

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Market Place Highways Improvement Project</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 January 2019
<b>WARD</b>	Wescott
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Andrew Moulton, Assistant Director, Governance

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Overview and Scrutiny is one of the checks and balances which ensure that the Council and its partners make and implement effective decisions. It is a key element in the decision making process which ensures transparency and accountability.

The Market Place highways improvement project is part of the overall programme to regenerate Wokingham town centre.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to:

- a) consider the background evidence, Lessons Learnt report and the public comments submitted in relation to the Market Place Improvement Project;
- b) consider the oral evidence submitted at the meeting in relation to the Committee's Key Lines of Enquiry;
- c) note that the final Stage 3 Safety Report has been commissioned and will be submitted to the Committee at a future meeting;
- d) note that the Committee will receive an Audit report on the Market Place Project at a future meeting.

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

At its meeting on 5 November 2018, the Committee received an interim update on the Market Place highways improvement project whilst awaiting the completion of the 'Lessons Learnt' report and the Stage 3 safety audit.

In order to provide additional evidence for the Committee, Officers published a Call for Questions via print and social media in December 2018.

The report sets out background information on the delivery of the Market Place project together with the Committee's Key Lines of Enquiry and public responses to the Call for Questions.

## **Background**

As part of the Committee's 2018/19 work programme, the Market Place Highways Improvement Project was identified as a key issue by Committee Members to scrutinise during the 2018/19 municipal year. These items were originally due to come to the Committee in November 2018. However an interim update was provided whilst the Stage 3 safety audit and 'Lessons Learnt' report were being finalised.

## **Origins**

Approval for the Market Place project was given by the Executive at its meeting on 24 September 2015. A copy of the Executive report is attached at **Annex A**.

## **Supporting Information**

A range of documents providing background information on the Market Place project are attached as follows:

Wokingham Public Realm Design and Delivery Strategy (Extract) – **Annex B**

Business Engagement – **Annex C**

Disability and Access Engagement - **Annex D**

General Engagement – **Annex E**

Issues Raised Post-completion of the project – **Annex F**

Stage 3 Interim Safety Audit – **Annex G**

Market Place Project Newsletter (example) – **Annex H**

## **Call for Questions**

In order to understand the views of residents, community groups, shops and businesses, the Committee published a Call for Questions via print and social media in December 2018. The Call for Questions stated:

"WBC Overview and Scrutiny – Call for Questions

The Council's Community and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be reviewing progress on the Wokingham Town Centre regeneration projects at its meeting on 14 January 2019.

The Committee will receive updates on Peach Place and Elms Field but will focus mainly on the Market Place Highways Project.

In order to inform its discussions the Committee would like to hear views and questions from residents, community groups, businesses and disability groups about the Market Place project. This could include views and questions on consultation and communication and any impacts as a result of the project.

Businesses and shops within the town centre also received a letter inviting them to submit comments and evidence.

A number of responses were received from residents, businesses and representative bodies. These are attached at **Annex I**.

### **Key Lines of Enquiry**

The Chairman of the Committee also agreed a set of Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE) which will act as a framework for Member questions at the meeting. The KLOE are set out at **Appendix J**.

### **Lessons Learnt Report**

The Borough and Town Councils commissioned a “Lessons Learnt” report to be delivered by an external consultant. It is expected that the report will be available for circulation to members of the Committee after the Agenda despatch.

### **Council Motion**

At its meeting on 14 December 2018 the Council approved a Motion relating to reporting on the Wokingham town centre regeneration project. The Motion stated that, on completion, each element of the overall regeneration programme (including the Market Place project) would be subject to a full audit report to be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The audit report to provide details on:

- Total income and expenditure from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2018;
- The original budget and timetable;
- An explanation of any variances between the original budget and actual income and expenditure and original timetable and actual progress;
- The sources of funding, with the amounts obtained from each separate source.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

*The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.*

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	NA	NA	NA
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	NA	NA	NA
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	NA	NA	NA

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

To be considered as part of the discussions.

### Cross-Council Implications

Overview and Scrutiny impacts on all Council services and the work of key partners.

### List of Background Papers

None

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