strategic Executive Board</td> <td>22 March 2023</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Scrutiny Board</td> <td>14 March 2023</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Recommendations for decision:</b></p> <p>In accordance with the provision of article 12.9 in Part 2 of the Council's constitution, the Leader (or in his absence Deputy Leader) in consultation with the Chair of Scrutiny Board, Vice Chair of Scrutiny Board and Chief Executive authorises the steps listed below</p> <p>These matters are of immediate urgency making the prompt exercise of the powers of the Cabinet desirable and cannot await the next meeting of the Cabinet (26 April 2023).</p> <p>These decisions will be reported to the next meeting of the Cabinet.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Approve the use of the urgent action powers outlined in Part 12.9 of the Council's constitution detailed in paragraphs 2,1 regarding the use of Urgent Decision.</li> <li>2. Approve the City West Relaunch grant scheme, to support businesses in the Victoria Street area to relaunch their business and payments to eligible businesses as per the criteria set out in appendix 1.</li> <li>3. Approve the use of the Our City, Our Plan reserve up to £350,000 to support the City West Relaunch grant and the establishment of supplementary budgets.</li> </ol> </div>	<b>Report title</b>	Urgent decision relating to City West Relaunch Grant Scheme		<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER		<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Steve Simkins Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy		<b>Key decision</b>	Yes		<b>In forward plan</b>	No		<b>Wards affected</b>	St Peters		<b>Accountable Director</b>	Richard Lawrence Director of Regeneration		<b>Originating service</b>	Enterprise		<b>Accountable employee</b>	Isobel Woods Tel Email	Head of Enterprise 01902 551848 Isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk	<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Directorate Leadership Team	27 March 2023		Strategic Executive Board	22 March 2023		Scrutiny Board	14 March 2023
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	<p style="text-align: center;">This report is PUBLIC [NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED]</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Inclusive City Economy and Cabinet Member for Resources and Digital City in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and the Director of Finance to allocate any balances from the £350,000 to provide additional further necessary business support once all payments have been made to eligible businesses.</li> <li>5. Note that given the 'go-live' date for this scheme is within the designated pre-election period of heightened political sensitivity where public communications activity is restricted, ahead of the all-out elections in the city on May 4 2023, it is proposed that information regarding the scheme is limited specifically to the businesses affected and that any such communication is marked as private and confidential with further communication provided after the end of the pre-election period.</li> <li>6. Note that businesses may be able to receive Business Rate relief through established processes such as hardship relief and have been encouraged to contact the Business Rates team if they find themselves in financial difficulty.</li> </ol>
<p>6<sup>th</sup> April</p>	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="width: 25%; border-right: 1px solid #ccc; padding-right: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meetings, agendas and minutes</li> <li>Calendar</li> <li>Meetings</li> <li>Decisions</li> <li>Forthcoming Decisions</li> <li>Forward Plans</li> <li>Document Library</li> <li>Search documents</li> <li>Subscribe to updates</li> <li><b>Democracy</b></li> <li>Your Councillors</li> <li>Consultations</li> <li>Council's Constitution</li> <li>Council's election results</li> <li>ePetitions</li> <li>Outside bodies</li> <li>Your MPs</li> <li>What's new</li> </ul> </div> <div style="width: 75%; padding-left: 10px;"> <h2 style="margin: 0;">Issue details</h2> <p style="margin: 0;">Urgent decision relating to City West Relaunch Grant Scheme</p> <p style="margin: 0;"> <a href="#">Issue Details</a> <a href="#">Issue History</a> <a href="#">Related Decisions</a> </p> <p style="margin: 0;">To agree the City West Relaunch grant scheme and provide business support aimed at eligible businesses who may have been adversely impacted by the city west public realm work in Victoria Street, Salop Street School Street and North Street.</p> <p style="margin: 0;">The payment offers small businesses who have been open during the works and intend to remain in the city, a one-off amount to relaunch their trading activities and seize upon the opportunities presented by the multi-million-pound investment in improved public realm and public spaces.</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Decision type:</b> Non-key</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Decision status:</b> Recommendations Approved</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Notice of proposed decision first published:</b> 03/04/2023</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Decision due:</b> 31 Mar 2023 by Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Lead member:</b> Deputy Leader: Inclusive City Economy</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Lead director:</b> John Roseblade, Director of Resident Services</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Contact:</b> Isobel Woods, Head of Enterprise Email: <a href="mailto:isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk">isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>.</p> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Decisions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 03/04/2023 - Urgent decision relating to City West Relaunch Grant Scheme</li> </ul> <p style="margin: 0;"><b>Documents</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urgent decision relating to City West Relaunch Grant Scheme PDF 128 KB</li> </ul> </div> </div>
	<p><b>WSTG came across this briefing note Public Realm - Support Package to Businesses dated 15<sup>th</sup> February. This was the <u>first time WSTG saw this and can categorically state that it was not received very well at all.</u></b></p>

INTERNAL - PROTECT

# Briefing Note

CITY OF  
WOLVERHAMPTON  
COUNCIL

Title: Public Realm Support Packages for Businesses Date: 15 February 2023

Prepared by: Isobel Woods, Head of Enterprise

Intended Audience: Internal  Partner organisation  Public  Confidential

## 1. Purpose or recommendation

- 1.1 To update City Economy Scrutiny Panel on the business engagement and support undertaken before and during the city centre public realm improvement works along Victoria Street and surrounding roads.
- 1.2 To outline the approach for business support in future phases of the city centre public realm improvements works.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 The regeneration of the West side of the city centre, aimed at arresting the decline in retail footfall and transforming the environment to bring more homes, jobs, events and shops, has been a significant priority since the publication of the City Centre Area Action Plan in 2016 and has been referenced in subsequent Investment documents as a key opportunity site.
- 2.2 The Council has proactively sought to assemble a strategic regeneration opportunity through land acquisition and subsequent enabling works such as demolition to present a 'development-ready' opportunity. City Centre West will represent a comprehensive mixed-use masterplan approach to bring the site forward in context with wider transformation and plans for the city centre.
- 2.3 City Centre West is identified as a priority project forming part of a continued public sector partnership approach with the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities and Homes England with a view to accelerating delivery, enhancing the quality of the project and maximizing outcomes for Wolverhampton.
- 2.4 The public realm works are an essential part of the overall masterplan and have been planned over a number of years. Following completion of concept plans for the work, and Cabinet endorsement to consult on the project in September 2018, engagement with the public, businesses and stakeholders began in October 2018. During this time extensive consultation was undertaken with a variety of specific interest groups including local businesses, taxis, disabled groups, Wolverhampton BID and cycle forum.

- 2.5 By the end of 2018 all businesses in the phase 1 (Victoria Street) and phase 2 (Queen Square / Lichfield Street) areas that were directly affected by the proposals were contacted on an individual basis.
- 2.6 In March 2020 work on the project paused as the country went into lockdown during the pandemic. Whilst detailed design work and business case development was undertaken during the early months of the year, contact with businesses was limited as most premises were shut down and only a limited amount of contact via email was possible.
- 2.7 As a response to the pandemic and to help facilitate social distancing and increase walking and cycling as a means to travel safely, the Council was mandated to create wider open spaces for safe walking and cycling routes. This led to the early intervention to close Victoria Street to traffic other than time restricted servicing and as part of the Government Reopening the High Street initiative, pavement build outs were created in Victoria Street to assist the hospitality sector to reopen safely with extra areas for outdoor dining. In Lichfield Street, Queen Square and Darlington Street pavements were widened, bus stops were built out, traffic movement restricted to one way westbound and a new segregated cycleway was created as part of these Emergency Active Travel Fund measures.
- 2.8 In July 2021 preliminary enabling works began on site. Occupiers of affected areas were informed by letter drop of the works and traffic management arrangements around the area. Media coverage through the Express and Star and Council social media channels also allowed for a wider audience to be made aware of the works. Ongoing communication with key stakeholders continued through the usual channels including BID meetings and social media.
- 2.9 In November 2021, prior to the start on site of the main contract works, all occupiers in the area were visited and contact / information cards distributed to ensure that occupiers had 7 day per week contact details for the Customer Relationship Manager (or her team). The project website was fully up and running and social media links went live.
- 2.10 On 7 April 2022 officers were invited by the businesses on Victoria Street to attend a business meeting. The meeting had over 50 local traders, ward councillors, Cabinet Member for City Economy and the local MP. At this meeting the business agreed a subgroup with a chair that would represent the businesses in the area and provide a conduit to keep the wider network informed. This subgroup would meet regularly with representatives from the council and agreed to take on the responsibility to feedback information and actions, to and from the meeting.
- 2.11 On 9 May the Cabinet Member for City Economy, Assistant Director for City Transport and Environment, council officers leading the public realm improvements works project, Head of Enterprise and the Director of Wolverhampton City centre BID, met with 10 businesses of the subgroup. At this meeting information on the programme of works and forthcoming events was shared. Businesses fed back the impacts of the work on their premises and access issues that were relayed to the main contractor Eurovia.
- 2.12 The meeting on 9 May also invited businesses to shape the approach for business support. The council outlined that this work needed to be undertaken by an independent party. Traders agreed that it was important the offer included a package of support; advice and guidance on current business needs, support to help the businesses prepare for when the

	<p>works completed, and a financial review. Details of the tender specification were shared with the traders, who provided oversight and input.</p> <p>2.13 At the same meeting the council also shared the point that it was not legally required to provide compensation but that it was committed to supporting those businesses where there was clear evidence of impact and financial loss. The council highlighted that it had to ensure it uses taxpayers money legally, appropriately and in their best interests.</p> <p>2.14 The next meeting took place on 6 June. At this meeting with the traders, officers provided an update on the progress with the tender, information on the programme of works and the city centre events programme, including the forthcoming Commonwealth Games and Krazy Races. Officers also stated the council's commitment to invest £20,000 in a future events programme for Victoria Street upon completion of the works. Officers responded to requests from the traders to promote footfall to this area of the city. A social media campaign and signs around the city, saying Victoria Street 'businesses are open' were actioned and have carried on throughout the time of the works. Later in June, the council procured a local business, SCA Consultancy, to undertake the business support.</p> <p>2.15 On 23 June a representative from SCA met with the subgroup, supported by Head of Enterprise, to talk through the approach to engage with businesses and to agree the reporting timeline period for the financial information. The financial information would be captured in a cashflow statement and would identify if a business had evidence of a financial loss arising from the public realm improvement works.</p> <p>2.16 The decision to use a cashflow statement for the financial evidence followed a discussion with the traders. It had been identified that business owners in the area had varying accounts and ways of recording their financial position. To bring a fair and consistent approach, and enable independent businesses to participate, it was agreed with the traders that the cashflow statement was the best approach. Both the Council and traders were keen for SCA to begin their work swiftly and so it was agreed that the financial assessment period would be from January 2021 – September 2021, the 9 months before the works commenced, and October 2022 – June 2022, the 9 months from the start of the works up to that point in time</p> <p>2.17 The meeting on 28 June with the council and traders was cancelled at the trader's request, because a meeting with the business consultant was planned to take place later that week.</p> <p>2.18 On 30 June SCA consultancy attended a business meeting with local traders from Victoria Street and areas where the works were taking place. Around 45 businesses attended, they received information on the engagement with SCA, the service they would offer and the financial evidence for the time periods, set by the traders sub-group.</p> <p>2.19 During July SCA, made contact with local traders in the area. From the 74 independent businesses who had been identified, 52 came forward to meet with SCA.</p> <p>2.20 On 26 July, the council and traders met. The meeting was attended by SCA who fed back the number of responses and shared challenges contacting some traders, having emailed, phoned and walked around the area. The traders were asked when they wanted to bring to a close the business engagement activity. They made it clear this was to be Friday 29 July and confirmed they would inform all the businesses of this deadline.</p>
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- 2.21 On 1<sup>st</sup> August SCA concluded engagement with the businesses in the area where the public realm works were underway.
- 2.22 The meeting on 22 August was cancelled at the trader's request
- 2.23 At the meeting on 26 September SCA presented their findings to the group. From the 74 independent businesses within the identified area, 52 engaged with the consultants, of these 11 showed financial evidence of a drop in turnover.
- 2.24 On 12 October individual letters were hand-delivered to every business who had participated in the business review with details of the financial information for the first and second period, showing the percentage difference.
- 2.25 On the 17 October, after the findings of the initial business review work had been shared, the traders presented concerns to the council regarding the financial review process methodology. Comments were received that businesses had not been able to provide all the financial information which had been requested by SCA
- 2.26 On 28 October the council hand delivered letters to the 52 businesses who had taken part, to invite any missing information for the work which had been undertaken by SCA, to come forward. It was made clear that this information was for the cashflow statement.
- 2.21 On 7 November 2022, the council met with the traders. The traders presented a new approach for the financial review they wanted the council to undertake. They requested that the financial review should be re-done with different financial information and over a revised period, to include the three months since the original financial review with SCA had concluded in July. At no point was December 2022 or the forthcoming Christmas trading period mentioned. Some concerns were raised about the level of support received and this matter is being examined.
- 2.22 Although traders were originally involved in agreeing the terms of the initial review, the council acknowledged the feedback and subsequently commissioned, at pace, a specialist firm of accountants, RSM to review the process and methodology. They were fast-tracked through procurement and started their work before Christmas. They have experience of working on previous similar schemes, both here in the city and West Midlands. This work is being progressed and the council is expecting a report on their findings shortly.
- 2.23 On 16 December the council made disruption payments to 5 of the 11 businesses who had evidenced a loss of turnover. The remaining six businesses did not meet eligibility requirements either because they provided erroneous information when validated or ceased trading.
- 3. Current Position**
- 3.1 The council is currently awaiting the outcome of the review from RSM which is due early February.
- 3.2 With regards to political oversight, updates on the public realm works have been shared at Economy and Growth Scrutiny Panel in October 2022, Residents, Housing and

	<p>Communities Scrutiny Panel on 17 November, at Scrutiny Board on 27 January 2023, and also at Full Council in January 2023.</p> <p>3.3 A report on the outcome of the consultation on the Phase 2 (Lichfield Street / Queen Square) of the city improvement programmes is due at Cabinet on 22 February 2023. The report recognises the need to have early engagement with businesses and regular channels of communication between all parties – council businesses and the contractor will be established. This will inform businesses about the programme of works and help to identify business support that may be needed.</p> <p>3.4 The RSM review work will also provide a robust methodology that can be applied to future schemes, necessary to the transformation of the city centre, which may impact upon local businesses.</p> <p>4. Going Forward</p> <p>4.1 Current business support is undergoing significant transformation as EU funded programmes come to a close. The council is working with key partners and stakeholders including the WMCA to establish a new local employer support programme, which will meet the needs of the businesses in the city.</p> <p>4.2 The council will review the report recommendations made by the financial experts currently reviewing the methodology and approach and this will inform future policy.</p> <p><b>Following the reading of the briefing note and what WSTG witnessed at the scrutiny panel we had no choice to basically present our side of what WSTG has encountered without it being watered down and misconstrued and not give a true representation of the facts.</b></p>
6 <sup>th</sup> April	WSTG Formal address to raise major concerns.

WSTG Response to Relaunch Grant 11 Yahoo/Sent ☆

 **des duggal** <westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com> 🖨️ 🔗 Thu, 6 Apr at 23:41 ☆

To: Tim Johnson, Labour Leaders Office, Richard Lawrence, Stephen Simkins, Ian Fegan (he/him) and 3 more...

Cc: martin.stevens@wolverhampton.gov.uk, paul.sweet@wolverhampton.gov.uk, Ellis.Turrell@wolverhampton.gov.uk, Simon.Bennett@wolverhampton.gov.uk, Lynn Moran, Cherry Shine, jane.stevenson.mp@parliament.uk, mcfaddenp@parliament.uk, wendy.thompson@wolverhampton.gov.uk, Stuart Anderson, Sohail.khan@wolverhampton.gov.uk, cllrsweetman@wolverhampton.gov.uk [Hide](#)

**To Isobel Woods, John Roseblade**

**CC: Tim Johnson**  
Ian Brookfield  
Richard Lawrence  
Stephen Simkins  
Ian Fegan  
Steve Evans  
Lynn Moran

**MP Stuart Anderson**  
MP Pat Mcfadden  
MP Jane Stevenson

**Wendy Thompson**  
Simon Bennett

**Cherry Shine - BID**

Scrutiny Panel:

**Contact: Martin Stevens**  
**Chair: Paul Sweet**  
**Vice Chair: Ellis Turrell**

Economy and Growth Scrutiny Panel

**Contact: Martin Stevens**  
**Chair: Jacqueline Sweetman**  
**Vice Chair: Sohail Khan**

**URGENT ATTENTION**

**Re: City Centre West Relaunch Grant Scheme**

[Download all attachments as a zip file](#)

 Response to... .pdf 261.8kB	 Enc1- Westsi... .pdf 243.2kB	 Enc2- Wests... .pdf 141.1kB	 Enc3- STATE... .pdf 1010.9kB	 Enc4- Public... .pdf 321.7kB
 Enc5- WSTG... .pdf 120.4kB				

**We have included attachments:-**

**Response to Council Options-3 4Apr23-2-5ENCs**

**Enc1-WestsideRetailerMeetingMinutes7Apr22**

**Enc2-WSTG Subgroup Council Meeting 9.May.22Council**

**Enc3- STATEMENT-OF-FACT-TO-COUNCIL**

**Enc4- Public Realm Support Packages for Businesses (Briefing Note) - 15 February 2023**

**Enc5- WSTG response to Enc 4 – Briefing Note 15.Feb.23**

**I have included Enc5 here as WSTG feel information is not presented in the interest of WSTG.**

**ENC 5:** WSTG – In response to Enc4 : Public Realm Support Packages for Businesses Date: 15 February 2023 Briefing Note

**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.**

<p><b>11<sup>th</sup> April</b></p>	<div data-bbox="323 342 1345 967" style="border: 1px solid #ccc; padding: 10px;">  <p><b>Councillor Ellis Turrell</b> &lt;ellis.turrell@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt; <span style="float: right;">Tue, 11 Apr at 11:54 ☆</span></p> <p>To: David Pattison  Cc: Tim Johnson, Councillor Wendy Thompson,  Councillor Simon Bennett, westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com</p> <p>Dear David</p> <p>In light of the very serious concerns raised by the Westside Traders Group about the Relaunch Grant Scheme, can I request an urgent meeting of Scrutiny Board where the traders group can come and speak to us directly about this important issue.</p> <p>Kind regards  Ellis</p> <p><b>Councillor Ellis Turrell</b>  Conservative Councillor for Tettenhall Wightwick  Vice Chair of Scrutiny Board  City of Wolverhampton Council</p> <p>Mobile: 07971 843840  Email: <a href="mailto:ellis.turrell@wolverhampton.gov.uk">ellis.turrell@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a></p> <p style="text-align: right;">&gt; Show original message</p> </div>
<p><b>13<sup>th</sup> April</b></p>	<p><b>WSTG understood that the Council refused the above request by the vice-chair in relation to concerns raised by WSTG.</b></p>

<p><b>13<sup>th</sup> April</b></p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="width: 60%;">  <p><b>Tim Johnson</b> &lt;tim.johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk&gt;                      To: des duggal                      Cc: Labour Leaders Office, Richard Lawrence, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Ian Fegan (he/him), Councillor Steve Evans, John Roseblade, Isobel Woods, Councillor Paul Sweet, Councillor Ellis Turrell, Councillor Simon Bennett, Councillor Lynne Moran, cherry, jane.stevenson.mp@parliament.uk, mcfaddenp@parliament.uk, Councillor Wendy Thompson, Stuart Anderson, Councillor Sohail Khan, Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman, Martin Stevens Hide</p> </div> <div style="width: 35%; text-align: right;">  Thu, 13 Apr at 15:30  </div> </div> <p style="color: red; margin-top: 10px;"><b>Sensitivity: RESTRICTED</b></p> <p>Dear WSTG</p> <p>Thank you for your message that was received at 23.41 on the 6 April.</p> <p>I want to reiterate the intention behind the relaunch grant scheme is to offer eligible businesses a one-off amount to relaunch their trading activities and seize upon the opportunities presented by the multi-million-pound investment in improved public realm and public spaces. It is not intended to recompense for loss or hardship.</p> <p>It has been developed following consideration at Scrutiny Board on the 14 March and unanimous support from the traders to pursue the option of a one off payment. The Urgent Cabinet decision supporting the scheme was approved following due process which included the consultation of the Chair and Vice Chair of Scrutiny Board.</p> <p>The scheme involves the substantial investment of £350,000 of taxpayers money into the direct support of the businesses in question, despite there being no legal obligation for the council to do so.</p> <p>As has been mentioned local businesses can also apply for a form of Business Rate relief and support that could include hardship relief, and a wider package of business support is underway as officers begin to visit businesses to look at other programmes of business support.</p> <p>With all of this in mind it is considered that the offer is fair and constitutes justifiable use of public funds.</p> <p>This is the councils final position so I would encourage all businesses that are eligible to apply for the funding before the scheme closes on 12 May.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>Tim Johnson  <i>Chief Executive</i></p>
<p><b>19<sup>th</sup> April</b></p>	<p><b>In response to Tim Johnson.</b></p>

	<div data-bbox="343 219 411 286"> </div> <div data-bbox="422 219 925 250"> <p><b>des duggal</b> &lt;westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com&gt;</p> </div> <div data-bbox="1066 219 1417 250"> <p>Wed, 19 Apr at 00:15 ☆</p> </div> <div data-bbox="443 250 1021 548"> <p>To: Tim Johnson              Cc: Labour Leaders Office, Richard Lawrence, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Ian Fegan (he/him), Councillor Steve Evans, John Roseblade, Isobel Woods, Councillor Paul Sweet, Councillor Ellis Turrell, Councillor Simon Bennett, Councillor Lynne Moran, cherry, jane.stevenson.mp@parliament.uk, mcfaddenp@parliament.uk, Councillor Wendy Thompson, Stuart Anderson, Councillor Sohail Khan, Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman, Martin Stevens Hide</p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 577 481 609"> <p>Dear Tim</p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 638 1385 698"> <p>Further to email received 13th April, we have included a response from WSTG, with a 3 further enclosures.</p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 728 534 759"> <p>Kind Regards</p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 788 662 819"> <p>On and behalf of WSTG</p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 862 746 922"> <p>&gt; <a href="#">Show original message</a>              ↓ <a href="#">Download all attachments as a zip file</a></p> </div> <div data-bbox="370 967 1257 1160"> <table border="0"> <tr> <td data-bbox="370 967 574 1102"> </td> <td data-bbox="598 967 802 1102"> </td> <td data-bbox="826 967 1031 1102"> </td> <td data-bbox="1054 967 1259 1102"> </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="370 1102 574 1160"> <p>Response to... .pdf 205kB</p> </td> <td data-bbox="598 1102 802 1160"> <p>Enc6 -Wests... .pdf 1.2MB</p> </td> <td data-bbox="826 1102 1031 1160"> <p>Enc7 -Wests... .pdf 1.8MB</p> </td> <td data-bbox="1054 1102 1259 1160"> <p>Enc8- Minut... .pdf 937.5kB</p> </td> </tr> </table> </div> <div data-bbox="319 1205 1452 1236"> <p><b>Formal response to Tim John together with another 4 further attachments sent in response:-</b></p> </div> <div data-bbox="319 1272 1005 1415"> <p><b>Response to Council Options-16Apr-3WSTG-Resp</b>  <b>Enc6- Westside Business Survey 31st Oct 2022</b>  <b>Enc7- Westside traders actions issues update June 28 22</b>  <b>Enc8- Minutes 5th Dec 2022 WSTG-Response To Council</b></p> </div>					<p>Response to... .pdf 205kB</p>	<p>Enc6 -Wests... .pdf 1.2MB</p>	<p>Enc7 -Wests... .pdf 1.8MB</p>	<p>Enc8- Minut... .pdf 937.5kB</p>
<p>Response to... .pdf 205kB</p>	<p>Enc6 -Wests... .pdf 1.2MB</p>	<p>Enc7 -Wests... .pdf 1.8MB</p>	<p>Enc8- Minut... .pdf 937.5kB</p>						
<p>19<sup>th</sup> April</p>	<p>WSTG forwarded all correspondence with enclosures to Cabinet Members for their address to the situation.</p>								



**des duggal** <westsidetradersgroup@yahoo.com>



Wed, 19 Apr at 00:45 ☆

To: paula.brookfield@wolverhampton.gov.uk,  
Chris.Burden@wolverhampton.gov.uk,  
Beverley.Momenabadi@wolverhampton.gov.uk,  
linda.leach@wolverhampton.gov.uk,  
jasbir.jaspal@wolverhampton.gov.uk,  
bhupinder.gakhal@wolverhampton.gov.uk,  
Obaida.Ahmed@wolverhampton.gov.uk Hide

Dear Sir/Madam

We are writing to bring to your attention, issues that are being encountered by Westside and the devastating impact of roadworks on the business traders and their livelihoods since Nov 2021. Following scrutiny meeting held 14th March it became apparent that Westside have been misled by Council and that there has been a gross injustice in the misrepresentation of facts.

We are requesting support from the cabinet members to address this as matters were highlighted to Council members, MPs, Scrutiny Panels and others.

We have forwarded email and enclosures for your perusal together with the most recent email response following a reply from Tim Johnson date 13th April. We feel very strongly that our voices are not being heard.

Kind Regards

Westside Traders Group (WSTG)

Response to Council Options-3-4Apr23  
Enc 1-5

Response to Council Options - 16Apr-3-WSTG  
Enc 6-8

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1.8MB



Enc8- Minut... .pdf  
937.5kB

21<sup>st</sup> April

Response from Tim Johnson



● **Tim Johnson** <tim.johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk>

📄 Fri, 21 Apr at 14:36 ☆

To: des duggal

Cc: Labour Leaders Office, Richard Lawrence, Councillor Stephen Simkins, Ian Fegan (he/him), Councillor Steve Evans, John Roseblade, Isobel Woods, Councillor Paul Sweet, Councillor Ellis Turrell, Councillor Simon Bennett, Councillor Lynne Moran, cherry, jane.stevenson.mp@parliament.uk, mcfaddenp@parliament.uk, Councillor Wendy Thompson, Stuart Anderson, Councillor Sohail Khan, Councillor Jacqueline Sweetman, Martin Stevens, Tim Johnson Hide

**Sensitivity: RESTRICTED**

Dear WSTG,

Thank you for your response to my message which I received on 19 April.

Whilst I acknowledge that you may still have issues, I firmly believe we now need to put our collective energies into ensuring businesses benefit from the support on offer. Once the deadline has past, no new schemes will be created and no new money will be made available. We want to ensure that as many businesses as possible benefit from the £350,000 funding pot put aside for this purpose. Indeed, 18 businesses have now already applied for Relaunch Grant support.

In terms of the points you have raised, I would like to summarise my responses as follows:

- The Scrutiny Board meeting on 14 March included an agenda item for a 'verbal' update to councillors on Victoria Street Business Support. The presentation, which was shared with WSTG the day before, was used to update councillors on the full position for complete openness and transparency. This included the details of RSM's feedback and their recommendations for a potential future scheme. It also included the option of the Relaunch Grant and set out that traders had agreed to feedback on the two options by 22 March. For complete transparency, the presentation to Scrutiny Board was shared with councillors, the public and WSTG on 14 March on the council's website. It is also important to note that scrutiny is not a decision-making body – that power rests with the Council's Cabinet which ultimately approved the approach after careful consideration
- Information on the two proposed support options were shared with *all* traders soon after the Scrutiny Board meeting. WSTG provided feedback on the unanimously preferred option on 22 March. The Council then wrote out to all traders to begin to implement the support package. This included personal visits to all traders and numerous options to ask questions / raise issues with the business support team. Indeed, we had a large number and have responded to all of these. So, we would contend that traders have had significant opportunities to ask questions and raise concerns

- I want to be clear again, that the Council has **no legal responsibility to provide support** in these circumstances and that the support we always intended to provide and, indeed are now providing through the grant scheme, is categorically **not** compensation and was never intended to be compensation
- Whilst some traders may disagree with the size of the grant payment, the total amount of funding available has been determined by the Council's Cabinet as previously mentioned. It is a significant sum of tax-payers money - £350,000 in total for the grants alone. This amount is proportionate and non-negotiable and will be evenly spread between eligible businesses to benefit more traders
- We have always accepted that the investment in the area may have had an impact on trade, that's why we have listened to traders at every stage of the process and have put funding into business support. I would categorically disagree that there has been no consultation. Comprehensive evidence of consultation undertaken by both Eurovia and the Council has previously been provided to WSTG.
- The cost of the SCA review was not £50k, it was £16,000 and led to five businesses in need receiving urgent funding in December 2022 of £5,000 each. WSTG's concerns about the SCA review and request to change the assessment window led to the commissioning of experts RSM. RSM's recommendations were professionally and methodologically rigorous and robust and were applied to other schemes in the West Midlands which we explained to WSTG. The implications of using the RSM methodology – which the Council would have pursued if traders had opted for this – would have taken a considerable amount of time and businesses may have had to wait years to receive financial support as the eligibility criteria and information required would have been extremely challenging for many traders to comply with and would have excluded many from any financial support.
- The relaunch grant is not a U-turn. It is a pragmatic and swift solution to the issues raised by traders. It's backed by a significant £350,000 sum of tax-payers money and aims to provide fast support to traders. Again, I want to reiterate the intention behind the relaunch grant is to offer eligible businesses a one-off amount to relaunch their trading activities and seize upon the opportunities presented by the multi-million-pound investment in improved public realm and public spaces. It is not intended to recompense for loss or hardship.
- Since the scheme went live on 5 April 2023 18 businesses have come forward with their application. As of today, 2 businesses who have provided the requested information have been approved and will be paid this week.
  - The change in status of the report scheduled for cabinet on 24 April was because it was brought forward to be an Urgent Decision. This fast tracked the decision to avoid delays in getting the support in place.
- You mention that WSTG will 'go to the press' if you do not get a satisfactory response. I hope that the information I have provided clarifies things but want to stress that any decision to go to the press is entirely a decision for WSTG. Although this will simply serve to exacerbate the

	<p>situation, it will not resolve anything, and the Council will of course reserve the right to respond in full.</p> <p>Once again, with all of this in mind it is considered that the offer is fair, proportionate and constitutes a justifiable use of public funds. The Relaunch Grant Scheme and wider business support offer remains the council's final position. I would ask that you again encourage all WSTG businesses that are eligible to apply for the funding before the scheme closes. On that point I am conscious that we do have bank holidays between now and the existing closing date of the 12 May. With this in mind we are extending the closing date to the 31 May with the intention that this should give sufficient time for all eligible companies to make their applications. I do have to reiterate that the funding will not be available after this date.</p> <p>My sincere hope is that we can all look forward and establish this area as a thriving part of our City Centre.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>Tim</p> <p>Tim Johnson Chief Executive City of Wolverhampton Council Email: <a href="mailto:Tim.Johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Tim.Johnson@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01902 554500</p>
<b>27<sup>th</sup> April</b>	<p>WSTG were made aware that a special scrutiny meeting was to take place on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.</p> <hr/> <p> <b>John Roseblade</b> &lt;<a href="mailto:john.roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk">john.roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>&gt; To: des duggal</p> <p style="text-align: right;"> Thu, 27 Apr at 18:23 </p> <p>Hi Des and Billy</p> <p>I am sure you will have heard but I wanted to make sure you were aware of the Scrutiny meeting that has been arranged for next week. The subject of the westside relaunch grant payment will be going to an extraordinary meeting of Scrutiny Board on the evening of the 2 May at 6pm.</p> <p>The focus of the meeting will be the actual amount being offered. There will be an opportunity for up to 2 traders to address the Board and this is on the invitation and discretion of the Chair.</p> <p>If you would like to nominate those that you would like to speak please let me know and I can get our Democratic services to make those arrangements.</p> <p>Happy to talk this through tomorrow if that helps.</p> <p>Regards</p> <p>John Roseblade Director of Resident Services Tel. Office: 01902 555755 Tel. Mobile: 07825 530368</p> <p><a href="mailto:John.Roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk">E-mail: John.Roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a> City of Wolverhampton Council</p>

	<p><b>WSTG did express for the whole of the subgroup to attend or at least 3-4 members. We heard nothing from the council</b></p>
<p><b>2<sup>nd</sup> May</b></p>	<p><b>WSTG attended Scrutiny meeting where they presented concerns. Unfortunately, it was recommended that another date be set by which time newly elected scrutiny board would have all correspondence to be sent to all members so that they could scrutinize and make recommendations. However, 2 members of the WSTG were allowed to present.</b></p> <p><b>Find attached a copy of the presentation by WSTG Bivir Chander-Kumar &amp; Esme Stackhouse</b></p> <p><b>WSTG responded to the <u>briefing note dated 27<sup>th</sup> April</u> which has been marked as Enc 9</b></p> <p><b>This was presented verbally at the Urgent Scrutiny held 2<sup>nd</sup> May.</b></p>
	<p><b><u>Enc9 : WSTG Response to Briefing Note : 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023</u></b></p> <p>1.3 The 5k that has been offered is an insult. Up until Dec 2022 we were under the impression that Westside businesses would be receiving financial hardship relief because of the impact of roadworks during Nov 2021 – to date.</p> <p>2.1 – Point refers to bringing in more homes, jobs, events and shops. What about retaining shops and not losing established businesses and branded shops like Toni &amp; Guy, Le Monde to name but a few.</p> <p>2.2 – No consultation taken place with individual businesses as to the extent of the roadworks. No impact analysis or assessment of the logistics of the roadworks.</p> <p>2.4 – Various Councillors, Deputy Leader, BID Team, MP Stuart Anderson and various other council representatives were invited to attend a meeting organised by Westside businesses at Equinox, Victoria St. to address the issue they had been facing since Nov 2021 in footfall reduction as a consequence of the roadworks. A document was presented to the council listing numerous issues. The meeting was also attended by over 40 local businesses.</p> <p>2.8 – We were unaware of the 50k being applied for as business support. We were told by Isobel that a process of tendering would have to be undergone to identify an independent company to assess the losses that businesses were suffering. It was Isobel who came up with Health Check - which was suppose to be light touch but turned out to be much more detailed.</p>

## Business Advisor Financial Health Check

From: Isobel Woods (isobel.woods@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

To: bilvirck@yahoo.com; info@crazyco.uk; duggall1@hotmail.co.uk; kimberleysouthall@yahoo.co.uk; nimoburgers@hotmail.com; abradleysolar@gmail.com; thegeorgewallis.wolverhampton@stonegategroup.co.uk

Cc: John.Roseblade@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Date: Monday, 16 May 2022 at 22:09 BST

Sensitivity: NOT PROTECTIVELY MARKED

Dear All

Many thanks for taking the time to review and for sharing comments and thoughts.

The focus for this work is to engage with the businesses in this area of the city and gather intelligence related to the improvement works underway on Victoria Street, which will help to inform the next steps. It's been identified that not all businesses in the area have an awareness of business planning. It is important that this is recognised in the spec so that they can receive advice and guidance, whereas others who are more knowledgeable about running a business may choose not to receive this.

Responding to the points which have been highlighted.

- **The title of this work – Health Check**

This work is to undertake a review of businesses position. As mentioned at the meeting the council needs to have an independent impartial review in order to inform further activity that may involve public funds and resources. It's been called a Health Check to ensure this is impartial. To call it a Hardship or Financial Impact at this stage could be seen a pre-determining the outcome of the work which may adversely affect future activity.

- **Wider business support**

From our meetings with businesses in the area, some have said they would find it beneficial to have advice on their current models, particularly as the economy recovers from the impact of Covid and other factors. From initial visits not all businesses have the same knowledge of running a business, or awareness of business support. The advice is optional and any follow up will be for individual businesses to decide and action.

- **Consultant qualification and details**

Details of who will deliver will come once they have been appointed. The qualifications, who the advisor will be and other information are part of the tender process that will commence now comments have been received. 'Competitive process' refers to the tender process to appoint the consultant. Once we have undertaken and complete this part we will be able to share more details.

- **Timeline**

The council has to ensure that all the businesses in the area have the opportunity to have a health check. The pace of delivery and the outcome of this work have been factored in to the brief. The timescale for this work will be subject to the availability and engagement of businesses who wish to receive this review. It will be important that the council can ensure businesses have the opportunity to come forward. It would be really helpful once the advisor(s) have been appointed for yourselves as businesses in the area to raise awareness of the support and to encourages businesses to come forward.

- **Financial Information**

The impact of Covid is a factor that has affected the whole of the economy, it would not be reasonable to use financial information from before March 2020 in this scope. There have been a number of national and local covid business support schemes in place to assist businesses affected by Covid by providing financial grants.

The focus for this work is to understand the impact on businesses as a result of the improvement works on and around Victoria Street and to offer business advice. In order to understand this it will be important to have a reasonable time period prior to the works to then compare during the period of the works. It is proposed that financial information will be looked at for the 6 months period prior to the works, and then from the start of the works to the current time.

- Financial Evaluation of the business – for the period June 2021 - 22 November 2021 , then December 2021 - up to current date
  - Profit and Loss Statement
  - Balance Sheet
  - Liquidity Ratio
  - Working capital

- **New Businesses**

For those businesses who opened after the 22 November when the works commenced, we will ask the advisor to refer to the business plan used when the business was set up, to identify a forecasted trading position for the period we are looking at. The outcome will depend on the quality and detail of the information contained in the business plan.

- **Large Businesses**

Public support is carefully monitored and Local Authorities have to adhere to number of rules and regulations. The UK Subsidiary Regulation (that replaced the EU State Aid rules) means that large companies or those who are part of parent company can only receive a maximum value of support from public funds. This is tracked over a 3 year period and cannot exceed £350,000 of either direct (grant) or indirect (service) support. The support from the advisor and any subsequent assistance will need to be within this threshold. For this reason the support has specifically identified small independent businesses whose main trading and business are registered in Wolverhampton.

I feel it would be helpful to share with you the next steps which are an essential and strictly governed part of local authority procurement.

- I will update the spec to reflect areas of change and send this out to seek a response from the market. This will run for two weeks to enable those who are interested to prepare and submit a response.
- The responses will be assessed and evaluated and a decision made about who will deliver.
- Once contracts / terms of work have been signed the work will commence

Kind regards  
Isobel

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City of Wolverhampton Council

2.8 SCA Management were commissioned by the council (as they were the only ones who submitted a tender response). The cashflow statement used to capture data had revealed issues around inconsistencies in not only what should be recorded, the conduct in the way the data was being collected and the process being used. WSTG raised concerns in a number of areas, one being the comparative windows that would be used to determine losses. This was confirmed by council legal and minuted that there was scope for change of window if necessary.

Window defined as Jan21-Sep21 comparative to Oct21-Ju22. Issues with this

- 2.8.1 3-month covid included where we were told it would be excluded. Covid grants were included for some businesses and not for others on the spreadsheet.

	<p>2.8.2 WSTG had proposed Council to use 2018/19 accounts but was refuted. Council stated nothing would be considered pre-covid. <b>Yet RSM Option 1 considered this.</b></p> <p>2.8.3 WSTG did ensure that the window should be flexible <b>without having to re-tender</b>. This was confirmed by <b>council legal and minuted</b>. To avoid wasting <b>public purse</b> money WSTG suggested window be changed to make the spreadsheet more viable, fair, capture realistic data which would give Council feedback on actual impact of roadworks on businesses which consequently would assist them in better management of their projects going forward i.e. Phase 2, 3 etc. Presentation was made to Isobel Woods &amp; John Roseblade Nov 7<sup>th</sup> 22 to look at this. It was clearly demonstrated that this was possible and a workable solution to salvage the situation and not waste resources as time was of the essence. Council realised that this would prove more businesses had suffered losses with proposed window Apr21 – Dec21 compared to Jan22-Sept22. (3 month date change)</p> <p>2.8.4 Even though Isobel Woods repeatedly said that Council &amp; Sam’s team SCA Management would come back to us with issues raised for them to clarify. This was ignored repeatedly as it would mean Council would have to address hardship relief for more businesses than the 5 identified.</p> <p>2.8.5 11 businesses out of 51 were clearly identified as evidencing loss by the Council, of which 5 businesses were only paid an <b>initial amount</b>. This admission clearly demonstrates evidenced loss by businesses, for which Council still need to pay the balance of. The window the council decided to stick with was about damage limitation for them not to pay out to more of the businesses.</p> <p>2.8.6 Repeated admission of losses evidenced – are council going to make good on mitigating losses of those businesses that have evidenced, as it appears to have been swept under the carpet and no longer financial hardship is mentioned.</p> <p>2.8.7 WSTG were promised Xmas event to drum up footfall, however due to delays nothing happened, and it was WSTG at the meeting 5<sup>th</sup> Dec22 raised to Councillor Simkins that the barriers were still up and the fact that there were no lights clearly gave general public the view that Victoria St was closed. Council claimed that they were supporting Westside by removing barriers and it caused delays. A complete misrepresentation of the truth.</p> <p>2.9 WSTG need to identify events to clarify this.</p> <p>2.9.1 Following meeting 7<sup>th</sup> Nov with Isobel and John where WSTG presented issues and solution of window change.</p> <p>2.9.2 Letters dated 10<sup>th</sup> Nov sent out by Isobel to businesses requesting additional evidence to support losses suffered by businesses. Businesses had provided updated financial information.</p> <p>2.9.3 24<sup>th</sup> Nov - WSTG chased up lack of response from Council / Isobel/John. Date change requested by Isobel to move traders meeting from end Nov to 5<sup>th</sup> Dec. A response detail WSTG disappointment of date change. (NOW 5 WEEKS OF COUNCIL DELIBERATION SINCE PRESENTATION)</p>
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	<p>2.9.4 1<sup>st</sup> Dec Isobel Woods emailed stating they are still looking at points raised by WSTG Nov 7<sup>th</sup>, Nov 24<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. WSTG were given no incline as to the engagement of an independent advisor until 5<sup>th</sup> December meeting. Council mentioned conversations were being held with a company to review their own processes and methodology adopted. This has been cleverly worded alluding that WSTG were aware of independent company engagement prior to the 5<sup>th</sup> Dec when it was clearly not the case.</p> <p>2.9.5 See WSTG minutes produced from meeting of the 5<sup>th</sup> with Council representatives. Even though all on list were invited, members abstained from attending. Councillor Simkins was re-introduced to being present and active engagement with WSTG. It was at this meeting that Isobel stated that an independent specialist was being procured to review the processes etc. See point 6 of document. <b>WSTG raised concerns over additional expenditure. Council basically ignored the workable solution given by WSTG. Another delaying tactic in accepting the need to pay financial hardship relief.</b></p> <p>2.9.6 WSTG attended Wolverhampton Business Forum – raised question to Andy St. See detail for response.</p> <p>2.9.7 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec WSTG notified via letter that RSM have been appointed to review financial health check approach, requesting permission to share information already provided to SCA Management with RSM. Another delaying tactic and waste of public money.</p> <p>2.9.8 We did not get any indication of findings until 13<sup>th</sup> March, the day before the scrutiny and the WSTG subgroup were given a directed choice. Totally ignoring all 17months of recognition of financial hardship by introducing a Re-Launch. WSTG were asked to agree with council without being given details. WSTG stated categorically, how are we supposed to make an informed decision without the detail. Isobel/Ian/Cllr Simkins gave WSTG a false sense of security and demonstrated underhandedness in hindsight.</p> <p>2.9.9 Throughout the whole process, since Mar 2022 financial hardship has been the centre point of all engagements and yet now has been totally IGNORED.</p> <p>4.11 In response to this “This excludes the considerable amount of officer time expended upon working to resolve this issue” WSTG Response: The issue is not resolved but WSTG left in dire straits as businesses have lost considerable time personally and has affected their mental health and lost livelihoods. Your officers and yourselves are being paid! You are not being asked to take a reduction in your income as businesses have had to because of council’s lack of professional management of projects by NOT undertaking impact analysis of roadworks and proper business consultation – we are still awaiting physical evidence of this for each business. We find this comment patronising and demeaning. It is the council that have deemed to have wasted WSTG business time yet have the audacity to make it about them. WSTG are the victims here! Not even an apology or credit given to show where WSTG have highlighted repeated flaws, issues in council failings. There is no moral stance here.</p>
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	<p>We urge the council to mitigate losses that have been experienced by WSTG and furthermore, evidenced and proven by businesses remain unpaid. This cannot be brushed away as it would be a gross miscarriage of justice.</p> <p><b>WSTG still need the financial hardship relief to be considered regardless of the Re-Launch grant.</b></p>