

	REPORT TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 9 MARCH 2015	
	Topic	Public Conveniences
Corporate Aims Safe and Healthy Quality Environments	Task Group (if applicable)	Public Conveniences
	Cabinet Portfolio Holders	Councillor D Chance

REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE SERVICE – PHASE 1 REPORT - SCR/15/03

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REASON REPORT REQUESTED: This report has been prepared in response to a Cabinet request to conduct a review of the recommendations of an Officer/Member Working Group on the future of the Public Convenience Service.

PURPOSE OF REPORT: To present the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee with the findings and recommendations of this review.

STATUS OF REPORT: This report is the work of the Member Task Group, on behalf of the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee, and where opinions are expressed it should be pointed out that they are not necessarily those of Scarborough Borough Council. While we have sought to draw on this review to make recommendations and suggestions that are helpful to the Council and its partners, our work has been designed solely for the purpose of discharging our terms of reference. Accordingly, our work cannot be relied upon to identify every area of strength, weakness or opportunity for improvement.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: The Task Group wishes to thank the parish councils, community groups, and others who have given us their views in the course of this review.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Task Group responsible for this review comprises Cllrs Godfrey Allanson (Chair), Cllr Herbert Tindall, Cllr John Ritchie, Cllr Colin Challen, Cllr Jane Mortimer and Cllr Dorothy Clegg with officer support from St John Harris,

Democratic Services Manager, Steve Reynolds, Environment, Regulation and Resilience Manager, and Paul Thompson, Operations, Transport and Countryside Manager. Together we agreed the following scope for our work:

Objective of the review

To consider the recommendations and principles established by the original working group and through dialogue with Parish and Town Councils explore the opportunities for transfer of facilities, joint-working and alternative service delivery options.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the 21 May 2013 Cabinet considered a report on the Market Testing of the Public Convenience Service. The report, in essence, explained that the costs involved in outsourcing the service were unaffordable in the current financial climate. It was resolved that the market testing of the public convenience service be discontinued and the service be retained in-house. Furthermore, Cabinet agreed to establish an Officer/Member Working Group and requested Officers to prepare a draft Business Plan detailing the service improvements and efficiencies that can be made.
- 2.2 The Officer/Member Working Group reported back to Cabinet in December 2013 (report ref 13/391). The Group had identified the following general principles for delivering an improved service which underpinned the recommendations in the report:
- 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.
- 2.3 One of the 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. It was therefore proposed to offer the operation of the facility to

the local town or parish council or another interested community group as an alternative to closure. Another option was to incentivise the private sector to allow the general public to use their facilities in commercial premises - a 'community toilet' scheme.

- 2.4 The Cabinet report recommended the referral of the Group's initial proposals to the Environment and Economy Scrutiny Committee to investigate in greater depth, with the exception of the recommendation to replace the Khyber Pass facility in Whitby which required early action because of the poor condition of the structure.
- 2.5 The matter was considered by this Committee in March 2014 (report ref 14/103). This report considered all the information made available to the original officer/member working group and their recommendations. The Committee resolved to establish its own Task Group to consider the original recommendations and report back to this Committee with its own recommendations.

3. METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The Task group met with relevant officers on a number of occasions to discuss the costing model used for the public convenience service. This costing model took account of the improvement costs, projected additional income, staffing costs and potential savings from the closure of low-use facilities.
- 3.2 Working with officers members 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.
- 3.3 It became clear that whilst there is significant public support for keeping all current facilities open, no Parishes felt able to take on the running of their local facilities.
- 3.4 The Task Group held a meeting at Danby in September 2014 so we could have direct dialogue with all the affected rural Parishes. The two key issues at this stage were potential transfer and the opportunities for joint-working aimed at reducing service costs. At this meeting it was clear that whilst there was no support for an extensive closure programme, many of those present felt that there were potential initiatives for some joint working which could lead to a saving in some service costs.

4. FINDINGS AND ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The Task group has identified a programme of improvements, largely funded by the installation of pay-on-entry systems which could be implemented in some areas of the Borough. Rather than delay these improvements whilst further discussions with the Parish Councils are undertaken it was agreed to deal with the review in two phases. Phase one will be the improvement

programme and pay-on-entry installations for some heavily used facilities, which will be self-funding as an Invest to Save scheme. Phase two will be a further period of working with Parishes on joint-working initiatives to see where, if at all possible, such schemes could reduce service costs. An example already under discussion is localised cleaning of facilities through the Parish Councils. The Task Group believes that since phase one is self-funding there is the opportunity to devote more time to working with Parish Councils and try to reduce service costs further if possible.

- 4.2 The proposed phase 1 programme is set out in the appendix to this report. This phase covers 12 facilities and includes, where necessary, retiling, pay-on-entry systems, steam cleaning facilities and waterless urinals. It also includes a major capital scheme to reroof the St Nicholas Gardens facility in Scarborough and renew the Hunmanby Gap toilets. In the latter case an agreement has been reached for the nearby café to take on the day-to-day cleaning of this facility.
- 4.3 In general terms it is proposed to roll-out the installation of steam cleaning facilities and waterless urinals across all facilities as funding becomes available from savings identified through joint-working with Parish Councils and further service efficiencies.
- 4.4 The facility at Khyber Pass in Whitby was not included in this review as the Cabinet decision was to relocate these toilets funded through the disposal of the current site. This project is still ongoing; a location somewhere on the harbour side of Pier Road is being sought. A potential location had been identified but this is now not available so further work is necessary.
- 4.5 In relation to low-use facilities the working group had identified a number of potential closures but, given the concerns raised about closures and the potential impact on tourism, particularly in the Esk Valley, the list was reduced to just two facilities. However, any final decision on closures has been postponed until the proposed phase 2 work has been completed in the hope that some joint-working with the Parishes concerned can be agreed and that sufficient savings can be identified to negate the necessity for closure. Phase 2 will also revisit the “community toilet” concept where there are toilets in private ownership which could be utilised for public use.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The committee is asked to support the following recommendations to the Cabinet:
 - 1 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.
 - 2 To approve a further period of liaison with Parish Councils and other agencies to identify areas for further savings and efficiencies.

- 3 To approve the roll-out of further capital works, including steam cleaning facilities and waterless urinals across all facilities as funding is identified.

6 IMPLICATIONS

Policy

- 6.1 No implications.

Legal

- 6.2 The Borough Council does not have a duty to provide public conveniences but may do so under its powers. The Council may charge for the use of such facilities providing it does not use “turnstiles” which are not permitted.

Financial Implications

- 6.3 There are significant capital costs in implementing the “phase 1” recommendations. However, the capital investment could be recovered through an “Invest to Save” scheme within 10 years. The current public convenience budget would allow payback of the capital costs and a small saving identified, hence there are no revenue implications.

Environmental and Health and Safety implications

- 6.4 There are no environmental or health and safety implications however the roll-out of waterless urinals, and the consequent reduction in water usage, will have a positive environmental impact.

Equalities and Diversity

- 6.5 An equalities impact assessment may need to be considered as part of the proposals.

Sustainability Impact Appraisal, Staffing Implications, Planning Implications, Crime and Disorder Implications

- 6.6 I have considered whether any of the above implications arise from this report and am satisfied that there is no identified implication that will arise from these recommendations.



**Councillor Godfrey Allanson
Chair of the Scrutiny Task Group**

Background papers:

None

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUERIES ABOUT THIS REPORT, PLEASE CONTACT
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APPENDIX

Table showing costs/savings for public convenience improvements

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

LOCATION	Retain?	Improvement Costs						Income	Savings inc labour
		Pay on Entry	Tiling	Steam Cleaning	Waterless Urinals	Major Cap. Works	Other		
Burniston Road Car Park	Y	7000	12000	250				5000	
North Bay Attended Toilets	Y	18000		250					2000
St Nicholas Attended Toilets	Y	18000	16000	250		30000			7000
West Pier Attended Toilets	Y	18000		250					7000
Ravine	Y	7000		250			4000		
Royal Parade	Y	7000		250			5000		
Filey Foreshore	Y	18000	16000	250			5000		
New Quay Rd Attended Toilets (2)	Y	18000		250					15000
West Cliff	Y	18000		250			7350		
Hunmanby Gap	Café					10,000			300
R Hoods Bay Station C Park	Y	18000		250			2400		
Staithe Car Park	Y	7000		250			1800		
TOTAL		154000	44000	2750	6000	40000	20000	30550	31300
		Repayment period 10 years							
		15400	4400	275	600	4000	2000		
	Savings	31300							
	Costs	26675							
	Net Saving	4625	per year						

NOTE: This phased approach plan focuses on upgrades where we install pay on entry equipment and where major capital works are needed in the short term. The repayment period is assumed to be 10 years but this could be reduced. It takes no account of savings from elsewhere or any closures

