

Committee: Community

Date: 19 March 2009

Title: Public conveniences in Felsted

Author: Simon Martin, Head of Customer Support
& Revenue Services

Agenda Item

[?]

Item for
decision

Summary

- 1 The Council manage and maintain public conveniences linked to a public house in Felsted. Both the conveniences and public house are owned by a brewery. Because of age and condition the conveniences are increasingly difficult to maintain and are attracting criticism from the stakeholders involved. Alternative arrangements to the conveniences are therefore proposed in this report. This matter is also being brought forward to Members as a scrutiny review of public conveniences is nearing completion.

Recommendations

- 2 The Council withdraw its management and maintenance of the public conveniences in Felsted and the brewery be advised accordingly.
- 3 Officers proceed with inviting expressions of interest to pilot a Community Toilet Scheme in Felsted as an alternative to the above. Details of any pilot scheme are brought back to this Committee for approval.

Background Papers

- 4 Various items of correspondence, DCLG report on Improving Public Access to Toilets (2008).

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Felsted Parish Council, Greene King and the Landlord of affected public house, ward members, scrutiny members, Strategic Management Board.
Community Safety	Potential for reduced vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
Equalities	Potential for improved accessibility.
Finance	Potential for on-going revenue savings.
Human Rights	None identified.
Legal implications	Notice to Greene King/Landlord. Notice to cleaning contractor. Pilot scheme subject to agreement and negotiation.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	Impact on Felsted ward.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

- 5 The public conveniences in Felsted fall considerably short of modern standards, particularly those relating to accessibility. They are relatively expensive to manage and maintain and have attracted adverse comment from various stakeholders for several years. The conveniences are not in Council ownership but are linked to a public house, outside eating area and an associated car park. The conveniences are prone to occasional vandalism and reported anti-social behaviour.
- 6 A scrutiny review of public conveniences confirmed the facilities at Felsted are relatively poor. However, the review also highlighted guidance from central government that has already been adopted by other councils. The guidance provides details of a community toilet scheme as a viable alternative to upgrading or replacing existing council facilities. Under the scheme expressions of interest may be sought from local businesses to make their pre-approved modern conveniences available to the public, in return for a modest annual grant payable by the Council. Adopted schemes elsewhere are reported to have improved service provision and accessibility, reduced council's revenue expenditure and avoided the need for significant capital investment. Participating businesses are also said to have benefited from an increased footfall and rise in sales. Appropriate signage advice the public that the scheme exists and that they are not obliged to buy anything from the business.
- 7 Stakeholders have been consulted on the proposed changes. It has been welcomed by some but concern has been expressed by the Parish Clerk on behalf of Felsted Parish Council. The Parish Council are due to meet again after this report has been written and before the Committee meet to consider this report. A verbal update on the Parish Council's latest position will be provided if possible.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Expressions of interest are not forthcoming from local businesses.	2 (There are a relatively small number of businesses in the centre of Felsted).	2 (Any scheme will need to be sufficiently advantageous).	Provisional expression of interest from local business.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.