

# **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

## **EXECUTIVE MEETING**

**Monday 28 February 2005**

### **Report Of The Waste Services Manager**

**(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards)**

#### **REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

##### **1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Executive to implement the outcomes of the review of public conveniences.

##### **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The decision of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards to endorse the recommendation of the Health and Leisure Review Panel (HLRP) to carry out a series of investments and disinvestments in public conveniences was published in the Weekly Bulletin on 20 January 2005. The principle behind the decision was to utilise funds raised from the sale of some sites to improve the quality of the remaining facilities and generate on-going revenue savings.
- 2.2 This decision now requires Executive approval before it can be implemented.
- 2.3 A copy of the report to HLRP is attached (APPENDIX A). However, a number of changes have subsequently occurred that now need to be considered:
  - There is consensus amongst the North Taunton Councillors that fitting out the shell of a freestanding public convenience built as part of the Surestart project is not the best solution. Research is therefore being carried out on the provision of a community facility within existing premises in the vicinity of Priorswood Place.
  - The forecasted costs of developing the Vivary Hub have increased and for supervised toilets to be provided this project requires further financial assistance.
  - Tenders have been received for the re-building of the North Street C/P toilets in Wellington. These are in excess of the current budget allocation.

### 3. FINANCIAL SUMMARY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

3.1 The revised potential financial costs and benefits of the review after taking these factors into account are summarised below:

	Scheme						
Capital	Pr/wd £	K/stn Rd. £	T/crd St. £	H/tn Rd. £	W/tn Lnds. £	N. St. W £	Total £
Capital spend	10,000	25,000			70,000	22,500	127,500
Capital receipt/saving	-45,000		-80,000	-80,000			205,000
<b>Net cost to TDBC</b>	<b>-35,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>-80,000</b>	<b>-80,000</b>	<b>70,000</b>	<b>22500</b>	<b>-77,500</b>
<b>Revenue savings PA</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>			<b>19,000</b>

Key: Pr/d = Priorswood, K/stn Rd. = Kingston Road, T/crd St. = Tancred Street,  
H/tn Rd. = Hamilton Road, W/tn Lnds. = Wilton Lands,  
N. St. W = North Street C/P Wellington

### 4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is recommended that the Executive notes the changes to the Health and Leisure Review Panel Report and recommends to Council the implementation plan and necessary changes to the approved capital programme.

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**TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**HEALTH AND LEISURE REVIEW PANEL**

**Tuesday 11 January 2005**

**Report Of The Waste Services Manager**

**(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Mark Edwards)**

**REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES**

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the provision of Public conveniences in Taunton Deane.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 A report was presented to HLRP in February 2004 that recommended that the number of public conveniences that the Council owns be rationalised on the basis that cleaning and maintenance budgets should be concentrated on a smaller number of facilities in strategic locations. (summary outcomes attached at APPENDIX 1). The principle behind the rationalisation was to move towards fewer but better quality facilities, that would enhance the impression of the Borough.

2.2 The report recommended the approval of the summary outcomes of the review of public conveniences. The recommendation was approved by the panel and endorsed by the executive Councillor.

2.3 It is now possible to put forward several opportunities to implement the summary outcomes and which cumulatively realise a net financial benefit to the Council.

**3. Priorswood**

The toilets at the rear of the library have been shut for a number of years following excessive levels of vandalism. The area is now part of the planned development of the Surestart family centre. The current agreement with Surestart is that:

- Surestart will demolish and landscape the existing public conveniences.
- In compensation for this loss of facility Surestart will erect the shell of a small (4m x 4m) vandal resistant public convenience up to a maximum value of £20k.
- The council will then fit out the shell using £35k capital held in the public convenience account.

- The continued closure of the public conveniences has not generated significant local concern. It is therefore considered that the £35k capital earmarked for this project could be utilised to better effect elsewhere.
- Surestart have agreed that if they were not required to build the shell they would pay the Council £10k compensation providing that it is used to improve public conveniences within the Deane.

It should be noted that the perception is that most genuine users of toilet facilities in Priorswood would be elderly local residents using the nearby shops. This would clearly be a better site for any new toilets. There is also a possibility that the £10k contribution from Surestart could be used to invest in improved community facilities for disabled and elderly people in the Priorswood Community Centre.

#### **4. Kingston road**

The toilets near the station on Kingston Road have been shut for over a year as a result of low usage, vandalism and the generally poor condition of the facilities.

The continued closure of the public conveniences has not generated significant local concern and it is proposed that the facilities should be demolished and the area landscaped. The cost of these works is estimated at £25k.

The potential annual revenue savings including rates associated with the demolition of the Kingston road toilets is £5k per annum.

#### **5. Tancred Street**

The toilets on Tancred St. were closed for a temporary period when the Council was having problems with the cleaning contract. (It was necessary to match the number of facilities that were cleaned to the available cleaning staff). This action attracted some adverse media reaction.

It is the view of the waste services unit that the toilets are not well used or strategically located. A people counter was used to try and assess usage but unfortunately this did not provide reliable information.

The toilets are situated adjacent to a development site for a number of semi-detached town houses in which the Council has an interest. The site has planning permission and if developed the existing public toilets will become a “bad neighbour”. Alternatively, the sale of the facilities for re-development would allow a further two semi detached properties to be built as part of the development removing the source of potential complaints.

The Council's Chief Valuer has estimated that the value of the site for development would be £80 - 100k.  
The potential annual revenue savings including rates associated with the demolition of the Tancred Street toilets is £5k per annum.

**6. Hamilton Road**

These toilets were closed in similar circumstances to Tancred St. However, due to very low usage and no adverse local reaction they have remained closed for over a year.

The site is suitable for development and draft plans have been produced that show that two semidetached houses could be built on the site.

Subject to planning approval, the Council's Chief Valuer has estimated that the value of the site for development would be £80 - 100k.

The potential annual revenue savings including rates associated with the demolition of the Hamilton Road toilets is £5k per annum.

**7. Wilton Lands**

The Wilton Lands facilities have been identified as being in need of refurbishment or replacement. They are strategically located adjacent to a car park frequently used by golfers and a children's play area and receive a high level of use.

If the £35k currently "earmarked" for the Surestart project (see 3. above) was to be released then it would be recommended that this should be used to refurbish Wilton Lands. However, there may well be an opportunity to improve the facilities by providing supervised public conveniences within the "Vivary Hub"

**8. ASSET MANAGEMENT GROUP**

These proposals were discussed at a meeting of the Asset Management Group on 7 December 2004.

The proposals were supported by the Group with the additional comment that the Proposed sale for redevelopment as housing of the Tancred Street site would have the further benefit of improving the overall appearance of the street.

**9. FINANCIAL SUMMARY**

This proposal has been discussed with the Financial Services Manager.

The potential financial costs and benefits of the above proposal are summarised below:

Capital	Scheme					
	Priorswood	Kingston Rd	Tancred Street	Hamilton Road	Wilton Lands	Total
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Capital Spend	10,000	25,000			40,000	75,000
Capital Receipts/Savings	-45,000		-80,000	-80,000		-205,000
<b>Net cost to TDBC</b>	<b>-35,000</b>	<b>25,000</b>	<b>-80,000</b>	<b>-80,000</b>	<b>40,000</b>	<b>-130,000</b>
Revenue Savings		5,000	5,000	5,000		15,000

## 10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 It is recommended that the Panel requests that the Executive Councillor approves:

- The discontinuation of the current agreement with Surestart to erect the shell of a public convenience at Priorswood.
- The demolition and landscaping of the public conveniences at Kingston Road
- Sale of the Tancred Street public conveniences on terms to be approved by the Chief valuer.
- Sale of the Hamilton Road public conveniences on terms to be approved by the Chief valuer.
- The provision of supervised public conveniences in the proposed "Vivary Hub or refurbishment of the Wilton Lands public conveniences.

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## SUMMARY OUTCOMES

- 4.1 The current arrangements for cleaning toilets twice each day regardless of usage is inflexible and inappropriate. Consideration should be given to focussing the cleansing service according to need.
- 4.2 The current policy of leaving facilities open all year round regardless of demand exposes some facilities to unnecessary vandalism, increases maintenance and utility costs and places a strain on the cleansing service. Where appropriate consideration should be given to opening facilities to cater for seasonal demand.

- 4.3 Public conveniences that do not meet an appropriate standard of health, hygiene and safety and where usage and need are low should be closed and resources redirected to improve standards at the remaining facilities.
- 4.4 The number of facilities provided by the Council should be rationalised to ensure that higher quality services are targeted at the facilities with greatest need.
- 4.5 The provision of public conveniences should be kept under review and opportunities taken, where possible to work in partnership with user groups to ensure that the facilities meet the needs of the users.
- 4.6 The provision of public conveniences in Taunton Town Centre should form part of the "Vision for Taunton". This could affect facilities at the Bus Station, Goodlands Gardens, Castle Green, Castle Walk, Canal Road and Priory Bridge Road. In most cases these facilities require attention and their replacement should be included in any development plans.

**Extract from a report to HLRP on 19.2.04**