

	REPORT TO CABINET TO BE HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2015
	Key Decision YES Forward Plan Ref No 5
Corporate Aims Safe and Healthy Quality Environments	Cabinet Portfolio Holder Cllr A Backhouse

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (LD) – 15/286

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

**SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE SERVICE -
REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE (SCR/15/03)**

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To present the findings and recommendations of the review of the Public Convenience Service (Phase 1), as endorsed by the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee on 9 March 2015. Report reference SCR/15/03 attached.

RECOMMENDATION (S):

That Cabinet adopt the following recommendations:

- i To approve the programme of works as set out in the appendix to this report subject to the availability of capital funding as an Invest to Save scheme.
- ii To approve a further period of liaison with Parish Councils and other agencies to identify areas for further savings and efficiencies.
- iii To approve the roll-out of further capital works, including steam cleaning facilities and waterless urinals across all facilities as funding is identified.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION (S):

To deliver an improved Public Convenience Service based on the following principles agreed by the previous Member/Officer Working Group set up by the

Cabinet:

- To charge for entry where practicable and cost effective
- To improve the standard of finish in facilities; primarily retile those facilities with dark and poor quality tiling
- To provide the means for steam cleaning of all facilities
- To rationalise staffing at existing pay-on-entry facilities through the use of automatic pay-on-entry systems
- To transfer or close all facilities where the cost/unit usage rate was excessively high.
- To close or replace facilities which are structurally poor and not capable of improvement.

HIGHLIGHTED RISKS:

- (i) The continued provision of certain poor quality public convenience facilities may damage the reputation of the Council and the Borough's image as a premier visitor destination;
- (ii) The terms of the proposed Invest to Save scheme of improvements identified in the appendix of the report may be unaffordable at the current time, and therefore require reassessment, and the improvements require further consideration and reprioritisation.
- (iii) Closure of public conveniences in popular visitor destinations may damage the reputation of the Council and the Borough's image.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In May 2013, the Cabinet had tasked a Member/Officer Working Group to develop a Business Plan for the Public Convenience Service detailing improvements and efficiencies that could be made within the existing budget. Reporting in December 2013, one of the Working Group's more sensitive recommendations was to close a number of facilities which have relatively low usage, in order to fund an Invest to Save scheme to upgrade the remaining Council-operated public conveniences. Under previous reviews, such proposals had met with resistance even though, in many cases, usage was minimal. This had led to compromise situations which had not enabled the Council to make the necessary savings to reinvest in the service. The Cabinet therefore referred the matter to scrutiny to explore alternative options, such as to offer the operation of the facility to the local town or parish council or another interested community group as an alternative to closure; or to incentivise the private sector to allow the general public to use their facilities in commercial premises - a 'community toilet' scheme.
- 1.2 Working with officers, the Scrutiny Task Group chaired by Councillor Allanson has sought to find ways to reduce the number of proposed closures through reconsideration of the improvements deemed essential, reducing costs and a

dialogue with parish councils to discuss the options for transfer of facilities. As Phase 1, the Task Group has identified a programme of improvements for some heavily used facilities in accordance with the principles outlined above, largely funded by the installation of pay-on-entry systems (as an Invest to Save scheme) which could be implemented in some areas of the Borough. Phase 2 would be a further period of negotiation with parishes on joint working initiatives to see where, if at all possible, such initiatives could reduce service costs.



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Director

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Background Papers:

None

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT OR WISH TO INSPECT ANY OF THE BACKGROUND PAPERS, PLEASE CONTACT ST JOHN HARRIS (SEE CONTACT DETAILS ABOVE)