

**BOROUGH OF POOLE**

**CABINET**

**9<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2016**

**PUBLIC TOILET REVIEW PROPOSAL: REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
AND CONSUMER PROTECTION SERVICES**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide members with an update of the progress of the Public Toilet Review and to seek approval to proceed with the next stage of the strategy in Poole Town Centre area.

**2. DECISION REQUIRED**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve the implementation of a Community Toilet Scheme in the Town Centre area.
- 2.2 That Cabinet approve the closure of Chapel Lane, Quay Visitors, Quay Watch Station and Kingland Road Bus Station public toilets.

**3. BACKGROUND/ INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Poole 2020 Communications and Engagement Plan reports that over the past five years the Council's core government funding has been cut by 56%. Savings of nearly £60 million have already been made in Poole. By 2019 central government revenue funding for local services will reduce from £15 million each year to zero. Further savings of £11.5 million will be required over the next four years over and above the plans that have already been made.
- 3.2 The current MTFP assumes savings of £300k from the Public Toilet Review.
- 3.3 To ensure long term efficiency and access to funding ECPS transferred management responsibility of nine toilets to Culture and Community Learning. The seven beach toilets were transferred to the beaches team with the full budget of £150k. The two Upton House toilets were also transferred with their £22k budget.
- 3.4 There are already four Community Toilet Schemes operating in Poole. These are in Canford Heath, Broadstone, Hamworthy and Parkstone. The schemes are operating successfully in all areas with no negative feedback received in 2015.
- 3.5 In Poole Town Centre area there are four public toilet facilities operated by the Council. This includes Chapel Lane, Quay Visitors, Quay Watch Station and Kingland Road Bus Station toilets.

- 3.6 Chapel Lane toilets are located adjoining to the Chapel Lane Car parks. These are a pre-fabricated metal structure. Usage data from 2012 suggests that Chapel Lane facilities were used an average of 29 times per day. This figure is based on the amount of 10 pence pieces collected before the locks were changed in 2013.
- 3.7 Quay Visitor toilets are also a metal pre-fabricated structure located next to the adjoining car park by Old Orchard Road. Usage data from 2012 suggests that Quay Visitor facilities were used an average of 21 times per day. This does not include the disabled cubicle which is free to access through the RADAR key scheme.
- 3.8 Both Quay Visitor and Chapel Lane toilets were previously coin operated access but these were changed to free access in 2013 due to consistent vandalism of the locking mechanisms.
- 3.9 Of the public facilities run by the Council, the highest number of drug paraphernalia is found in both Quay Visitors and Chapel Lane. These toilets also have the high level of use by rough sleepers.
- 3.10 The Quay Watch Station toilets are located near to the lifting bridge. Previous information recorded on the toilets usage was not considered to be a reliable representation. These toilets are showing signs of ageing and the appearance of the toilets makes them unappealing for public use.
- 3.11 Historical data shows that the Kingland Road Bus Station has a high level of use throughout the majority of the year with an average of 177 users per day. This does not include the disabled cubicle which is free to access under the RADAR key scheme. The toilets have a permanent attendant during opening hours. Access is by 20 pence admission.
- 3.12 The opening times for the four Town Centre toilets can be found in the appendix at the end of this report.
- 3.13 In addition to the public facilities operated by the Council there are two privately managed toilets in the Town Centre area. The Dolphin Shopping Centre has facilities located within 100 metres of the Bus Station facilities. There are also facilities located at Dolphin Quays which are maintained and operated on a 24 hour basis. These are within a short distance from the current Quay Visitor facilities.
- 3.14 Providing access to facilities which are staffed commercial/community premises rather than unattended public building could possibly reduce the incidence of anti-social behaviour and consequently improve the feeling of safety and wellbeing in the local community.
- 3.15 There are a large amount of alternative sites which could potentially offer facilities to the public through the Community Toilet Scheme. Invitations to join the scheme have been issued to 22 premises in the Town Centre area.
- 3.16 The following premises have shown interest in being part of a Community Toilet Scheme.

Premises	Facilities available	Availability	Opening Times
Poole Museum	Disabled and unisex	Varies from Summer to Winter.	<u>Summer</u> Mon - Sat 10am - 5pm Sun 12 noon - 5pm  <u>Winter</u> Mon – Sat 10am - 4pm, Sun 12pm - 4pm
The Lighthouse	Gents / Ladies and Disabled	Tues - Sat	11am – 8pm
Sainsbury's	Gents/ Ladies and Disabled	Open 7 days	Mon – Sat 7am – 8pm Sun 10am – 4pm
The Spire Cafe	Gents/ Ladies and Disabled	Tues - Saturday	10am - 3pm

- 3.17 The re-provision of these 4 toilets, together with the existing 2 privately provided toilets would create a better, cleaner and more attractive service than that which currently exists. Disabled facilities are available at all of the locations.
- 3.18 Users of the town at night are mainly attracted by the night time economy and each of the premises which they visit also provides facilities for their customers.
- 3.19 Officers will continue to contact and advertise the scheme to premises in the Town Centre to see if further interest can be generated should the scheme be approved.

#### 4. **WARD MEMBER ENGAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Members representing the Poole Town Centre ward were consulted as part of this review and support these proposals.

#### 5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 In February 2014 Members agreed the 2014-18 MTFP update which set Council Tax for 2014/15 and identified £11 million of savings for that year and £21 million over the MTFP period. A total saving of £300k was identified from the reduction in the Public Toilets budget.
- 5.2 As part of the £300k identified, targets were set to save 100k in the 2015/16 financial year, £100k in 2016/17 and a further £100k in 2017/18.
- 5.3 In 2014 it was identified through condition surveys that £156k is required now to bring toilets that are open up to a safe and efficient standard, and £1.3 million of capital funding would be required over the next twenty years. In recent years the proactive maintenance budget for toilets has been reduced to £16k per annum.

- 5.4 The instigation of the previous Community Toilet Schemes has achieved a saving of £48k made from the closure of four of the public toilets.
- 5.5 The total revenue budget for the four Town Centre toilets equates to £106k. The split of this budget between the four toilets are as follows, Kingland Road Bus Station (£63k), Quay Watch Station (£20k), Quay Visitors (£8k) and Chapel Lane (£14k).
- 5.6 There is an admission charge of 20 pence at Kingland Road Bus Station Toilets. In 2015 £13k was generated through the admission charge to offset part of the £63k required to operate the toilets.
- 5.7 The savings from the closure of the four Town Centre toilets to meet the target in the 2015/16 financial year would equate to £98k. This accounts for ongoing legacy costs from the buildings until they can be demolished, sold or reused.
- 5.8 There is a cost associated with running the Community Toilet Scheme. The exact cost will be agreed with the scheme members if approved.

## **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Provision and maintenance of public toilets is a non-statutory function of the Council.
- 6.2 The Council has previously allowed a Community Right to Bid. If this was instigated by a body this may be an alternative viable option for the toilet buildings.

## **7. PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Borough will retain the costs of non-domestic rates and liability for the toilets as long as the buildings remain as an asset.
- 7.2 Corporate estates are discussing the potential use of the Quay Watch Station with the occupiers of the adjoining building. The current opinion is that the area Chapel Lane toilets are sited could possibly be used as additional space for the car park. The current option for Kingland Road Bus Station is for it to be mothballed.
- 7.3 There is potential for both Chapel Lane and Quay Visitors toilets to be removed by crane. If the buildings are to be removed then planning permission would be required.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The four Town Centre toilet buildings remain a significant financial risk due to the level of future refurbishment required in order to keep them in a safe and useable condition.
- 8.2 There is a reputational risk to the Council if facilities are closed without providing an alternative. In addition, there is a reputational risk from the unplanned closure of a toilet. These risks have been mitigated by initial discussions with local ward

members and by finding interested parties to offer alternative provision of publicly accessible toilets in the area.

## 9. **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 A full equality impact assessment record has been prepared.
- 9.2 The proposal represents an opportunity to provide facilities in the Town Centre area that will allow the continued use for different groups of people.
- 9.3 Each of the 4 interested premises and the existing 2 privately provided toilets have separate disabled facilities.
- 9.4 To ensure that people who need access to toilets are aware of where facilities are located, ECPS will work with Poole Tourism and other national schemes to advertise the Community Toilet Scheme should this be approved.
- 9.5 The proposed strategy will ensure the long term provision of public conveniences.

## 10. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 10.1 The Community Toilet Scheme is operating successfully where it has been implemented. Officers need to continue to accelerate future changes in provision through new Community Toilet Schemes, Community Ownership or third party operation.

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### **Appendix**

#### **Town Centre Public Toilet Opening Times**

Site name	Opening Times
Kingland Road Bus Station	Winter 8am – 6pm Summer 8am – 8pm Disabled cubicle is accessible 24 hours a day
Quay Watch Station	24 hour access
Chapel Lane	24 hour access
Quay Visitors	24 hour access