

Public Conveniences – summary for Council debate on “Save Bath’s public toilets” petition

Council meeting: 12th September 2013

Introduction:

In response to financial pressures, the Council plans to reduce the number of public conveniences provided and invest in improving standards, hygiene, and cleanliness at the remaining facilities.

The facilities to be kept open are those which serve parks, play areas and open spaces where there is no viable alternative and known high use toilets at large transport hubs and a key city centre 24 hour location.

Process to date:

The Council's 3 year budget plan (the MTSRP, as agreed at the February 2013 Council meeting) includes £120k savings target from 2014/15 on the public toilets budget.

From November 2012 onwards, the Budget Plan (MTSRP) and Service Impact Statements were subject to public consultation process which included Policy Development & Scrutiny panels, public budget fairs and the “Have Your Say” public consultation and response mechanisms. There was local media coverage of the specific plans for the Public Conveniences in November 2012.

The Service Impact Statement regarding this item drew from an Equalities Impact Assessment which had been carried out and was made available on the public website in February. An additional summary document was also published with some options outlined for alternative provision at the locations for retention.

Background:

There is no statutory duty to provide public toilets. The Council has a Provision Strategy for Public Conveniences (December 2011). A key element of this recognised that providing toilet facilities in separate buildings (and mainly by local councils), has been the model for many decades but is no longer appropriate in every situation. It established a long-term framework for future provision in a range of ways and by a range of providers, seeking to reduce funding from and dependency on the Council.

Work in progress to achieve the target savings:

1) External contract (13 retained locations):

The external contract (15 years plus 5 year extension) provides for investment by the contractor to improve and modernise facilities, such as automatic doors, anti-abuse mechanisms and equipment, easy-clean surfaces, water and electricity minimisation. Entry charges will generate income to off-set running costs, which include full management, cleansing, coin collection/handling, utility charges, responsive and planned repairs and

maintenance. We have progressed to a period of due diligence with the preferred bidder, with formal award of the contract to follow with a start date to be confirmed in November.

The 13 retained facilities are made up of 12 toilets in parks/play areas/open spaces and linked to transport hubs and Monmouth Street, Bath.

- Alexandra Park;
- Sydney Gardens;
- Henrietta Park;
- Alice Park;
- Parade Gardens;
- Royal Victoria Park Play Area;
- Monksdale Road;
- Memorial Park – Keynsham;
- The Shallows – Saltford;
- Charlotte Street Car Park;
- Riverside Coach Park;
- (see note below on Monmouth Street/Seven Dials)
- Odd Down Park & Ride;

Monmouth Street (Seven Dials): We are also improving this facility as it is currently a key 24/7 facility. This also relates to the future of Riverside Coach Park and the regeneration plans for the river areas (the Bath Innovation Quay part of the Enterprise Area).

2) Proposals and actions for the remaining 14:

- Ashton Way – Keynsham - proposed to keep open until new facilities are in place as part of the town centre regeneration from Autumn 2014;
- Gullock Tynning, Midsomer Norton - a cross-authority group of officers are working on how to deliver facilities here as part of a 'community campus' to link with the skate park, adventure play area, Somer Centre possibly through concession/lease with the incoming Leisure contract in 2015; interim arrangements will need to be made and funded.
- The three existing Automatic Public Conveniences (APCs) - The Island Midsomer Norton; Shaftesbury Road, Oldfield Park; Charlotte Street (car park entrance); we will be having detailed discussions with the current contractor about moving these to other prioritised locations and working through options for alternative provision.
- High Street, Paulton - under offer to the Parish Council to takeover completely, formal notice on current agreement given (for July 2014).
- London Road, Batheaston - under offer to the Parish Council to takeover completely, formal notice on current agreement given (for July 2014). Planning Policy officers leading on discussions with the Parish Chair on their Vision Plan.
- Weston High Street – to remain open until replacement provision has been found; officers are working on options with Ward Councillors.
- Larkhall Square – to remain open until 1 April 2014 whilst Ward Councillors and officers work through options for alternative provision.

- Greenlands Road, Peasedown St. John – we are working through options for alternative provision
- Bradford Road, Combe Down - we are working through options for alternative provision
- Dominion Road, Twerton - we are working through options for alternative provision
- Royal Victoria Park Pavilion - there will be improved provision at the facility in the middle of Charlotte St car park, and we are working through options for alternative provision.
- Approach Golf Course – transferred to Aquaterra from 1st July