

Bath & North East Somerset Council		
MEETING:	Planning, Transport & Environment PDS Panel	
MEETING DATE:	13th September 2011	AGENDA ITEM NUMBER
TITLE:	Draft Strategy for Provision of Public Toilets in Bath & North East Somerset	
WARD:	ALL	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report:		
Appendix A: Provision strategy for Public Toilets in Bath & North East Somerset		

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 Publicly accessible toilet facilities are a fundamental need for everyone whenever they are “away from home”. They are an important factor in delivering a ‘people friendly’ and attractive environment for everyone who goes to shopping centres, leisure and entertainment venues, sports facilities, parks and green spaces, everyone who moves about on foot, or bicycle, car, van, lorry or public transport for many and varied reasons, whether for work or pleasure.

1.2 There are those with particular needs like families with babies and children, older people, people with disabilities and poor or specific health conditions. The overseas tourists and visitors to our villages, towns and city are also important as their overall experience can be influenced by their impressions of such essential facilities.

1.3 Although the current economic position will adversely affect Bath and North East Somerset for now, the area is set to grow through new housing developments, through tourism and through economic development. This is therefore an opportune time to set a framework for providing toilet facilities where they are needed and wanted, so that we are well placed to ensure maximum public benefit as and when developments occur.

1.4 The Provision Strategy recognises that local councils are no longer the only providers of toilet facilities and that other providers and options must be brought forward to achieve the aim and objectives outlined.

1.5 The Provision Strategy establishes a framework for future provision in a range of ways and by a range of providers and with a range of funding sources, to achieve an overall improved standard of quality, quantity and distribution.

1.6 Further rationale for and benefits of a Provision Strategy are given under Section 4 Risk Management.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 The Planning, Transport & Environment panel is invited to:
note and comment on the report and draft strategy

2.2 And is asked to recommend that:
the Provision Strategy for Public Toilets is taken forward for consideration by the Cabinet Member prior to adoption by the Cabinet later in 2011/12.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The current national and local financial position is under increasing pressure and will remain so for a number of years. There is little prospect of the Council being able to allocate any increase in capital or revenue funding to this non-statutory service. Any substantial development works around public toilets by the Council will therefore need to be self-funding through efficiencies or income generation (charging for use or external contributions).

3.2 The Provision Strategy will support and facilitate changes to the way publicly accessible toilets are funded in the following ways, sometimes in combination. This seeks to relieve Council budgetary pressure in this area ongoing.

- developer funding towards major refurbishments of existing toilet facilities
- developer funding towards new sets of toilets in or near appropriate housing or commercial (retail, entertainment, leisure) developments
- local partnership and sponsorship working with retail, hospitality and other businesses
- innovative solutions in joint arrangements with toilet industry providers
- business case-supported capital/revenue investment by the Council
- extended use of planning and licensing policies

3.3 The Provision Strategy establishes recommended quality and quantity standards for the existing provision which should be maintained through appropriate budget allocation. The 2011/12 Neighbourhoods budget (£295k) includes cleansing (labour, transport and materials/consumables); utilities; rates; insurances; APC leasing, maintenance and service contracts; Parish Council fees.

Miscellaneous and APC income totals £14K. Overall, the average cost of managing and cleansing operations of the Council's public toilets is approximately £10k per annum per facility (27 in total as at August 2011).

3.4 Since 2004, approximately £470k has been spent on upgrading a number of the Council public conveniences by Property Services, mainly focussed on Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance works which has been completed at most of them. This is in addition to regular repairs and maintenance costs.

3.5 Two Council public toilets are programmed for DDA works in 2011/12 – Sydney Gardens, Bath and Ashton Way, Keynsham. Refurbishment and remodelling works are in progress at two locations this year – Gullocks Tynning, Midsomer Norton and Monksdale Road, Bath, part-funded by Aiming High for Disabled Children.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 Key overarching issues that have been identified in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance are summarised below:

4.2 **Strategic** – A policy on the provision of public conveniences will contribute to the medium to long term goals and the Council's priorities in the areas of:-

- Better lives for young people
- Climate change
- Independence for older people
- Feeling safer
- Sustainable growth
- Transport & public spaces

It will clearly define what the Council is seeking to provide in this area and may help to arrest any decline in the standard of provision brought about by reductions in budget.

4.3 **Economic** – The strategy will assist the Council in expanding the level of private provision of public conveniences which could replace and supplement existing Council-provided facilities and thereby relieve internal budgetary pressure. It will set a standard intended to avert failure to manage the existing assets and resources necessary to provide a service.

4.4 **Timescale** - Approval of the strategy in 2011/12 will allow integration with the Local Development Framework and its progress and other planning interventions that will facilitate and capitalise on future opportunities for funding contributions such as through the Community Infrastructure Levy (largely replacing the previous Section 106 planning obligations arrangements).

4.5 Specific detailed risk assessments will be carried out where appropriate and relevant to individual projects and work areas as necessary and in consultation with the Lead Member.

5 THE REPORT

5.1 The full draft Provision Strategy for Public Toilets in Bath & North East Somerset is attached as Appendix A. It has been developed from national guidance, referencing and benchmarking with other authorities, previous consultation with the Safer and Stronger Communities Panel, as well as a public consultation exercise in 2009/10.

5.2 The background papers include the Communities and Local Government document “Improving Public Access to Better Quality Toilets - a strategic guide” and the Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government report which recommended that Local Authorities develop a strategy for the provision of public conveniences in consultation with their local communities.

5.3 It sets the standards of provision required by the Council and its residents through the public consultation (2009-10), related to quality, quantity and distribution. Any new toilet provision, however it is to be delivered, needs to be demand-driven with the local community involved in the assessment and decision-making.

5.4 It enables resources to be targeted at the areas where public customer satisfaction needs to be improved and where the local community is involved in identifying a need. FOBRA raised a number of issues in 2008 through the Cleansing Task & Finish Group, requesting these be addressed through this process.

5.5 It includes the following overarching aim and headline objectives where “provide or facilitate” means that the Council will give leadership and support where possible to enable publicly accessible toilets to be in place.

Our Aim:

To provide or facilitate the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for residents and visitors at key locations across Bath & North East Somerset.

Our headline objectives are to provide or facilitate:

- Clean, safe and well maintained facilities
- Facilities accessible to all, at all practicable locations
- Facilities suitable for the location making it viable and inclusive
- Easily found facilities with good direction signage and individual facility information signs
- Enough facilities for the local population and users
- Enough facilities for the high levels of visitors to central Bath
- Evening/overnight provision at key locations where specific need is established

- User information available through webpages and other media
- Maximised availability through Council, partnership and commercial provision
- Frameworks for future needs provided by commercial developments through Council strategy and planning channels
- Provision of adequate temporary toilets by the promoters/organisers at one-off events
- Sustainable provision and within the budget available

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment is being carried out using corporate guidelines as part of the drafting of the Provision Strategy and this will be reported on at the PTE panel meeting.

6.2 Equalities and special interest groups (eg related to specific illnesses) were identified with the support of the Equalities Team and other Service areas such as Community Development and contacted for the consultation in 2009/10 and will continue to be contacted for specific input where identified.

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Ward Councillor; Cabinet Member; Parish Council; Town Council; Trades Unions; Overview & Scrutiny Panel; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Service Users; Local Residents; Community Interest Groups; Stakeholders/Partners; Other Public Sector Bodies; Section 151 Finance Officer; Chief Executive; Monitoring Officer.

7.2 A public consultation exercise was carried out in 2009/10. The results were reported back to the Safer & Stronger Communities panel. The outcomes and recommendations have been incorporated into the strategy.

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Human Resources; Property; Young People; Human Rights; Corporate; Health & Safety; Impact on Staff; Other Legal Considerations

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

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<p>Background papers</p>	<p>(1) Report on Consultation - Locally derived standards for a Provision of Public Conveniences Strategy – to Safer & Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel, 25th March 2010 Link to report or full web address http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeed=127&MeetingId=2412&DF=25%2f03%2f2010&Ver=2</p> <p>(2) Penny for your Thoughts.....Public Consultation documents and questionnaires, November 2009 – February 2010 Link to consultation or full web address http://consultations.bathnes.gov.uk/inovem/consult.ti/PCs.Standards.2009/consultationHome</p> <p>(3) Provision of Public Conveniences Strategy report to Safer & Stronger Communities Overview & Scrutiny Panel, 29th January 2009. Link to report or full web address http://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/CeListDocuments.aspx?Committeed=127&MeetingId=2405&DF=29%2f01%2f2009&Ver=2</p> <p>(4) Communities and Local Government document “Improving Public Access to Better Quality Toilets - a strategic guide” (March 2008) Link to report or full web address http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/publicaccesstoilets</p> <p>(5) Parliamentary Select Committee on Communities and Local Government report (October 2008) Link to report or full web address http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmcomloc/636/63602.htm</p>
<p>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</p>	

Appendix A – Draft copy of “A Provision Strategy for public toilets in Bath & North East Somerset”, September 2011