

Environment & Economy Select Committee - Review of Neighbourhood Centres
22 September 2020

Questions regarding issues identified at February site visits and at the meeting in March 2020	Update comments September 2020	Suggested follow up from September meeting (to be agreed at the meeting) list as either complete, ongoing or still waiting for action.
Oaks Cross		
<p>Fly-tipping Can you comment on the fly-tipping at the back of the shops at Oaks Cross and in the garage compound? When Members did their site visit there was an old mattress and shopping trolley tipped in the garage compound. Do these areas get regularly scouted or do you rely on it being flagged by residents etc.?</p>	<p><i>Stevenage Direct Services - The areas are regularly inspected as part of the cleansing beat team's duties. Items of fly tip are reported by the team. Information from residents is valued and an important means of highlighting issues to us.</i></p>	<p>Complete/ongoing</p>
<p>Replace missing trees Can you comment on any plans to replace the missing trees in the designated planters in the pedestrian areas at Oak Cross (some at the front of the shops in the pedestrian area by the car park and some at the rear and not due to last winter storms), is this being actioned in the autumn planting season?</p>	<p><i>Cristian Pinta (SBC Arboriculture & Conservation Manager)</i> <i>Following on from the councillors site visit I have been in touch and plans were made, funded by LCB to plant a new Oak tree in the empty pit to the front of the shops.</i></p> <p><i>The plan was to plant the tree by early spring this year (at the end of the planting season). Unfortunately, with the lockdown settling in in March, the nursery were no longer available to deliver the said tree.</i></p> <p><i>I have been in touch with the nursery since and</i></p>	<p>Action ongoing.</p>

	<i>the tree will be delivered and planted in November this year, at the beginning of the planting season.</i>	
<p><u>Possible evidence of drug use</u> When Members carried out their site visit there was a strong smell of cannabis coming from the rear of the flats above the shops and some drug paraphernalia and litter detritus in the communal stairs and walkways.</p>	<i>CDO response. This needs to be raised with the Neighbourhood Wardens and the Police to monitor the situation.</i>	Still awaiting action
<p><u>Exterior paint on the flats/shops</u> The area could be enhanced by changing colours of the concrete around the centre which was all one colour and very drab. An area by the steps had been half painted but not completed.</p> <p>Do you know who would be responsible for painting the exterior of the Oaks Cross shops and residential area above the shops, is this down to the tenants, or SBC as landowner?</p> <p>(Note - Major appearance changes would only be addressed when each neighbourhood centre is regenerated.)</p>	<i>Estates – If the area in question is the shops then it is the leaseholders responsibility, if it's the flats above the shops then it will be the responsibility of SBC Housing.</i>	Still awaiting action
St Nicholas		
<p><u>Security Fence</u> Updating of unsightly security fence</p>	<i>No update</i>	Still awaiting action

probably from the 1990's		
<p><u>Telephone box</u> The redundant and vandalised telephone box had now been removed</p>		Complete
<p><u>Two relocated concrete planters & a noticeboard</u> Two concrete planters previously situated in the Town Centre had been purchased through a Member's LCB allocation which would be installed shortly.</p> <p>Clarification was sought regarding whether or not a fee should be payable for these previously used planters which were currently stored at Cavendish Road Depot to be redeployed in Neighbourhood Centres.</p> <p>Previously officers from Stevenage Direct Services had commented that they were waiting for detail from Community Development regarding the Notice Board before the planters are installed at St Nicholas. The Notice board is now installed. Can you now confirm that the planters have been installed? And is it now clear who will be maintaining the planters?</p>	<p><i>Stevenage Direct Services - There was never a charge for the planters. The LCB funding covered delivery / installation / soil / plants / labour only</i></p> <p><i>Stevenage Direct Services - Notice board and planters have been installed. Resident group to maintain the planters.</i></p> <p><i>Community Development Officers - Planters have now been installed. Neighbourhood Warden Sue Amey is due to (or may already have) get them painted to improve the look and Cllr Barr has a list of names of local volunteers who will help maintain them once they are planted up by Waste Not Want Not charity nursery. A new freestanding noticeboard has been erected by the pillar box near the Canterbury Way car park.</i></p>	Complete

<p><u>Tidy up shrub bed and remove/replace broken knee rail</u></p> <p>Can the area to the rear/side of the health centre be included in the replacement shrub bed programme or is it due to be grassed over as it looks in a dilapidated state (lots of the knee rail is missing and hardly any shrubs remaining)?</p>	<p><i>Stevenage Direct Services initial response - Not aware of any requests for additional planting of shrub bed, just the planters.</i></p> <p><i>SDS updated response - Plans to complete shrub bed improvement works have been severely impacted for this winter due to Coronavirus. It is anticipated as the CNM initiative commences shrub bed surveys will form part of the programme to be completed over several years. This would also include as to whether knee-rail fencing is still required. Damaged knee-rail will be removed as part of the winter prune programme this year</i></p>	<p>Still awaiting action</p>
<p><u>Broken wall and flagstones</u></p> <p>There was a dispute regarding the ownership and responsibility for the damaged wall and flagstones to the rear of the community centre which was currently being looked into. Has this been resolved?</p>	<p><i>Community Development Officers – The Flagstones and wall have now been repaired. I believe wall was the brewery’s responsibility. Flagstones were SBC responsibility.</i></p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p><u>The Oval</u></p>		
<p><u>Planting area near the underpass</u></p> <p>Regarding the planting areas near the underpass at the Oval (Jessops Close) it was noted that the flower beds would be full of wild flowers in the summer. Local Ward Councillor Teresa Callaghan as Chair of the Community Garden advised</p>	<p><i>Stevenage Direct Services - I had a request from Neighbourhood Wardens for daff bulbs last year. I offered a bag, but they were not collected. I do not believe this happened.</i></p> <p><i>Community Development Officers - Daff bulbs came too late to plant for this year, then other</i></p>	<p>Still awaiting action.</p>

<p>that a national charity offering crocus bulbs had been approached and that these would be planted late in the year for flowers to come up early next year.</p> <p>Regarding Bulb planting at The Oval would it be possible for this to happen this autumn?</p>	<p><i>bulbs were due to be planted by Community Payback Service (CPS) but Covid came. Bulbs had to be given away.</i></p>	
<p><u>New signage and new mural</u> New signage and a new mural would shortly be in place.</p>	<p><i>Community Development Officers - There was some discussion regarding this but then Covid hit. We have not heard anything since.</i></p>	<p>Still awaiting action.</p>
<p><u>Dangerous damaged steps</u> The damaged steps at Jessops Close beyond the underpass were dangerous and could easily result in accidents and potential claims. There is no dispute regarding ownership as they appear on a HCC Highways map, so the responsibility for the repairs and maintenance sits with HCC.</p>	<p><i>The matter has been raised with HCC by SBC Engineers on numerous occasions, so far no action has been taken to repair the dangerous steps. HCC have recently acknowledged the issue and have agreed to investigate it and report back.</i></p>	<p>Still awaiting action.</p>
<p><u>Bedwell</u></p>		
<p><u>Deep clean and renewed paint work</u> Paint was peeling on some of the railings and a deep clean was required.</p>	<p><i>Stevenage Direct Services – The Bedwell Shops are visited daily by a cleansing team and weekly by the sweeper. An inspection will be completed to ascertain what is required to remove any highlighted issues, such as cigarette butts as soon as possible.</i></p>	<p>Still awaiting action.</p>

	<i>SBC Engineers visited the site and established it is HCC adopted highway and have reported it to them to investigate and action. The handrail runs for a length of 29m and there are two other handrails at either side of the car park. All three sections are very rusty and the paint is very sharp. They are in need of repainting.</i>	
<u>Graffiti on wall including the mural which needed updating</u>	<i>Community Development Officers – The Neighbourhood Wardens would investigate and arrange for the graffiti to be removed without damaging the original mural. If this is not possible CD & NW officers would look into commissioning a new one if funding and artist can be secured.</i>	Still awaiting action.