

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 15 November 2021

Title: Tower Hill Bus Stop Improvements

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

Oxfordshire County Council is currently holding £10,000 of Section 106 money from the Kingfisher Meadows development, which is designated for bus stop improvements at Tower Hill. An arrangement was made for Witney Town Council to progress this project and procure a bus shelter for the stop going into town-centre bound.

The Project Officer obtained quotes for several types of shelter, with the Committee opting for a sedum roofed shelter.

Committee and ward members consulted residents, having previously received correspondence expressing their concerns over a new shelter. Residents were not in favour of a shelter being installed, although they were amenable to a bench being installed. Their concerns were that the bus stop was not well used, and that the shelter would attract ASB and vandalism, becoming an eyesore.

The Officer responsible for the shelter at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) offered to speak to the residents to see if he could help assuage their concerns.

Current Situation

The OCC Officer contacted the Project Officer following his meeting with residents to explain that he had recognised some of the concerns. As an alternative solution, he is in favour of exploring the installation of a shelter along Burford Road, with the view that residents of Kingfisher Meadows would not need to cross a road to access it. He has spoken to Stagecoach to see if it would service a new stop – either in addition to the existing stop and the Tower Hill stop, or instead of the existing stop and/or Tower Hill. The current assumption is that all would be serviced at the current time but confirmation from Stagecoach is awaited.

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.

By putting in a bus shelter the Council would be encouraging sustainable travel and the chosen sedum roof shelter would be of benefit to air quality and biodiversity.

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.

There could be reputational risk if the Council decides to recommend going ahead with the Tower Hill site.

The final decision on this project will be made by the County Council's cabinet which may agree or disagree with any recommendations made by the Town Council.

Financial implications

As the shelter will be funded by S106 contribution there are no financial implications. If the Council wishes to add cycle racks and a bin there will be additional costs and an on cost for bin collections.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. That, the decision on how to utilise the allocated funds to procure and install bus stop improvements at Tower Hill, in line with both authority's climate priorities, is made by Oxfordshire County Council as the Highways Authority and keeper of the Section 106 funds.