

**PUBLIC TOILET REVIEW**

The Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services introduced a report that set out a range of recommendations for specific public conveniences in the district and sought approval to proceed in order to deliver agreed Budget savings.

In light of the outcome of a recent Salcombe Harbour Board Workshop, a revised recommendation was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED**.

The Chairman informed that, during the debate, he would invite comments on each site listed and, at that time, would welcome the views of the local Ward Member(s) in attendance.

In the ensuing debate, reference was made to:-

(a) concerns over the process undertaken during the Review. The following particular concerns were raised:

- Specifically with regard to the Pay on Entry proposals for Steamer Quay, Totnes, a local Member referred to correspondence that had led him and the town council to assume that this site had not been included as part of these proposals. As a result, the Member asked that the Executive consider deferring a final decision on this site until its meeting on 7 February 2019 to enable time for the town council (and local stakeholders) to consider this proposal. In response, other Members felt this statement to be inaccurate and were supportive of the original recommendation.

Nonetheless, an amendment was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** to defer a final decision on the Steamer Quay, Totnes Pay on Entry proposals until the Executive meeting on 7 February 2019.

When put to the vote, this amendment was declared (by virtue of a Chairman's Casting Vote) **LOST**;

- Some Members felt that there had been a lack of clear messaging during the consultation process with town and parish councils. For example, instances were cited where some councils had been encouraged to open negotiations with the Council whereas others were told that this was not possible. These Members felt that such an inconsistent approach was both inappropriate and unfair;
- A Member highlighted the published minutes arising from a recent Kingsbridge Town Council meeting and queried the significant discrepancy between the projected and actual income figures for the facility at Fore Street, Kingsbridge. In

response, assurances were given this was the only facility that had seen such a difference between the projected and actual figures and it was confirmed that the Town Council would now be asked to pay the revised actual sum, which was higher;

- The published agenda report had omitted any reference to the payment of on-costs that had been previously included;
  - Some inaccuracies were cited in the published agenda report that included: the lack of recognition to Newton Ferrers being a tourism area and the facilities at Thurlestone being much further away from the Hotel and Public House than the three minutes indicated;
- (b) the principle of installing Pay on Entry. Some Members took issue with the comments raised that implementing Pay on Entry charges in some public toilets would have a significant impact to the local economy and tourism industry. In contrast, when considering the likely installation costs, risks of vandalism and the length of payback period, another Member felt that the Business Case underpinning the principle of Pay on Entry was flawed;
- (c) the public health implications. A Member reiterated his concerns over the public health implications of any public toilets being closed;
- (d) recommendation 3. The lead Member emphasised that, in the event of those sites listed in recommendation 3 not being transferred, they would be closed in September 2019. As a result, the Member encouraged the local town and parish councils (and local stakeholders) who had sites included in this list to be proactive and fully engage with the Council before next summer or they would close in September 2019.

To reinforce this point, an amendment was **PROPOSED** and **SECONDED** and, on being put to the vote was declared **CARRIED**, whereby officers be instructed to write to the Clerks of Holbeton, Newton & Noss, Staverton and Ugborough Parish Councils to encourage them to re-open dialogue with the Council.

For clarity, the lead Member also confirmed that, in the event of any interested party having concerns that they would be liable for business rates on the facility for part of the 2019/20 financial year, this would not be the case as the District Council would pay for the entire twelve month period;

- (e) the Shipley Bridge – South Brent facility. A local Member emphasised the importance of this site and he hoped that South West Water and the Dartmoor National Park Authority could work together to find a solution to ensure that this facility was retained;

- (f) additional recommendation 5. A number of Members welcomed the inclusion of this addition and, with the involvement of the Harbour Board, it was hoped that a satisfactory solution could be found in time for the Executive meeting on 7 February 2019. Specifically regarding the inclusion of Bowcombe, it was confirmed that this facility was not at risk of closure at this time.

Whilst appreciating the time of the next Harbour Board meeting (28 January 2019), the Leader hoped that an informed update could still be given to the joint Overview & Scrutiny Panel / Development Management Committee Budget meeting on 24 January 2019.

It was then:

### **RESOLVED**

That:

1. Pay on Entry (PoE) be installed at:
  - (a) Dittisham – The Ham;
  - (b) Ivybridge – Glanville’s Mill;
  - (c) South Huish – Hope Cove; and
  - (d) Totnes – Civic Hall, Coronation Road and Steamer Quay (with code or card access permitted for staff from the nearby Riverside Café and Ferry Office).
  
2. Income be generated in lieu of PoE through alternative charges at:
  - (a) Bigbury – toilet service charges to be supported through a review of Pay & Display Charges;
  - (b) Kingsbridge: Fore Street – Town Council to make payment in lieu of PoE;
  - (c) Stokenham: Torcross – toilet service charges to be supported through a review of Pay & Display Charges; and
  - (d) Strete Gate – toilet service charges to be supported through a review of Pay & Display Charges.
  
3. Asset transfers take place (or facility to close in September 2019) at:
  - (a) Holbeton;
  - (b) Kingswear – Lower Ferry;
  - (c) Malborough (asset transfer agreed);
  - (d) Newton & Noss – Newton Ferrers.
  - (e) Salcombe – Cliff House Gardens (to not be re-opened in Spring 2019 following winter closure);
  - (f) South Brent (asset transfer agreed);

- (g) Staverton;
- (h) Stoke Fleming (Parish Council have confirmed that an asset transfer is not required);
- (i) Thurlestone (asset transfer agreed in principle); and
- (j) Ugborough – Bittaford and Ugborough;

In respect of those sites listed at (a), (d), (g) and (j) above, officers be instructed to write to the local parish clerks (copying in the local ward Member(s)) to encourage them to re-open dialogue with the Council.

4. Other alternative arrangements be approved at:
  - (a) Dartmouth – Manor Gardens – to close in September 2019 with no asset transfer to the Town Council;
  - (b) East Portlemouth – Mill Bay – to close in September 2019 unless a 75% contribution from a stakeholder is achieved next financial year, with an asset transfer to be completed by financial year 2020/ 21 (*\*\*see recommendation 5 below\*\**);
  - (c) Kingswear – Higher Ferry – to close with no asset transfer to the Parish Council;
  - (d) South Brent – Shipley Bridge – withdraw cleaning service;
  - (e) South Milton – to close in September 2019 unless a 75% contribution from a stakeholder is achieved next financial year, with an asset transfer to be completed by financial year 2020/21; and
  - (f) Wembury – to allow the current lease with the National Trust to expire in June 2020.
5. the proposals for Batson Creek, North Sands, South Sands, Whitestrand, Ferry Steps, Bowcombe and Mill Bay toilets are finally considered following receipt of a Salcombe Harbour Board proposal being provided no later than 29 January 2019 and then to be considered by the Executive at its meeting on 7 February 2019.