

Briefing Note – Public Conveniences

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1. Consultation Summary

1.1 Timeframe:

- Talkback survey ended on 21st August. We now have a draft of the report to assess these results. 425 people responded.
- Online survey ran 21st July –21st August. Now open again until Sept 11th as complaints came in about the timing of the consultation. 128 responses so far.
- Tourist Info Office also had a survey in place but very poor response.
- Responses via letter and email will also be included in results of the overall consultation

1.2 Interim Results and Findings*:

- Approximately 75% of people are prepared to pay to use the toilets – the majority of which are happy to pay 20p.
- Stress the need for much better signage, as is poor at the moment and people unaware of where current facilities are.
- Out of the three options suggested, Automatic Public Conveniences are the least popular option, whereas there has been positive response to the proposal of a Community Toilets Scheme.
- People generally believe there are too few toilets provided in Oxford. This could possibly be related to the lack of awareness of locations.
- Majority of respondents not happy about toilet closures going ahead in Oxford.
- People's priority in terms of toilets appears to be that they are clean as easy to find – these are slightly more important than longer opening hours, modern facilities and being free of charge.
- A number of people are campaigning for the Changing Places. These are special large cubicles with a changing table and a hoist for people with complex needs.
- Concern on behalf of elderly and people with children that there should be more toilets, not less, and longer opening times.

* A full report on the consultation findings is due to be published at the end of September.

2. Thoughts Following Consultation and Discussion

2.1 Rationalise City Centre Facilities

- Reduce number of toilets found in close proximity.
- Provide more adequate signage and promotion.
- Keep open Market Street, Oxpens, Westgate facilities.
- Close Castle Street, Magdalen Street toilets.
- Outside centre the City Centre, close Headington Hill Park disabled, Barns Road, Littlemore (consider transferring to community group or Parish Council), Woodstock Road & South Parade.

2.2 Implementation of Long Term Strategy

- Automate locking and unlocking at start and end of the day to reduce costs.
- Refurbish Gloucester Green toilets to a high standard due to increasing usage demands.
- Cleaning efficiencies.
- Community Toilet Scheme – would provide high number of facilities around Oxford with longer opening hours.
- Better signage to good quality, easily maintained and cleaned toilets.
- Where refurbishments are carried out, consider direct access cubicles (as currently at Diamond Place and St Clements) to avoid problems with anti-social behaviour, vandalism and therefore reduce costs.
- Remove duplication and inefficiencies.
- Consider transfer to community groups.
- Charging – possibly different tariffs in different places.

2.3 Soft Market Testing

- Healthmatic involved in suggesting solutions based on their wealth of knowledge of councils across the country.
- Looking at best solutions from private sector and comparing costs.
- Possibility of private sector taking on costs and recommendation might be an option.
- Consider invest to save.

3. Strategy for Making Savings

- Initial saving will be made by losing two members of staff and one vehicle from the cleaning rounds. These displaced staff members will then be used to fill roles currently filled by temp/agency staff in other areas.

- Staff cuts will be due to closing toilets and/or more efficient working. Minimisation of existing facilities and improvements to future facilities will reduce maintenance and cleaning and therefore staffing need.
- Possible refurbishment of facilities to a higher standard could be funded by charging for use, resale of properties, and the invest to save bid.

4. Circulation of Report Details

Report has been on agenda at all Area Committees as follows:

- CWS - 11th Aug
- North East - 18th Aug
- Cowley - 2nd Sept
- North Area 3rd Sept
- South East - 7th Sept
- East Area Parliament - 16th Sept

5. Main Risk Assessment

Risk & Description	Likelihood	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Counter Measures
Community Toilet Scheme may not get support from local businesses	Low	Medium	Consider incentives and adequate promotion. Talk closely with businesses before implementation
Negative public reaction to toilet closures	High	Medium	Adequate consultation and consideration of opinions. Consult Press Office. Raise public awareness and concentrate on existing good facilities
Negative public reaction to charging for toilet usage	Low	Low	Justify costs with improved facilities. Consultation to determine reasonable charges. Provide free alternatives nearby where possible.
If toilets close anti-social behaviour may relocate to other areas	Medium	Medium	Careful consideration of which toilets should close.