

## COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2016

### REPORT OF HEAD OF CENTRAL SERVICES

#### PUBLIC CONVENIENCES -REPLACEMENT PROPOSAL

##### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide members with feedback on the outcomes of public consultation on the public conveniences and the recommendations that were made by Members at the public conveniences task group on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2016.
- 1.2 To seek members approval of the public conveniences project mandate attached at Appendix A.
- 1.3 To agree the next steps of the project and to approve the allocation of £10,000 from the Corporate Priorities fund 2016/17 to proceed with a business case for the toilets and to obtain planning permission for alternative use on the Park Lane public conveniences.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Members approve the Project Mandate (At Appendix A) for the replacement/renewal of the existing public conveniences at Wilton Road and St Marys Way as detailed within this report with two blocks of semi automatic public conveniences at Wilton Road and St Marys Way for inclusion into the capital programme. Funding to be allocated when the business case for replacement is fully developed and brought back to this committee.**
- 2.2 **Members note that an expression of interest has been made to the LLEP for funding at Wilton Road as set out in paragraph 3.4 of this report**
- 2.3 **Members approve the immediate closure of Park Lane toilets in accordance with the recommendations set out in Paragraph 3.5 of this report and that it be recommended to the Policy Finance and Administration Committee that this property be declared surplus and the Corporate Property officer be authorised to instruct architects to obtain planning consent for change of use and to seek to achieve maximum capital receipt for the freehold disposal of the Park Lane toilets.**
- 2.4 **Members note the summary document attached at Appendix B providing details and outcomes from the public consultation on provision of public conveniences.**
- 2.5 **Members approve the allocation of £10,000 from the Corporate Priorities Reserve 2016/17 to proceed with a business case for the toilets and to obtain planning permission for alternative use on the Park Lane public conveniences**

##### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 Officers undertook a review of the public conveniences due to their age and condition and certain defects that were causing complaints from the public. Building consultants advised that to bring the existing toilets up to modern design standards will cost in the region of £160k. In view of these costs and other financial constraints officers investigated introducing semi automatic toilets that would not require fully staffed toilets. The council has a £900k shortfall over the next 3 years and to go forward with the semi automatic toilets would be an estimated saving of £50k per annum (please note this will be dependent upon variables such as the cleaning regime and opening hours) and to sell Park Lane

toilets would bring in a capital sum in the region of £35k. The owners of Egerton Lodge have previously shown an interest in acquiring the Wilton Road site.

3.2 Officers implemented a public consultation exercise to get views from the public on the existing levels of provision, the introduction of semi automatic toilets and other associated matters. After receiving an initial report on the results of the public consultation Members set up a Public Conveniences Task Group to help steer the project. The Task Group and internal project team met in December 2015 and April 2016. The Task Group requested that the following recommendations be put forward to this committee:

1. That detailed plans are developed for 2 blocks of semi-automatic toilets at Wilton Road and St Mary's Way car parks resulting in the demolition of the existing St Mary's way facilities
2. That the existing toilets at Wilton Road and Park Lane be prepared for disposal
3. The council work with the Melton BID to develop a proposed business incentive scheme.

3.3 There were several important issues raised at the Task Group meeting, the distinction between automatic toilets that had been ruled out as unsuitable and semi-automatic toilets. Semi-automatic toilets are similar to what we have already except that they have direct access from the street, no lobby areas, there are no touch systems (wave flush and automatic wash/dryers), they offer clean modular cubicles that are easy to clean and serviced by cleaners at intervals during the day. The existing turnstiles and lobbies provide difficult access particularly for push chair users and they are not vandal proof. The omission of lobby areas in the design of semi-automatic toilets leads directly to lower cleaning and maintenance costs, less anti-social behaviour and vandalism

Melton Bid had commented on the opening hours as they intend to apply for the Purple Flag status and that in order to achieve this late opening toilets were needed, there were also individual comments on the design of the building and the toilets being unisex. The Chair also referred to the letter from the BID which stated that the location should be considered in conjunction with the strategy and coach parking proposals.

3.4 An expression of interest has been made for LLEP funding to develop Wilton Road for Coach parking by the Corporate Policy Officer. The outcome of the Expression of interest will not be known for at least six months, in view of the timing and uncertainty surrounding possible availability of grant funding, Members of the Task Group are of the opinion that whilst it is important to acknowledge and understand the inter relationship between the two initiatives it was also important that the public conveniences project presses ahead to enable the service improvements and also the projected revenue savings.

3.5 The Park Lane toilets are only opened 5-6 times per year and therefore it is extremely expensive to keep the toilets fully serviced and operational for such infrequent use. It is therefore recommended that these toilets are declared surplus and disposed on the open market, to achieve best value it is recommended that prior to marketing the Council seeks to gain planning permission for residential use. Currently these toilets are opened to service special events. It is considered that such provision should be made by event organisers through the use of temporary facilities.

3.6 Subject to Members approving the recommendations within this report. The next steps for this project are for officers to instruct external advisors to develop the business case, this will include some illustrations of semi-automatic toilets, detailed design and costings and proposed locations, taking into account the services and location of mains drainage. Operational issues can then be considered further through the Task Group reporting through to this committee.

#### **4.0 POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The provision of public conveniences is not a statutory requirement however Members have recognised that it is important for the town to have a public convenience provision.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The two existing toilets are both in need of considerable capital investment. With capital investment in semi-automatic toilets to replace existing service provision there is an opportunity for facilities to be improved as well as significant annual revenue savings to be achieved from this project. Present estimates suggest that annual savings of circa £50k can be achieved from an initial capital investment of circa. £225k.

5.2 A budget of £10k is required to progress the project to Business Case and to enable planning application to be made for Park Lane toilets.

5.3 A capital receipt is expected to be generated from the disposal of Park Lane toilets, subject to obtaining planning permission for residential re-development a net capital receipt of circa. £30-32k is anticipated. Wilton Road toilets would also be expected to generate a capital receipt after the replacement toilets are provided.

5.4 Any capital receipt is likely to be received after the new facilities are constructed.. This would mean the total funding would need to be provided from existing capital receipts a portion of which could be replenished later following any disposals. It is possible that LLEP funding may be secured for the Wilton Road project reducing the net capital cost of this project to the council.

5.5 The estimated saving in the region of £50k per annum from the introduction of semi-automatic toilets has been factored into the MTFs when arriving at the £900k shortfall. Should the project not progress this would increase the estimated deficit.

#### **6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 The proposals and recommendations within this report are likely to impact on existing staff working at the toilets and Human Resources and legal advice will continue to be taken accordingly.

#### **7.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

7.1 Replacing the existing toilets with the proposed modern design semi-automatic toilets means that there will no longer be a lobby area within the toilets and this is expected to reduce the likelihood of misuse of the toilets.

#### **8.0 EQUALITIES**

8.1 The proposed modern semi-automatic toilets are unisex, removal of the turnstiles in the existing toilets will improve access to toilets for parents with buggies and customers with access issues, and customers carrying goods. Once designs are put forward an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

## 9.0 RISKS

9.1 The risks of the project are as set out below:

**Probability**  
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Very High A				
High B		1		
Significant C				
Low D				
Very Low E				
Almost Impossible F				
	I Neg- ligible	II Marg- inal	III Critical	IV Catast- rophic

→  
**Impact**

Risk No.	Description
1	If the current services are not improved the facilities will continue to deteriorate causing high customer dissatisfaction
2	If revenue savings are not generated from this project then the Council will need to realise savings from another service area.

## 10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no specific climate change implications as a result of this report

## 11.0 CONSULTATION

11.1 Between January and March 2016 the Council has been working to engage the views of residents, community and access groups, local businesses, tourists, Council staff and Members on the options presented in regards to Public Conveniences within Melton Mowbray town centre. Over 200 people have directly engaged in the survey or have actively participated in the consultation process. A summary report of the consultation is attached as Appendix B.

## 12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All Wards are affected.

Contact Officer: David Blanchard

Date: 03.05.16

Appendices: Appendix A- Project Mandate-  
Appendix B –Public consultation summary document

Background Papers: Consultation responses  
Task Group Papers and minutes

Reference: X : Committees\

