

## **Environment Scrutiny Panel – 14 March 2011**

### **Progress with Public Conveniences ISG Report Actions**

#### **Report of Assistant Director (High Quality Environment)**

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#### Purpose of the Report

The Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider this matter as part of its role in holding the High Quality Environment Portfolio Holder to account.

#### Links to the Corporate Strategy

The Corporate Strategy places emphasis on strong performance management and High Quality Environment. This report forms part of that process and is designed to check progress being made against agreed targets.

#### Recommended

That the Panel raises with the Portfolio Holder any issues arising from this report and considers whether any items of significance need to be drawn to the attention of Cabinet.

#### Executive Summary

Members received a report from the Public Conveniences ISG on the 20 July 2009 the agreed recommendations of which were subsequently referred to Cabinet on 9 September 2009.

An update report EN90 provided an update on progress 11<sup>th</sup> November 2009

This report gives a further update on the current position as requested by the Scrutiny Panel.

Members are asked to consider this update report and comment on the progress to date.

### **Background Documents**

EN87 – Public Convenience Provision Informal Scrutiny Group Review

DETAIL:1 Introduction

- 1.1 Members received a report from the Public Conveniences ISG on the 20 July 2009 which contained a number of recommendations for consideration. Following debate on the issue a final list of agreed recommendations was prepared and referred to Cabinet for considerations.
- 1.2 The minute of the Environment Scrutiny Panel meeting was as follows

**That the Environment Scrutiny Panel:**

- 1. Considers the report and whether the review has adequately scrutinised issues relating to Public Convenience Provision, as defined in the Group's terms of reference (paragraph 1.3 of the Report refers)**
- 2. Asks Cabinet to agree the following recommendations in order to improve the provision of Public Conveniences in the District.**

1. That the Tower Street Public Conveniences not be reopened and that the money planned for its refurbishment, where possible, be re-directed to improve other public conveniences in the town.

2. That the Middle Brook Street Public Conveniences be closed, once the new public conveniences at Silver Hill become available. In the meantime, the lighting at the Middle Brook Street Public Conveniences should be improved.

3. That the Partnership Toilet Scheme (paragraph 4.16 refers) be supported in principle and that, in the Winchester town area, the City Centre Manager investigate, through the BID process, in consultation with the Head of Economic and Cultural Services, and report back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.

4. That the Head of Economic and Cultural Services investigate the possibilities for the Partnership Toilet Scheme in the rural District and report back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.

5. That officers prepare a long-term programme of planned refurbishment (with costings and identified priorities for improvement) and that these be reported to Cabinet as part of the 2010/11 Capital Programme.

6. That, in terms of improving the condition of the public conveniences, officers execute the "quick wins" identified by

the Group at paragraph 5.4 onwards and by New Alresford Parish Council (appendix 1), where practicable. In particular, the Group underlined the need to routinely check the operation of the disabled alarm systems, particularly at St Catherine's Park and Ride car park.

7. That officers investigate and prepare a report to Cabinet on the feasibility of providing a "tardis-style" convenience to serve the night-time economy in central Winchester

8. That large events, such as the Hat Fair, be flagged up to the contractor in advance to prepare longer opening hours and additional cleans and that any significant additional costs be transferred to the event organisers, if possible.

9. That officers draw up and implement a programme of annual deep-cleaning each of the District's public conveniences.

10. That a member of the Environment Team inspect each of the rural public conveniences at least once a month and more regularly in the Winchester town area.

11. That the public convenience cleaners in Winchester town centre should rotate from one location to another to provide a better service to the public.

12. That officers should consider undertaking Criminal Records Bureau checks on new cleaning staff who worked in the public conveniences.

13 That, during the development of new facilities, or the major refurbishment of existing facilities, officers consider:

- a) the imbalance between male and female cubicles
- b) consulting the British Toilet Association and other local authorities on the design of new toilets
- c) bringing the disabled facilities up to current standards
- d) consider favourably the recommendations of the changing places scheme, subject to the practicalities of its implementation
- e) the need for a separate family room and low-level urinals, basins and wc seats for children

14 That the Portfolio Holder for Environment should try to secure sufficient budget for the long term maintenance programme and the consequences of the changes to the Public Convenience NNDR charges.

15 That, without adding clutter to the town and village centres, better signage was required (especially in central

Winchester) to direct people to the public conveniences and that funding should be provided to make this possible.

16 That officers investigate the feasibility of the SAT LAV mobile phone system.

17 That the location of public conveniences be included on maps of the town/village centres on notice boards.

18 That the Head of Environment report back progress on the above recommendations to the Environment Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 2 February 2010.

**3. That the Panel review Cabinet's consideration of the above recommendations at its next meeting, to be held 11 November 2009.**

**4. That the Panel review Cabinet's implementation of the above recommendations in twelve months time, at its meeting to be held July 2010.**

1.3 These recommendations were referred to Cabinet on 9 September 2009 who resolved:

**'That the recommendations of the Panel regarding the Final Report of the Public Conveniences Informal Scrutiny Group (Report EN87 refers) be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Environment for further consideration under the Portfolio Holder decision making process, subject to comments outlined above.'**

1.4 Since that time work has been ongoing in implementing those actions considered to be feasible within existing resources and progress has been made. Some items are dependant upon new developments for the re-let of the Depot Contract as part of a separate toilet cleaning contract which is referred to elsewhere on this agenda. A table summarising the current position is attached at appendix 1

### **Links to the Sustainable Community Strategy and Corporate Business Plan:**

This relates to High Quality Environment and managing our assets as a part as our aim to be an efficient and effective Council.

**Resource Implications:**

Many of the 'quick wins' identified within the original ISG report have been funded from within existing resources. The more significant matters included in the plan such as a major refurbishment programme will be considered by Cabinet as part of the 2011/12 Capital Programme.

**Risk Management Issues:**

A risk assessment has been completed in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Methodology and the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks (Red or Amber) have been identified.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Progress in Implementing Public Convenience ISG recommendations

**Appendix 1**Progress in Implementing Public Convenience ISG recommendations

| <b>Item</b> | <b>Recommendation</b>   | <b>Progress</b>   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 1.          | That the Tower Street Public Conveniences not be reopened and that the money planned for its refurbishment, where possible, be re-directed to improve other public conveniences in the town.  | Action completed. Facilities 'mothballed' and disabled facility left open   |
| 2.          | That the Middle Brook Street Public Conveniences be closed, once the new public conveniences at Silver Hill become available. In the meantime, the lighting at the Middle Brook Street Public Conveniences should be improved.  | No progress due to delays in Silver Hill development. Lighting levels improved in the meantime. Further options will be investigated as part of carbon reduction programme  |
| 3.          | That the Partnership Toilet Scheme (paragraph 4.16 refers) be supported in principle and that, in the Winchester town area, the City Centre Manager investigate, through the BID process, in consultation with the Head of Economic and Cultural Services, and report back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.   | Not actioned due to lack of time and resources as a result of depot contract relet project. Now considered to be of minimal benefit and no resources available to fund a contribution.  |
| 4.          | That the Head of Economic and Cultural Services investigate the possibilities for the Partnership Toilet Scheme in the rural District and report back to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Panel.  | Not actioned due to lack of time and resources as a result of depot contract relet project. Now considered to be of minimal benefit and no resources available to fund a contribution.  |
| 5.          | That officers prepare a long-term programme of planned refurbishment (with costings and identified priorities for improvement) and that these be reported to Cabinet as part of the 2010/11 Capital Programme   | Survey completed and bid submitted but not approved for the 2011/12 capital programme. Re-application will be made for 2012/13  |
| 6.          | That, in terms of improving the condition of the public conveniences, officers execute the "quick wins" identified by the Group at paragraph 5.4 onwards and by New Alresford Parish Council (appendix 1), where practicable. In particular, the Group underlined the need to routinely check the operation of the disabled alarm systems, particularly at St Catherine's Park and Ride car park. | Most items completed. Remaining items will be actioned now that capital resources secured. Checks of P&R facilities undertaken and may be incorporated within the new toilet cleaning contract specification (see report elsewhere on this agenda). |

| Item | Recommendation   | Progress  |
|------|--|---|
| 7.   | That officers investigate and prepare a report to Cabinet on the feasibility of providing a “tardis-style” convenience to serve the night-time economy in central Winchester   | Action not accepted by Cabinet/Portfolio Holder based on feasibility and affordability. Opportunities for provision of 24 hour facility will be kept under review as part of future refurbishment programme |
| 8.   | That large events, such as the Hat Fair, be flagged up to the contractor in advance to prepare longer opening hours and additional cleans and that any significant additional costs be transferred to the event organisers, if possible.   | Actioned and completed. New arrangements now in place.  |
| 9.   | That officers draw up and implement a programme of annual deep-cleaning each of the District’s public conveniences.  | Actioned. Deep cleansing costs to be requested as a costed option within the new toilet cleaning contract and decision taken on number of cleanses each year.   |
| 10.  | That a member of the Environment Team inspect each of the rural public conveniences at least once a month and more regularly in the Winchester town area.  | Actioned and completed. May be incorporated within streetcare team responsibilities in future for efficiency reasons.   |
| 11.  | That the public convenience cleaners in Winchester town centre should rotate from one location to another to provide a better service to the public.   | Actioned and completed. New rota implemented  |
| 12.  | That officers should consider undertaking Criminal Records Bureau checks on new cleaning staff who worked in the public conveniences   | To be actioned as part of any new staff recruitment and will also be a requirement of the tender evaluation for the new public conveniences cleaning contract   |
| 13.  | <p>That, during the development of new facilities, or the major refurbishment of existing facilities, officers consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the imbalance between male and female cubicles</li> <li>• consulting the British Toilet Association and other local authorities on the design of new toilets</li> <li>• bringing the disabled facilities up to current standards</li> <li>• consider favourably the recommendations of the changing places scheme, subject to the practicalities of its implementation</li> <li>• the need for a separate family room and low-level urinals, basins and wc seats for children</li> </ul> | Will be considered as part of future toilet refurbishment projects  |

| Item | Recommendation  | Progress  |
|------|---|---|
| 14.  | That the Portfolio Holder for Environment should try to secure sufficient budget for the long term maintenance programme and the consequences of the changes to the Public Convenience NNDR charges.                                | Capital bid submitted but not approved as part of 2011/12 capital programme. Bid will be submitted for 2012/13.   |
| 15.  | That, without adding clutter to the town and village centres, better signage was required (especially in central Winchester) to direct people to the public conveniences and that funding should be provided to make this possible. | Some signage improved as part of overall City Centre upgrade. Additional signing provided to Abbey Gardens facility. Signing to Discovery Centre facilities still needs improvement and additional capital resources. |
| 16.  | That officers investigate the feasibility of the SAT LAV mobile phone system.   | Investigated but not considered to be feasible as would require significant investment in IT and communications requirements linked to text service and GIS.  |
| 17.  | That the location of public conveniences be included on maps of the town/village centres on notice boards.  | Planned to address this as part of project to renew maps in car parks and Park & Ride facility.   |