

Appendix 5: Community Toilet Scheme Research

Background

Brighton & Hove City Council previously participated in a Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) called 'Use Our Loo'. It started in 2000 as the 'You're Welcome' scheme and was designed to encourage businesses to open up their toilets to the public. They are asked to display a sticker and their details are displayed in tourist information, the city map and online.

As reported in 2012¹, uptake was limited, with 19 businesses involved. The concerns that businesses had in participating in the scheme related to:

- *Anti-social behaviour*
- *Opening up their premises to 'all and sundry'*
- *Costs incurred such as water metering, cleaning and supplies*
- *Insurance implications*

Feedback was also that smaller businesses found it difficult to participate in the scheme due to:

- *Less likely to be accessible toilets*
- *Lack of supervision of facilities*
- *Location of toilets within small businesses can be inaccessible and present security issues*
- *Less resources for cleaners*
- *The rate at which these businesses were going under, there was no guarantee that they would still be there in 6 months*
- *Impact on insurance.*

At the time, no financial incentives were offered by the council to participate in the scheme.

Because of the relatively poor uptake owing to local business concerns above, the council decided to alter the nature of the CTS by not keeping participant's facilities open to the general public. Instead, there were plans in 2012 to adapt the Use Our Loos Scheme for use from the general public to only those with specific medical needs. There were plans to issue 'Can't Wait Cards' to those eligible. Since this time, the limited officer resource has focused on the public toilet cleaning and maintenance contract, when it was delivered by a contractor and, more recently, the insourcing of the service and now direct cleaning and maintenance.

Desktop research

Desktop research has been completed into the CTS run by other local authorities:

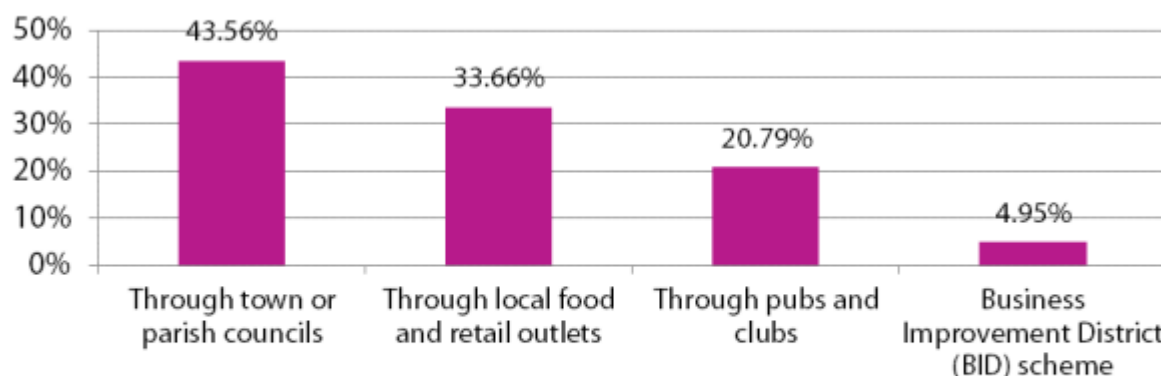
Authority	How many toilets does your local authority provide?	How long has the CTS been in place?	Is a fee paid to those businesses participating in the CTS?
Bristol City Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18: council maintained public toilet sites in parks throughout the city • 9: council buildings • 21: open access sites e.g. shopping centres • 83: businesses / organisations participating in a CTS 	Since 2018	No
Cardiff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 36: council maintained public toilet sites, of which 35 are council buildings 	Since 2019	No

¹ Publicly Accessible Toilets Scrutiny Panel Report, July 2013 available at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/sites/default/files/migrated/article/inline/final%20publicly%20accessible%20report%20for%20OSC.pdf>

Authority	How many toilets does your local authority provide?	How long has the CTS been in place?	Is a fee paid to those businesses participating in the CTS?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2: in open access sites e.g. shopping centres / train stations • 3: businesses / organisations participating in a CTS 		
City of London	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2: council maintained public toilet sites • 2: council buildings • 12: open access sites e.g. shopping centres • 60: businesses / organisations participating in a CTS • 4: other (Urilifts) 	Since 2010	Yes - £600 per year regardless of facilities offered
London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unknown: council maintained public toilet sites – the council still maintain toilets in parks, libraries, and cemeteries • 8: council buildings (libraries) • Unknown: open access sites e.g. shopping centres • 49: businesses / organisations participating in a CTS 	Started in late 1990s and officially launched in 2003	Yes – £1000 per year if open seven days a week, and £800 if not (payments made six months in arrears and six months in advance)
Poole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19: council maintained public toilet sites • 3: council buildings • 1: open access sites e.g. shopping centres • 17: businesses / organisations participating in a CTS 	Since 2016 – shut all toilets in the town centre (4) when introducing the CTS	Yes – criteria are used to score the facilities available and a payment made accordingly; this ranges from £300 to £1000
Wealden District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4: council maintained public toilet sites • 4: council buildings • 0: open access sites e.g. shopping centres • 17: businesses / organisations participating in a CTS 	Since 2009	Yes – dependent on opening hours and facilities available; ranges from £500 to £1560

A July 2022 report from the [Association for Public Service Excellence](#) (APSE) presents the results of a survey conducted with APSE member councils on public toilet provision, including alternative arrangements for public toilet provision. This includes:

Has the council developed alternative arrangements for public toilet provision?



The responding councils have several different approaches to alternative arrangements for public toilet provision, with the most popular two being through town and parish councils (43.56%) and through local food and retail outlets (33.66%) via community comfort schemes. Several others also have alternative solutions through things like privately run toilets or use other council owned facilities such as sports centres, libraries and customer centres.

Considerations for Brighton & Hove City Council

In determining whether to introduce a CTS in Brighton & Hove, the following needs to be considered:

Item	Necessary?	Cost
Fee paid to participants	Optional	£300-£1560 per site per annum based on other council examples
Signage costs	Mandatory	Unknown
Administration costs i.e. staff and associated costs relating to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaising with and supporting participants • Inspecting sites to ensure compliance 	Mandatory	Based on other council examples, at least 1 FTE
Initial advertising costs	Optional	Unknown

If the council wanted to introduce a CTS, a budget would need to be allocated. This would be to fund a dedicated officer to administer the scheme and pay businesses to participate. At present, there is no identified budget for this purpose. An alternative is for the CTS to be funded from the public toilet budget, which would reduce the number of sites that could be opened. Therefore, at this time, it is not recommended that a CTS is introduced.

