

Report to: **Executive**
Date: **7 February 2019**
Title: **Public Toilet Project**
Portfolio Area: **Environment Services**
Wards Affected: **All**
Relevant Scrutiny Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Urgent Decision: **N** Approval and clearance obtained: **Y**

Date next steps can be taken: Following the expiry of the Call-in period

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Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Executive resolves to

1. Continue to work with Totnes Town Council and Kingsbridge Town to find suitable funding proposals to recover Pay on Entry projected income at the following locations:
Totnes – Civic Hall, Coronation Road and Steamer Quay
Kingsbridge – Fore Street
Unless suitable funding alternatives are offered locally before the 28 February 2019, then Pay on Entry (PoE) equipment should be installed.
2. Endorse the proposed approach of Salcombe Town Council working in partnership with the Salcombe Harbour Board to take over the management and running of the Salcombe Estuary Toilets for a 2 year trial period. This proposal requires a transfer of the service budget to facilitate the pilot being agreed in detail. Full details of the proposal are outlined in amended Paragraph 2.4ii of this report and Appendix B.

3. Consider the £9,000 request for the repair to the roof at Mill Bay in recognition that this maintains a facility which would otherwise have been permanently closed. This will need to be funded from the central building and maintenance budget which the Council has for all its assets.
4. Note the position in respect of public toilet facilities at:
 - Holbeton
 - Newton Ferrers (Newton & Noss Parish)
 - Staverton.

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report requests that Members consider the above recommendations and resolve to proceed as recommended for each facility.

2. Background

- 2.1 Members will be aware that the public toilet service was previously considered, as part of the budget process, on 1st February and 26th April 2018, where decisions in respect of the way forward were resolved. Update reports have been presented to Executive Members on a regular basis throughout this project.
- 2.2 Resolutions were made in respect of the majority of public toilets at the Executive meeting on 22 November 2018, although decisions in respect of the three facilities in Totnes (Civic Hall, Coronation Road and Steamer Quay) and the three rural facilities in Holbeton, Newton Ferrers (Newton and Noss Parish) and Staverton were the subject of a further consultation following consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 12 December 2018.
- 2.3 In respect of the remaining public toilets included in this review, a summary of the resolutions made and actions taken thus far is attached at Appendix A.
- 2.4 This report contains updated information in respect of the outstanding facilities:
 - i. **Kingsbridge – Fore Street**
Kingsbridge Town Council had resolved to pay anticipated income from PoE, in lieu of having PoE installed in Fore Street toilet facilities (PoE is already in place in the Quay facilities).

The amount of income estimated by Healthmatic was considerably higher than the amount estimated by officers before the procurement of PoE equipment was concluded, Kingsbridge Town Council were asked to increase this annual payment accordingly to £4,200. This is consistent with other similar facilities where alternative funding streams have been considered in lieu of PoE.

Kingsbridge Town Council has been asked to confirm its position in this respect and, if an alternative proposal is not received by 28 February 2019, it is recommended that the installation of PoE equipment goes ahead.

ii. **Salcombe estuary –**

- Mill Bay, East Portlemouth
- Ferry Steps, East Portlemouth
- Batson Creek, Salcombe
- North Sands, Salcombe
- South Sands, Salcombe
- Whitestrand, Salcombe

Salcombe Town Council and Salcombe Harbour Board are working in partnership in respect of the above public toilets and, following discussions with officers, have made an outline proposal as detailed below. The outline proposal as submitted is attached at Appendix B.

In order to facilitate the proposal, it is recommended that responsibility for all six facilities listed above is transferred to Salcombe Town Council, with effect from 1 October 2019, who will work in partnership with Salcombe Harbour Board to provide the public toilet service at these locations.

The partnership has requested that all six facilities be leased to them for two years initially, to give them time to establish seasonal footfall and any logistical challenges which may be faced in managing the service.

At the end of two years, assuming that all has gone as anticipated by all parties, four facilities (Mill Bay, Ferry Steps, North Sands and South Sands) would be the subject of an asset transfer from the District Council to Salcombe Town Council. It is sensible that the details of any asset transfer would be worked up with the council during Year 2 of the 2 year period.

Batson Creek and Whitestrand will remain in the ownership of the District Council, so that any future development of the sites can be considered at the appropriate time.

The partnership has requested that the District Council transfer funds equivalent to the running costs it would have had to meet should the facilities have stayed under the management of the District Council from 2019/20, minus anticipated PoE income.

The Mill Bay toilet facility requires essential maintenance, estimated at £18,000, to repair the roof which is currently

leaking. The Salcombe proposal requests that the Council fund half of the repair as well as revenue running costs. This facility was previously resolved for permanent closure on 22 November 2018.

Future long term revenue funding for the toilets would need to be considered by the Council in consultation with the partnership as part of any Council wide considerations of the wider public toilet service during the 2 year period and an agreement made on how this would be treated at the point of transfer. This has been done in Dartmouth, although on a wider package of services and assets.

The potential to develop Batson Creek and Whitestrand sites is to be kept under review and, should an asset transfer become a feasible option, a recommendation would be made to the Executive as part of the overall scheme detail.

The partnership has requested that officers investigate the cost of refurbishing Cliff House Gardens public toilet, where the current resolution is that these should close, due to the estimate high refurbishment costs, and the close proximity of Whitestrand facilities. Should a proposal be presented that the partnership fund the refurbishment of the building and operate it as a public toilet facility, officers will update the Executive Members accordingly.

The proposal also requests further exploration of the ability to include pay on entry charges within parking tariffs at 'destination' sites.

The recommendation is subject to the detailed agreement of the transferred running costs being agreed, but the principle of the proposal looks to establish a maintained service without the need for the installation of pay on entry equipment and with services being maintained. This should provide both the Salcombe estuary and Council with a maintained service whilst contributing to the overall savings required for the public toilets.

iii. **Thurlestone -**

Whilst an asset transfer was agreed in principle, and an initial visual inspection report produced for the Parish Council, a request has been received for more detailed information.

As a result of this delay, the Parish Council was unable to include the cost of taking on the public toilet facility in its precept for next year. Officers will ensure that a more detailed report is provided to the Parish Council so that it can consider the matter in good time for the 2020/ 21 precept setting process.

Therefore, whilst the facility will close on 30 September 2019 for the winter period it is likely to reopen in April following an anticipated asset transfer to the Parish Council before 1 April 2020.

- iv. **Totnes –**
- Civic Hall
 - Coronation Road
 - Steamer Quay

Members will recall that, following consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel, officers were instructed to re-open negotiations with Totnes Town Council in respect of the proposal to implement PoE at all three facilities listed above.

As a result, Ward Members and officers met with Members from the Town Council on 10 January 2019.

Totnes Town Council is now giving the matter further consideration within a timeframe which fits with its decision making process, and is due to present a proposal in respect of all three facilities shortly. However, if a proposal is not received by 28 February 2019, it is recommended that Pay on Entry equipment be installed at the three facilities as was previously resolved.

- v. **Holbeton, Newton & Noss and Staverton Parish Councils**
– Members will recall that, following consideration by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel, officers were instructed to re-open negotiations with all three Parish Council and this has commenced.

Officers will update the Executive on progress with discussions at its meeting on 14 March 2019.

3. Outcomes/outputs

- 3.1 Consultation has already been undertaken with Towns, Parishes and other stakeholders, and this will continue as necessary in order to ensure the smooth completion of all recommendations.
- 3.2 Press releases have gone out and Towns and Parishes in particular have engaged in constructive dialogue with both Members and officers.
- 3.3 It should be noted that free access to public toilets will continue to be available for disabled customers, who are able to purchase a RADAR key. This is a national scheme allowing anyone who is registered as disabled to access disabled toilet facilities.

4. Options available and consideration of risk

4.1 Each facility above has been the subject of an individual Comprehensive Impact Assessment.

5. Implications

Implications	Relevant to proposals Y/N	Previously circulated to the Executive.
Legal/Governance		
Financial		Appendix C sets out the financial information.
Risk		The closure of public toilets is likely to result in adverse publicity for the District Council. However, there is sound information to demonstrate the requirement to make the associated financial savings and, where possible, alternative solutions have been highlighted in the Comprehensive Impact Assessment.
Comprehensive Impact Assessment Implications		
Equality and Diversity		A comprehensive impact assessment has been completed in respect of this each facility which shows that there are limited numbers of customers which are adversely by these recommendations.
Safeguarding		No implications.
Community Safety, Crime and Disorder		The implementation of PoE at the facilities above is likely to have a positive impact in respect of anti-social behaviour and vandalism.
Health, Safety and Wellbeing		As per the Comprehensive Impact Assessment.
Other implications		None.

Appendices

Appendix A – summary of resolutions and actions taken to date

Appendix B – Summary proposal - Salcombe partnership

Appendix C – financial information

Appendix D – Comprehensive Impact Assessment.