

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 20 September 2021

Title: Committee Work Plan

Contact Officer: Town Clerk - Sharon Groth

Background

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on the Committee's work plan which includes projects identified as part of the Council's Draft Strategic Plan and Budget Setting agreed in February 2021, as well as the Open Spaces Strategy adopted in June 2021.

This is also an opportune time to consider any future/additional projects to be put forward for the budget setting cycle (November) to prepare a forward plan for 2022 and beyond, to give Officers time to carry out any required research.

Current Situation

Appendix 1 attached lists the current project list – some of which has been budgeted for and are underway – however it should be noted that some of these projects cross reference into the Open Spaces Strategy which should be seen as the overarching plan for the Council and should dictate priorities and timescales.

In the interim, the following updates have been provided by the Operations & Estates Advisor and the Project Officer on the status of current or emerging projects:

Bus Shelters

The vandal proof bus shelter at Burwell Shops has been installed.

The proposed shelter at Tower Hill, whilst approved by Council, is still under consultation with residents. The S106 money is only for a shelter in this location and cannot be used elsewhere.

There is a risk that if the shelter is not ordered soon the price could increase due to the increasing price of the raw materials.

WW2 Pill Box

The Project Officer has now obtained permission from the Diocese of Oxford to plant up the pillbox on Langel Common (the one closest to the Newland path). Permission is also needed from the Vicar of Cogges and if this is forthcoming, an application can be made to Historic England for the work to be carried out. However there is yet to be a budget established for this project, additionally it has been established that the structure in question isn't in very

good repair – photos attached. Members are requested to consider whether they wish to see this project proceed under the current circumstances, and should be aware that these are not on WTC land nor are the structures in its current ownership.

Bike Repair Racks

The Project Officer has been trying to obtain permission from the County Council to install one of the racks at the rear of 51a Market Square since June. Unfortunately, there has been no movement on this despite repeated e mails and phone calls. Without permission the rack cannot be installed in that location. Both Councillors and Active Oxfordshire are keen to see it installed there.

The rack for The Leys can be installed as soon as it arrives which should be in around 4 weeks' time. Unfortunately, this does not tie in with car free day but a separate event can be held to publicise this rack – and hopefully the one at the rear of 51a Market Square.

Open Spaces Strategy

During the next two months the Town Clerk, as Strategic Lead, will begin to drill down into the OSS Action Plan in order to establish some clear project plans for implementation by her Officers.

At this stage, as a reminder, attached at appendix 2 is the extract from the OSS - this Committee's priorities.

The Town Clerk is pleased to report that OSS Item EE3 – Communication Policy/Plan has been achieved because it was adopted by this Committee and ultimately the full Council during the last cycle of meetings. This now gives the Communications & Community Engagement Officer a structure to work with and towards better and more timely communications to raise the profile of the Council and its work.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Each project plan will include an environmental impact assessment to ensure that the Council's declaration and environmental issues are taken into account and isn't to the detriment of the Council's ambitious target of carbon neutrality by 2028.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

A lot of the projects identified have significant costs attached to them and Officers and Councillors should be mindful of not wasting taxpayer's money – but also ensuring the projects have full cost benefit analysis.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

With regard to the WW11 Pill Box Project – costs for its restoration have yet to be established.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and the status of the various projects agreed, and consider:

1. whether to proceed with the WW11 Pill Box Project;
2. any priorities or forward plan the Committee may wish to put forward for the budget setting cycle for projects in 2022 and beyond.