

Subject:	Preston Park Toilets. Petition Triggering Full Debate		
Date of Meeting:	17 July 2014		
Report of:	Monitoring Officer		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Wall	Tel: 29-1006
	E-mail:	mark.wall@brighton-hove.gcsx.gov.uk	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 A combined paper and e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 1,400 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**3.1 The Petition**

"I, Francis Incorvaja, the petition organiser on behalf of myself and over 1,400 undersigned, petition the Council to arrange and implement the full refurbishment of the male/female/disabled public toilets adjacent to the Rotunda Café in Preston Park.

In support of the petition, we submit the following information:

Preston Park is the City's largest urban park and one of its flagship parks. It is frequented by thousands of people every week and used for some of the City's major events.

In close proximity to the subject public toilets (toilets) there are children play areas, tennis courts and bowling green, vegetable gardens, the rose garden, the wild flower area and the pond, as well as the vast open space. Visitors to these areas generally use the toilets.

In just over four weeks over 1,400 people have signed the petition and it is considered the number would significantly grow if the petition was held for longer or had been subject to greater publicity.

The toilets have not been subject to any significant repairs or refurbishment for over 13 years and with such high usage are seriously dilapidated. Families will rather take their children home than use the toilets and mothers refuse to change babies for fear of health issues.

The toilets are subject to broken fittings, dangerous flooring, cracked tiling, mould growth and poor decoration. The decoration (not refurbishment) of the toilets has been within the Park's Management Plan for at least financial years 12/13 and 13/14. Both times it was classed as Low Priority and both times the work had not been carried out.

Irrespective of the Council's budget for the management of its parks, Revenue from the Preston Park controlled parking scheme can only be expended on Preston Park. For the financial year ending 2014 the unspent surplus from the parking scheme was circa £27,000. These surplus funds in themselves will be sufficient to properly and fully refurbish the toilets without reliance on the overall Council's budget.

The Council makes great overtures about the awards it receives for its public toilets but at the same time allows one of its most prominent and widely used assets to fall into disrepair.

Equally, the toilets are for the use of the Café's customers and staff. If the toilets were part of a private business it is likely the Council's Environmental Health Department would insist on the toilets being refurbished including the provision of hot water.

Lead Petitioner – Francis Incorvaja

3.2 The options open to the council are:

- To note the petition and take no action for reasons put forward in the debate; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting with recommendations.

4. **PROCEDURE:**

- 4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the prayer of the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response;
- (iii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors and call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to move an amendment or additional recommendation(s) to the recommendation listed in paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- (iv) Any councillor may move an amendment or recommendation, having regard to the recommendation in 2.1 above and any such proposal will need to be formally seconded;
- (v) After a period of 15 minutes, the Mayor will then call an end to the debate and ask the relevant Cabinet Member to reply to the points raised;
- (vi) The Mayor will then formally put:
 - (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
 - (b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).