

Scrutiny review of UDC provided public conveniences

Scrutiny Committee 9 December 2008, item 7

Committee:	Scrutiny	Agenda Item
Date:	9 December 2008	7
Title:	Scrutiny review of UDC provided public conveniences	
Author:	Simon Martin, Head of Customer Support & Revenue Services, 01799 510422	Item for decision

Summary

- 1 This report provides details of progress to date on the scrutiny review of UDC provided public conveniences.

Recommendations

- 2 Members note progress to date and agree to explore the feasibility of a Community Toilet Scheme, initially on a pilot basis.

Background Papers

- 3 Agenda and minutes of Scrutiny Committee 2007/08 and 2008/09 to date. DCLG paper on Improving Public Access to Toilets, Guidance on Community Toilet Schemes and SatLav.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	Town and Parish Councils. Uttlesford Access Group.
Community Safety	Some public conveniences in the district attract anti-social behaviour.
Equalities	DDA implications.
Finance	Transfer of public conveniences to Town/Parishes may reduce revenue expenditure.
Human Rights	None.
Legal implications	None.
Sustainability	None.
Ward-specific impacts	Several wards have district council provided public conveniences. Most do not.
Workforce/Workplace	None.

Situation

- 4 A scrutiny review of UDC provided public conveniences was commissioned in 2007/08. Terms of reference were subsequently approved and three

Scrutiny review of UDC provided public conveniences

Scrutiny Committee 9 December 2008, item 7

Members nominated to work with Officers (Councillors Schneider, Wattebot and Yarwood).

- 5 Officers have obtained budget and actual spend information. This is summarised in the table below:

<u>Public convenience</u>	<u>Actual</u> <u>2007/08</u>	<u>Budget</u> <u>2008/09</u>
- Hill Street, Saffron Walden.	13,825	12,450
- White Street, Gt Dunmow.	11,390	10,350
- Margaret Street, Thaxted.	13,435	13,560
- Station Road, Felsted (at the Swan Inn).	5,665	6,980
- Lower Street, Stansted, Swan Meadow, Saffron Walden, The Common, Saffron Walden (all automated toilets).	75,080	73,360
- Charges from automated toilets	(2,970)	(2,800)
- Bridge End Gardens, Saffron Walden.	4,080	4,940

Notes:

- Much of the above expenditure relates to an outsourced cleaning contract.
- The Council is approximately half way through a 20 year contract for the provision of three automated toilets.
- The public conveniences in Felsted are no longer of a reasonable standard, there would be significant future costs involved in repair or refurbishment.

- 6 In addition Officers have consulted Saffron Walden Town Council, Great Dunmow Town Council, Felsted Parish Council and Thaxted Parish Council. All had views on the provision of public conveniences and broadly concluded:

- Public conveniences should be provided where there is sufficient demand. They are valued by many residents and visitors to the district.
- This Council is generally best placed to continue to take responsibility for providing them (it should be noted however, that Officers are negotiating with Great Dunmow Town to transfer the White Street public conveniences so that they may form part of the town square project. Officers in any event feel that public conveniences are a local facility and should be managed accordingly).
- They would like some control over opening hours, particularly when special events take place.
- Felsted Parish Council believes that the conveniences adjacent the Swan Inn is very poor.

- e) Notwithstanding the above, the consultees perceived they may be able to clean and maintain the conveniences more cheaply and to a higher standard than at present.

7 The Uttlesford Access Group has been approached with a view to establishing a position on accessibility and whether it needs to/can be enhanced. The Access Group concluded:

- a) Newer facilities were accessible to most disabled users. Older facilities might not be fully accessible. Superloo provision seemed most suitable.
- b) The use of Radar locks and keys, particularly in rural communities, can be a barrier to using the facilities.

The Group were also keen to know what action the Council will take to improve accessibility.

8 Research has identified a potentially innovative approach to developing public toilet provision in the district. A Community Toilet Scheme would allow members of the public to use toilet facilities in a range of approved local businesses and other organisations during their opening hours. Some or all of the Council's own facilities would be closed. The service would be made available for free and without any expectation that users purchase goods or services. Participating premises would undertake to keep their toilets safe, clean, hygienic and easily accessible. In return, they would receive an annual payment from the Council. Appropriate signage would also have to be displayed. A Community Toilet Scheme has been successfully adopted in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames.

9 In addition to the above, further work is now required by Members and Officers to conclude the Scrutiny Review. This work will involve:

- a) Looking to future public convenience provision. Making associated recommendations such as considering a Community Toilet Scheme on a pilot basis.
- b) Considering opening and closing times, standard of maintenance and cleaning. Making associated recommendations linked to a) above.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Stakeholder expectations are raised.	2	2	Terms of reference set out the scope of this review and what it aims to achieve and what it doesn't aim to achieve.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

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

Scrutiny review of UDC provided public conveniences

Scrutiny Committee 9 December 2008, item 7

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

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