

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 26 September 2022

Title: Community Infrastructure Review

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

The Project Officer was tasked with reviewing all of the town's small infrastructure – including bins, benches, notice boards, planters, and dog bins, in accordance with reference IS5 of the Council's adopted Open Spaces Strategy,

'Undertake an audit of current litter bins, dog waste bins, signage, seating, fencing, bus shelters and other associated infra-structure with a view to drawing up a corporate replacement and upgrade plan, to include policies relating to the installation and adoption of infrastructure on non-WTC land.'

Current Situation

The Project Officer has photographed and catalogued every item of small infrastructure in the town. Each item is listed on the attached spreadsheet with a reference, location, and a note of the condition. Corresponding to these are photographs, with the reference relating to the spreadsheet (due to their size, these will be emailed to members separately).

The review will enable members to assess priorities for renewal, repair, or replacement, and also provide the opportunity to add to the infrastructure where appropriate.

For example, requests have been made over the past few years for a bench in Corn Street. One was taken out due to ASB and the bench being in close proximity to houses. However, the Council's satisfaction survey earlier this year highlights that there are no opportunities for stopping for a rest in Corn Street – which may be particularly important for the elderly, those with less mobility, or young children on a long road with a slope at the end. It is hard to assess how many of the public would be in favour of additions such as this. Whilst some asked specifically for more benches in the Council's most recent annual survey, others complained that the town looked cluttered with too many pieces of street furniture so there needs to be a carefully balanced and considered approach.

The benches throughout the town are generally in need of sanding and staining as they presently look very dilapidated. Most are structurally sound but if they were refurbished would contribute to the town having a better overall image as well as extending their lifespan.

The bus shelters are similar in that they need cleaning, any graffiti removing and missing Perspex replacing.

This will be a substantial amount of work for the Council's works team to undertake. When the work is being carried out, it could be heavily promoted on the Council's social media as a focus point- e.g., "Bench Blitz – over the next two weeks you will see our staff working hard to refurbish the benches around town" etc. This would promote the Town Council and bring some positive publicity as well as showing that the Council does listen to resident's concerns.

The defibrillators are already on a rolling programme of maintenance under the Operations Officer.

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.

There are no environmental concerns from the infrastructure review.

Financial Implications

There will be financial implication in the form of Works Team time required to carry out the work and also for any repairs/renewals that are required.

Recommendations

1. That the report be noted.
2. That Councillors give consideration to drawing up a corporate replacement and upgrade plan in consultation with the Operations Team.