

Environment and Economy select committee.

Provision of Public Toilets in the Town - Update

1st March 2017

1.0 Background

A presentation and briefing was given at the Environmental & Economy Select Committee (Wednesday 12th October 2017) on the current provision of accessible Public Toilets within Stevenage.

Data was presented showing the number of toilets available in council owned and managed buildings based on their accessibility, for example a) Fully accessible, toilets open to the public during business opening times, b) Limited access, toilets available at the discretion of the business or manager, and c) Restricted access toilets available generally where payment has been made to enter the building/event.

Although there is no legal requirement to provide public toilets, Authorities will need to determine the most effective way of providing these facilities taking into account the following challenges and opportunities.

- Understanding the future potential needs and requirements
- Providing access to toilets provision where they are most needed.
- Providing access to well equipped toilets and are safe and accessible
- Meeting the needs with finite resources.

Options for providing accessible toilets for residents and visitors to the town via a Community Toilet Scheme and kiosk toilets was also presented at the meeting.

2.0 Actions

The following items were raised for further consideration, investigation and action:

- a) Forming a Community Toilet Scheme in Stevenage, and consider the possibility of a site visit to EHDC to view their scheme in operation.
- b) Increasing the provision and times when toilets are open to the public at Fairlands Valley Park, in particular during the summer months.
- c) Improve toilet provision visibility on SBC website and update information.
- d) Public funded buildings including community centres and council buildings to provide toilets accessible to the public.

2.1 Community Toilet Scheme.

The community toilet scheme encourages local businesses to work with the council to provide clean safe accessible toilets at their premises free of charge without the need to make a purchase.

The scheme operates in a number of Local Authorities around the country including EHDC and Broxbourne BC. We have had discussions with both authorities and EHDC have provided information on how their scheme was set up and managed.

Feedback from Cllr Downing and Andy Sowden's visit to Ware (EHDC community toilet scheme) on 21st February. – To follow

The following shows how the scheme could be set up and managed using the principals of the EHDC model

2.11 Setting up the scheme.

The areas the scheme would operate needs to be established and agreed. Further research will then be required to assess the viability, in particular:

- a) Establish the need – How many people (potential / actual) need toilet facilities.
- b) The seasonality of the toilets and the times they need to be available.
- c) Capital and running costs.

Although the Town Centre is currently well provided by public toilets this scheme could be introduced to supplement the current provision or future provision following the town centre regeneration. However the scheme could have a more immediate impact if introduced in and around the neighbourhood centres or other targeted areas.

Initially EHDC approached Local business to see if there is any interest in the concept. Unfortunately there was limited success.

2.12 Scheme Participants.

EHDC targeted Specific business within the designated areas and encouraged them to join the scheme, the ideal number of participants was dependant on the level of provision required and the period of cover (opening times).

In the case of Broxbourne BC potential participants were encouraged to join the scheme without funding (some are paid and some are not) however EHDC participants are paid an annual amount to provide the facilities. The fee is dependant on the actual number and type of toilets available to the public.

For example:

Single sex toilet - £600 per year

Separate male and female toilets - £700 per year

Separate male and female toilets with baby changing - £900 per year

Separate male and female toilets with baby changing and disabled - £1,000 per year.

2.13 Management of the scheme

An agreement was drawn up between the council and the participant setting out the terms and conditions of the scheme. The service provider (business proprietor) agrees to maintain the toilets in a clean and hygienic condition, with adequate toilet rolls, soap, hand dryers etc. for the public to use free of charge and will not refuse anyone the right to use the facility unless deemed a threat to customers and staff. A payment is made by the council to assist in meeting any additional costs incurred by the business.

Signage was provided by the council comprising street finger signs and window stickers to be displayed in the window of the business.

The council undertake regular inspections of the toilets provided under the scheme including a formal inspection every 3 months and spot checks. The public can also report any concerns they may have directly to the provider or the council.

2.14 Publicity and Marketing

An initial publicity campaign was carried out to promote the scheme.

Information about the scheme was placed on the website. This could be a dedicated area or added to the existing Public toilets page of the website.

Leaflets about the scheme also listing the participants was produced and placed in public buildings, leisure centre, local businesses and other information points. See example leaflet attached.

2.15 Resources required.

Based on the EHDC model it is anticipated that the following resources will be required to deliver the scheme.

- a) Staff
 - Setting up– Confirming scope of the scheme, approaching participants and obtaining formal agreements.
 - Running / management– organising signage, leaflets, managing invoicing and payments, inspections etc. Making changes and updates.
- b) Other costs
 - Annual fee payable to the participants
 - Signage
 - Promotional material

2.2 Toilet Provision at Fairlands Valley

2.21 Public toilet facilities currently available at Fairlands valley:

a) Sailing centre /cafe

9:30 to16:00 - 7 days a week

Toilets are available and open to the public and although accessible independently to the café, the facilities are only available when the café is open. This is in accordance with an agreement set up between SLL and the Café operator. The opening times are therefore dependant on the café being open



b) Sailing Centre

One toilet is accessible directly from the outside of the building and is available to the public 24 Hrs – 7 days a week opened only by a RADAR key.



c) Aqua Park

Two toilets are available to the public, including disabled and baby change facilities between 10.00 am to 5:00pm Weekends during spring bank holiday to summer holidays and 7 days a week during the summer holidays. (the opening times and days are subject to weather conditions).

Signage is located on around the sailing centre building indicating the location of the toilets.



2.22 Adequacy of the toilet provision at Fairlands Valley Park.

Sailing centre

During the day (café opening times) the toilets at the sailing centre appear to provide adequate provision, however during the summer months there is a considerable increase in numbers of people using the park and this does put a strain on the toilets and the adequacy of the provision. It is noted that there may be occasions when the café / toilets close outside of the advertised times.

Aqua Park

The current toilets are a good modern easy maintainable facility however there is pressure at busy times during the summer and the facility sometimes cannot cope with peak demand. During the months when the aqua park is not open the public the nearest toilet facilities are available at the sailing centre.

General.

With the exception of the RADAR accessible toilet there is currently no public toilet provision at the park after 4.00pm (5.00pm during the summer months at the Aqua park)

2.23 Options to increase the provision.

A further detailed viability study would need to be carried out to establish the need, potential use, seasonality and times the toilets need to be available, and the capital and running costs.

Possible options:

- At the Aqua Park
 - Provide additional facilities by installing a new toilet kiosk. This will provide increased capacity/provision and help alleviate some the pressure on the existing Aqua park facilities at the busy times during the summer months. This will also allow the opportunity to consider providing a toilet facility during the winter months at this side of the Park.
 - Opening the existing toilets during the winter months. Management, servicing and maintenance costs, vandalism and suitability of the existing toilets will need to be considered. Discussions would need to be held with SLL on the viability of opening for this period.
- At the sailing centre
 - Provide additional facilities by installing a new toilet kiosk. This will provide increased capacity/provision and help alleviate some of the pressure on the existing Sailing Centre facilities at the busy times during the summer. The option to open the kiosk during other times of the day could be considered.
 - Increase the toilet opening times for example until 6.00pm. This will require additional staff hours equating to approximately £60/day £420 / week and subject to further discussions with SLL

2.24 New Toilet Kiosks.

The type of kiosk will depend on the proposed need, use and requirements. There are essentially two types, Automatic and semi automatic. The automatic is designed to operate 24 hours and the semi automatic at set times, they have design features to cope with vandalism and misuse, the level of these feature will depend on the model chosen. Charging systems can also be introduced.

The budget cost for supply and installation is estimated at 70K per unit and the running costs at approx.. £15,000 pa based on an external company providing the cleaning and maintenance service.

Typical example of the type of toilet kiosk that could be provided is shown below. These can be clad in any material and are brought to site pre-assembled ready to install onto a prepared base.



2.3 Council Website

The page on the council's website relating to the toilet provision has now been updated to read "Public Toilets" see page extract below.

Further general updates are required to the contact details etc. and the reporting process and form.

Town centre gardens toilets will also be added.



Monday – Saturday 8am – 4pm

Sunday 8am – 3.30pm

Other information that could be included on this page:

- Toilets available to the public that are not owned /managed by the council e.g. Westgate Shopping Centre, Leisure centre, fairlands valley.
- RADAR key facilities.
- Community Toilet Scheme information and members/participants.

The page will require future monitoring and updating

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Public toilets

Provision of public conveniences; where these are provided the Council is also responsible for maintenance and cleaning of the facilities.

All public conveniences are cleaned at least three times a day and wherever possible disabled and baby changing facilities are provided.

The list below provides the locations of all public conveniences, their opening hours and facilities available:

Town Square
Disabled and baby change facilities

- Monday to Saturday 8am - 6pm
- Sunday 9am - 5pm

Indoor Market
Disabled and baby change facilities

- Wednesday to Saturday 8.30am - 5.30pm

Middle Row, High Street, Old Town
Disabled and baby change facilities

- Monday to Saturday 8am - 6pm

If you find a problem with any of the facilities provided please contact us using the details on the right or use the online reporting form.

Online Reporting form

Contact details

For maintenance:
Design and Property Services
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
SG1 1HN
01438 242567
design&propertieservices@stevenag.gov.uk

For cleaning:
Environmental Services
Stevenage Borough Council
Daneshill House
Danestrete
Stevenage
SG1 1HN
01438 242812
environmentalservices@stevenag.gov.uk

2.4 Providing public access to toilets in council buildings.

Community centres generally and discreetly allow the public to use their toilet facilities. However providing more formal access to the public in council owned buildings raises a number of issues that would need to be considered, for example vandalism, potential damage, responsibility, security, abuse, increased cleaning and maintenance, safeguarding, suitability of the existing facility, and additional running costs.

Understanding the need and requirements would also need to be considered in conjunction with any future community toilet scheme.