

REPORT TITLE: PRIDE IN PLACE - PUBLIC TOILETS IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY.

13 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Learney Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The council is determined to improve public toilet provision across the district in terms of enhancing and improving facilities and their cleanliness.

This report sets out a Public Toilet improvement strategy, considering availability, sustainability, inclusivity, safety, affordability, and cleanliness of our public conveniences. The strategy envisions residents and visitors to the Winchester District having access to toilets in key locations which are comfortable, clean, safe, well maintained and cater to the whole community, increasing both public satisfaction in the area and the visitor economy.

The report also sets out plans for expenditure to carry out significant improvements to public conveniences and how these will be funded and delivered.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. To agree a strategy and approach for improving and managing public toilets in the district as set out in Appendix 1 of this report and to delegate to the Cabinet Member for Climate Emergency and Head of Programme to make any non-material amendments as required.
2. To Note that a detailed action plan to fully deliver the strategy will be brought forward following further discussion and data gathering.

3. To approve:
  - (a) a supplementary capital estimate of £10,000, funded by the car parks reserve, increasing the budget allocated in CAB3384 Parking and Access Improvement Programme from £200,000 to £210,000; and
  - (b) capital expenditure of £210,000 to improve toilets in Chesil and Worthy Lane car parks, and St Catherine's and South Winchester park and ride car parks.
  
4. Subject to Cabinet approval of CIL funding in October (CAB3426):
  - (a) approve a capital budget of £360,000; and
  - (b) approve capital expenditure of £210,000 of CIL funds for the works outlined in paragraphs 2.5 and 11.4.7.
  
5. To note that the refurbishment of public conveniences in Wickham, Bishops Waltham, New Alresford and Denmead will be subject to outcome of further discussions with Town and Parish Councils.
  
6. To note that additional cleaning will be undertaken at the most heavily used public toilets utilising some of the reserve funding which was put aside for Pride in Place enhancements. See paragraph 11.4.6 below.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

Winchester City Council strives to ensure that support is delivered to residents and visitors to the district across the services we provide. By investing in Pride and Place and delivering a strategy to enhance and improve our public convenience offering, we aim to mitigate some key issues around vandalism and anti-social behaviour, enabling access to both residents and visitors to toilets in key locations, which are comfortable, clean, safe, functional, economically sound, and cater to the whole community.

#### 1.1 Tackling the Climate Emergency and Creating a Greener District

The city council has declared a Climate Emergency and addressing the climate crisis and reaching carbon neutrality is the city council's overarching priority. By setting out key actions within an overarching strategy, we can ensure that the public conveniences we offer in the future are ambitious by ensuring public toilets are delivered in the most environmentally responsible way, which is practically possible. The first steps here have already been taken, by introducing leak detection equipment in all public conveniences – allowing us to detect and address any water wastage or issues much faster than previously.

#### 1.2 Vibrant Local Economy

Following the pandemic new challenges face our business community. Our businesses need our support as they work to adapt to tackle increasing costs, labour shortages, climate change and the changing face of the high street. Our approach regarding the public convenience strategy is to facilitate and support local development for the district covering Winchester City and other market towns, adding to the attractiveness of the district to live, work and visit and improving the quality of the environment, supporting the visitor and tourism economy. The strategy for public conveniences as set out in this report sets out an approach to protect and enhance the character of the district, reinforcing and maintaining a strong sense of community and identity.

#### 1.3 Living Well

Public toilet provision is an important consideration for the council particularly bearing in mind tourism and number of visitors who come to the district. The availability and accessibility of good quality public toilet facilities allows the area to be enjoyed by more people and for longer periods of time. For those in the population that have specific health needs, public toilets are a vital facility that are required if they are to be able to participate in daily activities that others take for granted. This often requires the provision of specialist facilities that are appropriate for complex health needs. We want all residents to live healthy and fulfilled lives, to feel safe and secure in their neighbourhood, and enjoy the recreational and cultural opportunities that the district offers. The council is committed to investing in our public spaces and working hard with

partners to deliver pride in place for our residents. This strategy aims to increase the deliverability of outdoor recreation for all, deliver inclusivity across communities, and support the cultural, visitor, and tourist economy. It should be noted that we have recently included sanitary disposal bins in our men's toilets in addition to those in the women's and disabled facilities.

#### 1.4 Your Services, Your Voice

The council is committed to ensuring that everyone from everywhere in the district, every background, income, or life circumstance can make their voice heard, and that these views are carefully considered and acted upon. The Council has received complaints in recent times about the condition/cleanliness of public toilets and toilet closures due to maintenance issues and antisocial behaviour damage. To address these issues within the new strategy, first we have commissioned toilet condition surveys which have allowed us to recognise and begin to analyse the works which need to be carried out at each of the public convenience sites across the district to bring them into an improved and upgraded condition. To follow this, we are now carrying out user number surveys at each location, to determine how often the facilities are used, how long for, and when, over a 6-week period. The information gathered from this study will help to determine actions required to deliver the strategy going forward.

## 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 In order to carry out important improvement works to public conveniences the required capital budgets will be funded from a combination of CIL (subject to Cabinet Approval in October) and the Car Parking reserve. A £200,000 budget for works to the toilets at Chesil and Worthy Lane car parks was included in the capital programme as part of the Parking and Access Improvement Programme (CAB3384). A CIL allocation of £410,000 has been agreed by the CIL panel and is subject to Cabinet approval in October (at present only £360,000 of this is required see below). A one-off budget for design works to the public conveniences has been approved and has been funded from a release of the reserve set aside for the purposes of improving service quality.
- 2.2 The works to the toilets at Chesil and Worthy Lane car parks are now estimated to cost up to £160,000 (including contingency). It is also intended to charge the cost of improvements at the two park and ride toilets to the parking reserve bringing the total spend from the parking reserve fund to £210,000. As these are existing facilities, there are no direct revenue consequences of the capital works.
- 2.3 Approval of works to existing toilets, funded by CIL, is sought in this paper at a total cost of £210,000 and as existing facilities there are no direct revenue consequences. The remaining £150,000 allocated for works to Middle Brook Street (currently closed) and the creation of a Changing Places facility will remain subject to approval to spend. These aspects will be considered further and brought forward in a subsequent report.

- 2.4 Without direct government legislation or funding for toilets, every local authority must decide on the number, location, and maintenance of their public facilities. This means that toilets are funded under “discretionary” services. Management of public conveniences is a TC25 project and this will be considered as part of the implementation of this strategy.
- 2.5 The table at paragraph 11.4.7 below sets out the works for which approval to spend is being sought in this paper as well as the works for which approval to spend will be sought at a later date.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The council must adhere to the rules set out in the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations) and the council’s own Contract Procedure Rules (CPR’s). In conducting any procurement, the council will be bound to observe the general principles enshrined in the Regulations, namely openness, transparency, and non-discrimination.
- 3.2 To ensure best value, in relation to future improvement works, a competitive procurement process will be undertaken, or a pre-tendered framework utilised in accordance with the council’s Contract Procedure Rules for the works to the public conveniences and changing places. The Procurement Team will continue to provide advice on this matter and ensure that the process is undertaken in accordance with the City Council’s Contract Procedure Rules and the Regulations.

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Works will be procured and managed by the in-house Asset Management Team at Winchester City Council. The Asset Management team will provide client resources from within existing staffing and the Environmental Services Team will provide as required.
- 4.2 Ongoing management for any works and analysis will be resourced from existing staffing within these two teams.

### 5 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The public conveniences mentioned within the strategy are all owned by WCC or leased to the council. New leases are being sought for the park and ride and the Market Lane public conveniences. The strategy for these facilities will be appropriate to the time remaining on the leases whilst still providing a good and enhanced level of service and functionality.

### 6 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 6.1 Consultation and guidance have been sought from the British Toilet Association (BTA), which advise on best practice and accessibility, as well as internally via The City Council Asset Management Team. Guidance has also been sought from a recent publication titled Local Authority public

conveniences provision 2023, published by the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE). Findings have been incorporated wherever practically possible into our strategy and approach.

- 6.2 Initial discussions have taken place with town and parish councils and these are ongoing.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The council has declared a Climate Emergency and is committed to sustainable development. Our Carbon Neutrality Action Plan ensures all council activity is undertaken with a view to supporting our commitment to achieving net zero carbon emissions.
- 7.2 The strategy for public conveniences considers possible features within design processes which minimise the use of resources both in construction and in use, taking opportunities throughout the strategy to reduce both water and energy use of facilities.

## 8 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

Toilets are about the continued health & well-being of our residents and visitors. Many persons with medical conditions may need to visit the toilet several times across the day and as such urgent access to a hygienically clean toilet is essential. Good toilets allow our older persons and young families to visit local amenities and purchase goods from local retailers – promoting social inclusion and developing better community bonds for activities and public safety. With over 14 million persons on the disabled register in the UK and another 10 million persons over the age of 55 suffering from medical, emotional, and physical difficulties it is so vitally important that we address all our equality and Human Rights issues by providing accessible toilets that are open, clean, and fit to function correctly.

An EQIA is attached at Appendix 3.

## 9 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the Data Protection Act 2018 and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) is not required for the public convenience strategy because there is no processing of personal data. In the event that any potential impacts are identified, the council will ensure they are assessed and addressed appropriately.

10 RISK MANAGEMENT10.1 Key risks are set out below.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<p><b>Financial Exposure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in prices due to market differences for improvement works.</li> <li>• Increased expenditure for continued replacement/maintenance of PCs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently undertaking pre-tender design works for public toilets in Chesil and Worthy Lane car parks so that documents can be prepared as soon as possible and in line with current estimates.</li> <li>• Ensuring a fixed price contract as far as can reasonably be done</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows the opportunity of time to conduct pre-market engagement and develop a specification for a new contract once the works are complete and the extension ends.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reputation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cleaning quality declines/ not maintained by contractor.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to monitor the contract and ensure feedback loop remains open.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Achievement of outcome</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to achieve the delivery of planned benefits/works with budget approval.</li> <li>• Impact of carrying out the improvement works.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure project plan and strategy is robust, with key milestones being closely monitored by the project team.</li> <li>• Careful phasing of works will be undertaken to ensure alternative provision is available during improvements works. Where this isn't</li> </ul>	

	<p>possible the use of communications will be made to make people aware in advance and seek to work with businesses who may be able to offer use of their facilities in the short term.</p>	
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## 11 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

### 11.1 Background

In 2022 the Council commissioned the British toilet Association to undertake an independent review of the current stand-alone toilet provision covering their condition, quality of maintenance and the cleaning regime and suggesting potential areas of improvement. The City Council Asset Management Team has also carried out a full building condition survey of all the Council's toilets.

Both these pieces of work confirmed the need for some considerable work to be done to bring our toilets up to standard and highlighted opportunities to make our provision better.

A list of council run facilities is included at Appendix 2.

### 11.2 Vision

**Residents and visitors to the Winchester District have access to toilets in key locations which are comfortable, clean, safe, well maintained and cater to the whole community.**

There is a clearly identified need to improve the provision of toilets, cater better for the needs of users with accessibility needs, reduce levels of antisocial behaviour and damage, and improve the maintenance and cleanliness of public toilets across the district. However, the Council, in common with other local authorities across the Country is facing severe financial challenges and needs to consider approaches other than direct provision and work with others to find financially sustainable solutions to public needs.

To achieve this vision, we will work with Town and parish councils and the commercial sector and invest in cleaning, refurbishment and deterring anti-

social behaviour and consider best practice approaches in order to achieve this.

11.3 The objectives of our public toilet improvement strategy are:

**Availability**

Provide toilets available to the public, directly and through partnership, to residents and visitors in key locations across the district.

**Sustainability**

Ensure public toilets are delivered in an environmentally responsible manner.

**Inclusivity**

Public toilets will meet the needs of all our residents, with a range of toilets available to meet the needs of families, those with restricted mobility and disability and others with protected characteristics.

**Safety**

People feel safe and comfortable accessing local toilet provision which is free of anti-social behaviour.

**Cost-effectiveness**

Ensure the proper management of public toilets is affordable, at a time when local authority budgets are under extreme pressure.

**Cleanliness**

Toilets are regularly cleaned and maintained, in line with levels of use and meeting community expectations.

11.4 Discussion

**11.4.1 Availability of public toilets**

The City Council currently has 11 traditional stand-alone public toilets with street access open in the district, 4 in Winchester Town, 3 on the edge of town or park and ride car parks and 4 in the market towns across the district. A list of these is included in appendix 2.

The British Toilet Association report highlighted that there was insufficient capacity in central Winchester particularly at times of high demand over the summer and at Christmas.

A threat to provision of public toilets in the centre of Winchester is that the Market Lane toilets are not in the City Council's ownership and the lease has relatively few years to run. The Council is seeking to renew the lease, but if it cannot be renewed alternative provision in the area will be needed.

Some additional toilet provision could be provided in the city centre by reopening toilets in Middle Brook Street. These were closed due to high levels of anti-social behaviour and damage, which also allowed for the available budget to be used for enhanced cleaning in Market Lane and Abbey Gardens toilets. This will need to be considered carefully and would have to be achievable within current available budgets.

### **11.4.2 Sustainability**

Refurbishing toilets will give the opportunity to introduce water and energy saving measures into our public toilets.

### **11.4.3 Inclusivity and changing places**

Currently all the Council's toilets have accessible facilities suitable for independent use by those with limited mobility. Changing Places toilets provide for people with multiple and complex disabilities who have one or two assistants with them. They need to be in locations where assistance is available in case of any problems.

Although the district has more there is no provision in the central part of Winchester. The Council will look for opportunities to fill this gap directly or in partnership with others.

Provision is also needed for families, baby change facilities should be provided in all male and female toilets and where possible, separate family rooms.

### **11.4.4 Safety and combatting anti-social behaviour**

Anti-social behaviour in our toilets makes the public uncomfortable using them and increases costs in maintenance and cleaning. Following completion of the refurbishment works and enhanced cleaning regimes it may be necessary to investigate other ways to reduce anti-social behaviour. All options will be subject to consultation.

### **11.4.5 Cost-effective provision of toilets**

The Council is committed to retaining toilets in key locations and where sufficient demand exists but needs to look at reducing costs through rationalising provision, working in partnership with others and looking at cost recovery where appropriate.

The provision of new and improved facilities will need to be dependent on a strong strategic case and available funding. Funding will be sought from outside sources and partnership working where possible.

User number surveys are currently being undertaken through August to September 2023 for the Council run public conveniences across the district. These surveys will help us to understand how often our toilets are used, and when. A deeper understanding of this usage will allow us to consider economical options going forward. This information will also allow us to consider if some toilets are not well used and if the money used to provide these facilities could be better used elsewhere.

Town and parish councils may be better placed to provide and maintain such facilities through economies of scale with other local contracts which they may have in place already. Parish and Town Councils in the district already make contributions to the maintenance/ cleaning of public toilets. Recent meetings have taken place with parish and town councils to explore enhanced / community / local management of these facilities. Further discussions are needed with Parish and Town Councils in advance of committing to undertake improvement works.

Private sector toilet providers may benefit from promoting their toilets for wider use and we can highlight these accordingly. We will also consider the introduction of community toilet schemes, where local shops and cafes make toilets available to the public.

#### 11.4.6 Cleanliness

The cleanliness of our toilets is a key driver of public satisfaction. Public toilets are cleaned by our contractor Wettons. This contract is due to be retendered at the end of 2024.

We are currently discussing with the contractor how we can enhance cleaning and maintenance of the facilities through additional cleaning and inspection of the most used facilities. This work is being informed by the usage surveys that we are currently undertaking. It is intended to use some of the additional allocated funding for Pride in Place enhancements to support and improve cleaning for a set period of time to see if this addresses some of the current issues and the impacts of antisocial behaviour. This will be evaluated in terms of its effectiveness prior to retendering the cleaning contract.

#### 11.4.7 Next steps

It is proposed that the Council deliver a programme of refurbishment of public toilets in line with the outcome of condition surveys funded as detailed below. **These improvements will address all identified issues identified from the condition surveys in terms of required plumbing and electrical works and will also provide a complete refurbishment of the fixtures, decoration, and fittings. This will make them easier to maintain and keep clean whilst making them more durable to antisocial behaviour and wear and tear. Measures will also be included to reduce energy and water usage.**

<b>Works to car park public toilets (funded by car parks reserve)</b>	<b>£'000</b>
Chesil Multi Storey car park	75
Worthy Lane car park	85
South Winchester Park and Ride	25
St Catherines Park and Ride	25

<b>Total funded by car parks reserve</b>	<b>210</b>
<b>Works to other public toilets (funded by CIL)</b>	
<i>Approve to spend in this paper</i>	
Abbey Gardens	85
Market Lane	25
Discovery Centre	20
For Towns and Parish Toilets	80
<b>Total approved to spend</b>	<b>210</b>
<i>Subject to approval and further consideration</i>	
Middlebrook Street (currently closed)	50
Changing Places Facility	100
<b>Total subject to approval</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Total funded by CIL</b>	<b>360</b>

## 12 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:

### 12.1 To do nothing – leaving the public conveniences in their current condition.

This option has been dismissed due to several reasons. Firstly, the comments and recommendations made by the British Toilet Association as referenced within this report. Secondly, the health and safety issues related to the current state of the current public conveniences, especially in a post-pandemic world, lacking the ability to provide visitors hygienically clean and well-maintained facilities along with complaints from users and associated bad publicity for the city. Thirdly, the levels of ASB currently taking place in the public conveniences needs mitigation measures put in place to ensure safe use for visitors.

### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

#### Previous Committee Reports:-

CAB3384 Parking and Access Improvement Programme

#### Other Background Documents:-

None

### APPENDICES:

1. CAB3411 Appendix 1 Public Conveniences Strategy
2. CAB3411 Appendix 2 List of WCC PC facilities\_

3. CAB3411 Appendix 3 EQIA (sept)