

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

18 November 2019

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

## Monson Road / Public Realm Cross-Party Working Group Update

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Lead Member(s)</b>	Councillor Jane March – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Economic Development
<b>Lead Officer/Author</b>	Paul Taylor – Director of Change and Communities
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:**

That the report be noted.

<b>Timetable</b>	
<b><i>Meeting</i></b>	<b><i>Date</i></b>
Full Council	25 September 2019
Working Party meeting	21 October 2019
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	18 November 2019

Tunbridge Wells Committee Report, version: March 2019

# Monson Road / Public Realm Cross-Party Working Group

## 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Working Group is an informal group consisting of representatives from the various political parties. It has no decision making powers but was established to consider ways to achieve the purpose set by Full Council. It may make recommendations to the relevant decision makers as appropriate.
  - 1.2 This report provides a 'for information' update on progress.
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## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Full Council on 25 September 2019 resolved as follows:

"This Council welcomes the petition, recognises the challenges that retailers are facing and undertakes to review the true impact of the scheme whilst the works continue. It notes that the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee have recently formed a 'Task and Finish Group' to look at how the Council communicated and engages with the public and businesses and would welcome any suggestions to improve the Council approach. This Council will set up an emergency working group to provide immediate support to affected businesses and residents."

- 2.2 Following said resolution, political group leaders appointed members to sit on the working group. The agreed membership is as follows:

- Councillor March – Chairman
- Councillor Scott – Conservative Group
- Councillor Ellis – Liberal Democrat Group
- Councillor Bruneau – Tunbridge Wells Alliance Group
- Councillor Lewis – Labour Group

- 2.3 The working group is supported by relevant officers at the request of the working group.
- 2.4 The working group has no decision making powers but can advise and make recommendations to the relevant decision maker as appropriate.

### **Work of the working group**

- 2.5 The working group met on 21 October to consider how the Council could provide immediate support to affected retailers.

- 2.6 The councillors asked officers to develop a process to identify those businesses affected financially by various public realm works and approach the Valuation Office Agency on behalf of all those affected (rather than direct individual companies to the VOA).
- 2.7 Members felt this was a fair and equitable way of providing immediate support and assessing the true impact of the scheme to date as set out in the resolution.
- 2.8 A letter has since been hand delivered to 48 businesses affected by public realm works. This letter and plus posters for those who wish to advertise open for business will also be available. Two large banners stating we are open for business will also be hung in strategic places
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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 3.1 The report is for information and may be noted.
- 3.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has no power to impose anything on the working party but may take its own action, if it so wishes.
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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To note the report. The working party is an effective method to implement the will of Council and therefore no alternative action is recommended at this time.
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### **5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 The report is a 'for information' update as to the work of the working party and has not been subject to outside consultation.
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### **6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b> including Human Rights Act	This report is for information and does not propose any policy changes which could result in cross-cutting implications at this time.	Mark O'Callaghan, Scrutiny and Engagement Officer 27 September 2019
<b>Finance</b> and other resources		
<b>Staffing</b> establishment		
<b>Risk</b> Management		
<b>Data Protection</b>		
<b>Environment</b>		

and Sustainability		
<b>Community Safety</b>		
<b>Health and Safety</b>		
<b>Health and Wellbeing</b>		
<b>Equalities</b>		

## 7. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with, and form part of, the report:

- None
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## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None