

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
DATE: WEDNESDAY, 6 FEBRUARY 2013
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update Scrutiny on the revised delivery arrangements for the Council's Public Convenience Service

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Flintshire County Council provides or financially supports Public Convenience facilities at the following locations:

- Alexandra Street, Shotton
- Drovers Lane, Caerwys
- Duke St, Flint
- Wepre Drive, Connah's Quay
- New St, Mold
- Bus Station, Mold
- Tower Gardens, Holywell
- Somerfield, Holywell
- Station Rd, Queensferry
- Station Road, Talacre
- The Close, Cilcain
- Daniel Owen, Mold - Part Contribution

2.02 The Council has no statutory requirement to provide a Public Convenience service and does not have a formal Policy to determine the location or type of facilities provided. Hence inconsistency has developed both in the location of the facilities and quality of the service provided across the County.

2.03 Some of the locations have been linked to anti-social behaviour, with reports received of substance misuse and vandalism taking place at the facilities. Whilst the majority of the information is anecdotal, there are records of complaints being received by the Council concerning specific sites. The site in Alexandra Street, Shotton has been closed since June 2012, due to specific complaints of anti-social behaviour taking place at the Public Convenience facility.

- 2.04 The Public Convenience service is managed within Streetscene with a budget allocation of £173,187 in 2012 -13. Repairs and maintenance at all of the facilities are currently being carried out by private contractors. The existing contract for maintenance expires in March 2013.
- 2.05 The Council is developing a programme of one stop shop, Flintshire Connects Centres across the County and also manages numerous other Council buildings in close proximity to existing stand alone Public Convenience facilities. The new Flintshire Connects Centres and the other facilities i.e. Leisure Centres could offer toilet facilities both for their own use and for use as wider Public Conveniences.
- 2.06 The Welsh Government currently offers a grant to businesses of up to £500 in return for the business opening their facilities to use by the public.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01 It is important that the Public Convenience service complements wider strategic Council objectives such as the promotion of Tourism and Town Centre marketing and the proposed new service provision will do this by ensuring the Council continues to offer well maintained facilities, provided in key locations across the County
- 3.02 Utilising Flintshire Connects Centres, other Council buildings and (where appropriate) privately owned facilities will both rationalise and improve accessibility to the service, providing the following advantages over the current service:
- Potentially longer opening hours which are more targeted to local need
 - Reduced instances of anti-social behaviour and vandalism at the new sites as staff will be available during opening hours to monitor user behaviour more closely.
- 3.03 Options for the revised Public Convenience service provision at each location would be as follows-
- Linking to facilities in existing Council buildings e.g. Flintshire Connects 'One stop shop', Leisure Centres etc. This option will be considered on a case by case basis as some facilities will not be able to provide a combined facility
 - Stand Alone Council facilities with rationalisation of other facilities in the area
 - Utilising private facilities made available for public use.

Business will be entitled to a contribution from the Welsh Government Fund set up for this purpose e.g. In Public Houses and Shops

- Town and Community Council management of the facilities

- 3.04 It is recognised that clear and consistent signage for the facilities should be provided once the location and the type of facility has been identified. The signs would be situated on Street furniture e.g. Street Lighting columns and would indicate the location of the nearest facility. The signs would be small (A3 Size), of consistent and recognisable design County wide and would show the location in diagrammatical form.
- 3.05 The management of the Public Convenience service will remain the responsibility of Streetscene, who will also monitor the facilities to ensure they meet the required standard. In the case of private facilities, once the requirements have been identified, the local Town and Community Council will be contacted to assist in identifying suitable businesses willing to partake in the scheme.
- 3.06 Current sites which are under utilised and recommended for closure would be offered to the local Town and Community Councils to take on responsibility for future maintenance. The offer would be without financial support for the facility and in the event of this being rejected, the facility will close.
- 3.07 Whilst there is uncertainty on the future of this Welsh Government grant it is recommended that the cost of providing the funding should continue from existing Council Public Convenience budgets in future, should the grant funding come to an end. This would apply only where sites are identified as being required.
- 3.08 Most of the facilities have little or no value in terms of asset release once they are closed and replaced by alternative facilities. Each site will require an individual assessment and action plans developed to either dispose of the asset or demolish the facility completely.
- 3.09 Consideration has been given to introducing a charge for using the facilities but concluded that such a charge would be more expensive to introduce and manage than would be raised by the charge, thus creating a further budget pressure on the Council. Charging would also increase the threat of vandalism at the facilities. Likewise the introduction of a 'Superloo' system was considered, but the cost was found to be prohibitive.
- 3.10 The future provision at each of the existing locations has been considered using the preferred delivery option in 3.03 of this report. The outcome is shown in **Appendix 1**.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Scrutiny note the future delivery option for each of the Public Convenience Facilities shown in **Appendix 1**

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The budgets and the true costs for the service delivery are shown on - **Appendix 2.**

5.02 The proposals will deliver the proposed £50k savings for the service identified in the 2013-14 budget proposals

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 No impact

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 No impact

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 A desktop EIA has been completed which indicated the proposals do not unfairly impact on any particular group

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 With T&CC regarding taking over maintenance and of the sites proposed for closure

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 With Cabinet Member

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – Proposals for Future delivery
Appendix 2 – Budget information

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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