

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

## Agenda Item 87

**Subject:** Public Toilet Update

**Date of meeting:** 14 March 2023

**Report of:** Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### **1. Purpose of the report and policy context**

1.1 This report provides Members with an update on the Council's public toilet service.

### **2. Recommendations**

2.1 That Committee notes the report.

### **3. Context and background information**

3.1 On 17 January 2022, Environment, Transport & Sustainability (ET&S) Committee received a report on public toilets. That report:

- provided an update on the service provision at that time in light of the decision to close some public toilets across the city in response to an increasing budget pressure in-year.
- set out scenarios for the service provision from 1 April 2023 in light of the budget pressures experienced in 2022/23 combined with proposed savings as part of the initial 2023/24 budget.
- provided an update on the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme.
- sought approval for the introduction of charging at some sites in the city to sustain as much public toilet provision as possible.
- provided a response to the Public Toilet Notice of Motion agreed, as amended, at this committee on 15 November 2022.

3.2 This report provides a further update on the public toilet service due to developments since this time.

### **Public toilet budget**

3.3 At Budget Council on 23 February 2023, Members approved the General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasure Management Strategy 2023/24. This impacted the public toilet service in two ways. Firstly, the previously proposed saving to the public toilet budget was removed, with additional

funding provided to the public toilet budget. Secondly, £1.100m was allocated for capital investment to public toilets refurbishments and rebuilds.

### **Reopening of public toilets**

- 3.4 The additional funding means it is now possible to reopen all public toilets without placing a financial pressure on the public toilet budget. However, the reopening of currently closed sites requires additional permanent and seasonal staff.
- 3.5 Sites, including the recently refurbished sites, will be reopening, but the dates are dependent on recruitment and the ability to fill the additional posts. Seasonal staff are required in the summer due to the longer opening hours. In winter, the shorter opening hours mean each toilet site can be opened, closed and maintained within one shift. In the summer months, the longer hours mean two shifts are required to open, clean and maintain each toilet site.
- 3.6 Recruitment has started and as soon as resources are available, closed sites will begin to reopen. If it is not possible to recruit the seasonal staff, other options will be pursued to enable the toilets to be opened.
- 3.7 Three toilet sites will remain closed whilst significant issues are dealt with.
- 3.8 The toilets on Princes Place near the Royal Pavilion Gardens are in a central location and need refurbishment. There are very high levels of anti-social behaviour and drug use in these toilets which makes it unsafe for members of the public and our staff. These problems also make it much harder to maintain and keep the toilets clean. The site has been reviewed alongside a Public Conveniences Problem Reduction Guide produced by Hertfordshire Constabulary. This document highlights the best crime prevention practice in toilet design, such as ensuring the entrance is visible and in areas of high passing footfall. Based on this guide, there are concerns about whether the location of the building is suitable for a public toilet. Discussions have also taken place with the council's Head of Architecture & Design and Community Safety Teams, as well as Sussex Police, to identify options to reduce to the risk to the site, staff and members of the public and the options are limited. The orientation and location of this site needs to be carefully considered prior to any investment, which could end up being wasted if the behavioural issues and vandalism are not resolved first. Work is continuing with stakeholders on the future of this site.
- 3.9 The Level Toilets are currently closed due to significant issues with the building they are housed in, The Velo Café, which require substantial remedial work and investment to bring the building and toilets back into use. Further to this, these toilets are the focus of anti-social behaviour and drug dealing. The location and orientation may also be a factor that needs to be considered. The Level café and toilets are subject to an options appraisal at present and the options will be presented to committee for a decision in the future.

- 3.10 There is alternative provision in the area, including Jubilee Library, the museum, Churchill Square and bars and restaurants.
- 3.11 The toilets at Norton Road have been closed since April 2022 and will remain closed due to the significant repairs required. This site was open on weekends and bank holidays.

### **Public Toilet Programme Manager**

- 3.12 As part of the additional revenue budget, funding has been provided for a two-year Programme Manager to address the future sustainability and resilience of public toilet provision across the city. Recruitment will start shortly.
- 3.13 The Programme Manager will complete an options appraisal for each site to determine the most viable options to sustain toilet provision, which may include transfer to businesses or communities, whilst remaining as publicly accessible toilets. The postholder will also manage the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme and look at options for developing a Community Toilet Scheme.
- 3.14 An update will be brought to a future ET&S Committee on the public toilet service. Recommendations for transfer will be brought to the appropriate committee for a decision on how to proceed.

### **Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme**

- 3.15 Phase 1 of the Programme started on 28 November 2022 at Daltons, Kings Esplanade, Saltdean Undercliff and Station Road. Appendix 1 sets out the enhanced facilities at each site. These sites are due to be handed back to the council on 31 March 2023. It is anticipated the sites will reopen on Monday 3 April, following a deep clean, staff training and stocking each site. However, this is dependent on there being no significant snagging issues and recruiting seasonal staff.
- 3.16 The Park Road toilets in Rottingdean have also been undergoing refurbishment with funds from Rottingdean Parish Council. This site is due to be handed back to the council on in April. At the time of writing, it's not possible to provide a reopening date.
- 3.17 Consideration is now being given to Phase 2 of the Refurbishment Programme, particularly in light of the additional capital funding now available. Opportunities to invest in sites before transfer to businesses or communities will form part of future options. It is important to note that it is unlikely the pace of the programme will increase with the additional budget provided. This is due to the refurbishments taking place in the quieter months to lessen the impact of their closure, meaning refurbishments can only be completed between September and March. Officer capacity to manage the refurbishments is also a consideration.

- 3.18 The public toilets at Hove Lagoon will be refurbished as part of Kingsway to the Sea and will include a Changing Places Toilet. The public toilets at Western Esplanade will be replaced by purpose-built toilet facilities as part of Kingsway to the Sea's new outdoor sports hub, which will also include a Changing Places Toilet.
- 3.19 Plans for installing the new Changing Places Toilets (CPT) are progressing with the CPT in the One Garden at Stanmer Park. The procurement of the contractor for the works will likely commence this spring with a late summer/early autumn opening date.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the public toilet service and there are no alternative options for consideration resulting from this report's recommendations.
- 4.2 The Public Toilet Programme Manager will consider the options for each public toilet site, which will involve looking at all the options available and analysing the viability of each. The postholder will also look at other options to sustain toilet provision across the city, such as a Community Toilet Scheme.
- 4.3 Regular updates will be brought to ET&S Committee on the public toilet service. Recommendations for transfer will be brought to the appropriate committee for a decision on how to proceed.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 Following the publication of the first draft of savings for 2023/24 as part of the 1 December 2022 Policy & Resources Committee papers and the Public Toilet Report for ET&S Committee, a significant amount of feedback has been received. This feedback contributed to the revised financial proposals agreed by Budget Council on 23 February 2023.
- 5.2 Engagement with stakeholders will form a key part of options appraisal for each site. This includes, but is not limited to, ward councillors, local businesses, sports groups, Friends of Park groups, disability advocacy organisations and other council teams.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 This report provides committee with an update on the public toilet service following the last report to ET&S Committee on 17 January 2023. Regular updates will be brought to committee on the service, including progress on the options appraisals, the Refurbishment Programme and other activities to sustain public toilet provision across Brighton & Hove.

#### **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report which is for noting. Previously reported budget savings for public toilets had been removed prior to Policy & Resources Committee 9th February 2023. Part of the budget agreed at Policy & Resources committee and Budget Council 23rd February 2023 included £0.465m service pressure funding required to meet increased maintenance and cleaning costs of public toilets and provide additional business support for future resilience of the service. A budget amendment was also agreed that redirected £1.1m capital funds to be used for public toilets refurbishments and rebuilds. Any significant variation to budget will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.
- 7.2 There are no direct financial implications arising from recommendation 2.4 of this report. Corporate Modernisation Delivery Board funding has been awarded as part of the City Environmental Modernisation Programme. This includes capital and revenue funding for the initial acquisition of an Integrated Waste Management System and annual licence cost for year 2. Licence fees for year 3 onwards would be contained within existing City Environmental budgets and any significant variation will be reported as part of the council's monthly budget monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 06/03/2023

## **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report which is for noting.

Name of lawyer consulted: Alice Rowland Date consulted: 06/03/2023

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from the report's recommendations.
- 9.2 The work to be completed by the Programme Manager, particularly the options appraisals, will have regards to the Public Sector Equalities Duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) and will consider the equalities implications.
- 9.3 Public toilet provision across the city is being made more accessible through increasing the numbers of CPTs in the city and as set out in Appendix 1 in terms of the enhanced facilities at the refurbished sites.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the report's recommendations.
- 10.2 The Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme is introducing motion sensor lighting, taps and hand driers, reducing electricity and water consumption.

## **11. Other Implications**

### **Crime & disorder implications**

- 11.1 Some sites in the public toilet portfolio experience high levels of anti-social behaviour, particularly Royal Pavilion Gardens and The Level. Other sites also have issues, in terms of the number of needles found at sites, including Goldstone Villas, Shelter Hall and The Colonnade.
- 11.2 The work to be completed in terms of the options appraisals and future phases on the Refurbishment Programme will take this into consideration to design in mitigations to reduce anti-social behaviour.

### **Public health implications**

- 11.3 The importance of public toilets to public health is acknowledged. The increased investment for the public toilet service is in recognition of this. The work to be completed by the Programme Manager, particularly the options appraisals, will consider the public health implications.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **Appendices**

1. Appendix 1: Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme

### **Background documents**

1. [Draft General Fund Budget & Resources Update 2023/24 report](#) to Policy & Resources Committee on 1 December 2022 (item 78)
2. [Public toilet report](#) to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 17 January 2023 (item 77)
3. [General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasure Management Strategy 2023/24 report](#) to Budget Council on 27 February 2023 (item 91)
4. Public Conveniences Problem Reduction Guide available at <http://www.btaloos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/PubliclyAvailableToiletsProblemReductionGuide.pdf>