

Scrutiny Panel - Environment & Quality of Life



Please contact: Matt Stembrowicz
Please email: matthew.stembrowicz@north-norfolk.gov.uk
Please Direct Dial on: 01263 516047

22nd June 2022

A meeting of **The Scrutiny Panel - Environment & Quality of Life** will be held in **remotely via Zoom** on **Thursday, 30 June 2022 at 10.00 am.**

Emma Denny
Democratic Services Manager

To Councillors: Mr H Blathwayt, Dr V Holliday, Mr J Rest, Mr A Varley and Ms L Withington

Officers: Maxine Collis and Matthew Stembrowicz

For information to: all other Members



**If you have any special requirements in order
to attend this meeting, please let us know in advance**
If you would like any document in large print, audio, Braille, alternative format or in
a different language please contact us

Corporate Director and Head of Paid Service: Steve Blatch
Tel 01263 513811 **Fax** 01263 515042 **Minicom** 01263 516005
Email districtcouncil@north-norfolk.gov.uk **Web site** www.north-norfolk.gov.uk

A G E N D A

1. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES

1 - 6

To approve minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 2022.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

7 - 8

Members are asked at this stage to declare any interests that they may have in any of the following items on the agenda. The Code of Conduct for Members requires that declarations include the nature of the interest and whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest (see attached guidance and flowchart).

4. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

To determine any other items of business which the Chairman decides should be considered as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.

5. **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY - ENVIRONMENT & QUALITY OF LIFE
PANEL: PUBLIC CONVENIENCE STRATEGY REVIEW AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

9 - 18

Summary: The Council has sought to prepare a Public Convenience Strategy aimed at providing a clear path to future management of this non-statutory function that is felt to be essential for both visitors and the local population. Public toilets are crucial to tourism and town centre economies but are facing ever increasing costs to provide.

Options considered: The panel has reviewed in-depth over the past 6 months, the Draft Public Convenience Strategy and sought expertise and guidance from both officers and external consultants regarding a range of options and ideas. The group also sought opinions from local Town and Parish Councils.

Conclusion: In general the panel supports the provision of a Strategy to ensure a holistic approach to the future management of the Council's extensive portfolio of 38 public conveniences across the District. The following recommendations are made regarding the Draft Public Toilet Provision Strategy Document.

The Panel reviewed current provision, sought to identify options for the future and reviewed means of obtaining and achieving customer expectation.

Recommendations: **The working group has made fourteen recommendations which are listed throughout the report and summarised in Appendix 2 on page 10 of the report.**

Reasons for Recommendations: To ensure that the Council's public conveniences are managed and maintained efficiently and effectively to a high standard for public use by residents and visitors.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Public Conveniences Strategy

Cabinet Member(s): Ward(s) affected: All

Contact officer, telephone and email:

Maxine Collis Maxine.collis@north-norfolk.gov.uk 01263 516256

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To pass the following resolution, if necessary:

“That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs _ of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.”

SCRUTINY PANEL - ENVIRONMENT & QUALITY OF LIFE

Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Panel - Environment & Quality of Life held on Thursday, 26 May 2022 in the remotely via Zoom at 1.00 pm

Committee Members Present: Mr H Blathwayt Dr V Holliday
Mr J Rest Mr A Varley
Ms L Withington

Officers in Attendance: Corporate Programme & Project Manager (CPPM), Estates and Asset Strategy Manager (EASM), Assistant Director for Organisational Resources (ADOR), Democratic Services and Governance Officer - Scrutiny (DSGOS) and Assets and Property Programme Manager (APPM)

35 APOLOGIES

None.

36 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 21st April 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr A Varley declared a non-pecuniary interest in reference to item 6 on Parish and Town Council comments, and stated that he was the Vice Chair of Horning Parish Council, who had shared comments on the NNDC's public conveniences.

38 ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None received.

39 PUBLIC CONVENIENCE DESIGN, MAINTENANCE, AND COST-SAVING INITIATIVES

The DSGOS introduced the item and informed Members that whilst Property Services had not been asked to prepare a report for the agenda, this item should be taken as an opportunity for Members to ask questions relating to issues and potential proposals raised at previous meetings.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The Chairman referred to maintenance costs and noted a suggestion from a previous meeting regarding the potential for standardisation of equipment to reduce costs. The APPM replied that the Council had 38 public conveniences of various ages and condition, with efforts made over the past five years to standardise equipment as much as possible. He added that standardisation of equipment such as toilet cisterns, taps, and lighting etc. made maintenance easier, quicker and cheaper. It was noted that the new toilet and changing places designs would again seek to utilise as much

standardised equipment as possible, with cheap easily replaceable parts. The APPM stated that much of this work could be done during the off-season, allowing the Council to move from reactive to planned maintenance, which was a proven dividend of the standardisation of equipment.

- ii. Cllr V Holliday referred to automatic opening and locking systems, and asked for the Property Service Team's opinion. The APPM replied that timed automatic locking systems had previously been used at the Vicarage Street public convenience, where it had caused several issues. As a result, the system had been removed and returned to a standard locking system. It was noted that the costs of implementing any changes locking systems would have to be weighed against the existing costs charged by Serco to open and close the facilities. It was noted that this could be considered if it would generate a significant saving, but cost analysis would be required.
- iii. Cllr L Withington stated that a key issue for Sheringham and Holt was a lack of disabled facilities, and asked whether it was possible that one block with disabled facilities be kept open later via an automatic locking system to allow extended access. The APPM replied that most disabled toilets were operated by a radar access key, however anti-social behaviour had led to these toilets being locked overnight to avoid damage. He added that there had been vandalism to facilities in Sheringham, and it was difficult to find a balance between access and security. Cllr L Withington stated that whilst she did not expect 24 hour access, it would be helpful to extend summer and winter opening times by a few hours to improve accessibility. The APPM noted that facilities could be kept open for extended hours during specific events, which could be explored further, but the risk of vandalism had to be considered.
- iv. Cllr A Varley referred to issues with caravan and campervan owners placing waste into public toilets causing drainage issues, and asked what measures could be put in place to mitigate this. The APPM replied that there had been an increase in campervan activity during the past two years, with issues reported in Walcott, Bacton, Weybourne and other locations. He added that these issues were difficult to police, as car parks were not routinely monitored after 18.00, and there were little further powers available to the Council. It was noted that some campervan groups had expressed disappointment that facilities were not provided to dispose of waste. Cllr A Varley asked whether providing the necessary facilities to dispose of this waste was a feasible option, taking into account the cost implications. The ADOR replied that the matter had been discussed previously, and a communications plan was being established to deter people from disposing of this waste in public toilets. He added that if the Council's existing Policy were to change to provide waste disposal facilities, then there would be considerable associated costs for installation and maintenance. The Chairman noted that boat owners had to pay to dispose of waste and suggested that campervan and caravan owners should do the same. Cllr V Holliday stated there was a particular issue in the Salthouse area, and the Environmental Protection Team were investigating whether campsites could provide this service to members of the public for a nominal fee. The ADOR replied that he had discussed this with officers, and unfortunately there appeared to be little appetite to provide this solution amongst commercial campsite owners, even with the option of fees. The Chairman asked whether it was feasible for the Council to provide this service commercially, and it was suggested that it was unlikely that fees would cover the associated costs. It was noted that policing payments would also be difficult and have further

associated costs that could make the proposal unviable. Cllr J Rest asked whether consideration could be given to providing this service at recycling centres, to which the ADOR replied that these sites were operated by NCC, but the option could be explored.

- v. The CPPM referred to standardisation of building design and sought confirmation that all schemes were designed by architects. The APPM confirmed that designs were developed by architects with input on public safety from the Police, and suites of cubicles now being developed where possible. He added that it was difficult given the age and existing layout of some facilities to implement this approach in all locations. It was noted that despite subtle design differences dependent on location, efforts were being made to standardise the internals and equipment of all facilities.
- vi. The DSGOS noted that LED lighting had been installed across several of the Council's public conveniences, and asked whether further green initiatives had been considered, such as solar panels or water recycling. The APPM replied that a £200k bid had been approved to improve energy efficiency as part of planned maintenance. He added that options such as rain water harvesting could be explored, whilst solar panels were already planned for a new facility at Vicarage Street, in an effort to achieve a zero-carbon standard. It was noted that achieving this would be challenging, but green technology would be a scored aspect of the tendering process. The ADOR noted that all maintenance tasks would seek to reduce each facility's carbon footprint, though this would take time and considerable funding.
- vii. The EASM informed Members that as part of the Net Zero Strategy a project broad had been established to consider how the NNDC estate could achieve net zero, and consultants would soon be appointed to accomplish this.
- viii. The Chairman referred to the possibility of installing more gender neutral cubicles, and noted that significant space was lost on lobby areas. The APPM replied that two blocks had been built to this specification on Sheringham East and Cromer West Promenades, which enabled a reduction of facilities over winter to reduce costs. He added that creating more of these facilities would depend on the footprint of existing locations. The ADOR noted that individual cubicles could potentially lead to higher costs if more equipment was required, but this could be considered as part of any proposal. The CPPM suggested that closing some cubicles would help to generate savings over the winter season, which was not an option for shared lobby facilities. The Chairman suggested that where there was potential for this type of facility, it should be explored with a cost-benefit analysis.
- ix. The DSGOS asked whether there were any public convenience locations with specific issues, and any that potentially required additional funding. The APPM replied that provision in West Runton was fairly basic with no electricity or hot water. Holt Country park was reported to be in a similar situation, though it did have a generator and potential funding for a mains power supply. The APPM noted that the lack of drainage infrastructure in Weybourne meant that the evaporating toilet struggled to cope with demand, and temporary measures had been taken to supplement the existing provision. Finally Beach Road Wells and Stalham public conveniences were reported to be functional, but in need of investment.
- x. The EASM referred to the cost of cubicle designs and suggested that future

proposals could assess the cost of this design against a more traditional shared lobby with a cost consultant. The Chairman requested that this be noted as a potential recommendation. The APPM noted that this approach would only be applicable where existing facilities were due to be fully demolished or relocated. Cllr L Withington stated that How Hill had developed attractive single cubicles, though they had substantial footprint available to achieve this.

- xi. Cllr J Rest suggested that consideration should be given to including a commercial unit as part of any newly built facility, in order generate income and help improve security.
- xii. Cllr V Holliday suggested that campervan waste disposal at recycling centres should be considered as a potential recommendation. Cllr A Varley added that it would be prudent to investigate any actions taken by other authorities to address this issue. The Chairman noted that this service was widely available for a fee in boat yards across the Broads Authority's district.
- xiii. The APPM noted that campervan waste disposal was an issue, alongside matters such as vandalism and antisocial behaviour. He added that in some cases increased CCTV outside facilities and reduced opening hours in winter may help to mitigate issues. On disabled facilities, it was noted that radar keys had allowed toilets to be slept-in overnight, hence the need to lock facilities in the evening.
- xiv. The ADOR stated that all proposals discussed would require some level of investment, and a political decision would need to be made on how much to invest into the service.

AGREED

To give consideration to including final recommendations relating to:

- 1. Undertake design and cost-benefit analysis of gender neutral cubicle facilities for all new public conveniences.**
- 2. Request installation of campervan waste disposal facilities at County run public recycling centres.**

40 PARISH & TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS

The DSGOS reminded Members that they had requested comments from Parish and Town Councils on NNDC's public conveniences, and a summary of responses had been provided for consideration. It was noted that there had been a range of positive and negative comments, though facilities in Holt had been raised as a particular concern.

Questions and Discussion

- i. Cllr J Rest noted that facilities in Walsingham were not supported by car parking revenue and it was therefore difficult to justify further investment beyond existing maintenance. The Chairman noted that this was likely the case across a number of areas, and there were many locations with commercial options available. Cllr V Holliday noted that the Walsingham facilities were of a reasonable standard and did not require any significant

further investment.

- ii. The DSGOS noted previous discussion of the potential for relocation of Stalham facilities, which the Town Council appeared to support in principle.

AGREED

To note the comments from Parish and Town Councils.

41 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was proposed by Cllr V Holliday and seconded by Cllr A Varley to exclude the press and the public to avoid disclosure of information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information), when discussing the public convenience asset register.

RESOLVED

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to the Act.

42 REVIEW OF ASSET REGISTER

The DSGOS introduced the item and informed Members that the register was an opportunity to ask questions of the EASM on the value or availability of land in relation to the Council's public conveniences.

Questions and Discussion

- i. The Chairman referred to the Stalham facility and noted that the present site was not ideal, with an alternative location a possible option. He asked for clarification of the value of the existing facility. The value was discussed with potential other locations and existing land considered. The EASM replied that relocation could be explored but this would require significant investment that sale of the existing facility would not cover. She added that location of mains water and electrical services would require further consideration, as well as the potential loss of income from repurposing an existing asset. It was noted that land had recently been purchased in North Walsham, which had shown that town centre locations warranted a relatively high purchase price. In response to a follow-up question from the Chairman, the EASM confirmed that neither NNDC or the Town Council owned much land beyond existing amenity land on housing estates, though a search could be carried out. The Chairman suggested that the preferred location for Stalham appeared to be near the bus stop. The CPPM noted that usage counter data had been gathered for the Stalham, which had shown considerably higher usage by men. She added that the strategy needed to consider why this was the case in order to help determine what more could be done to improve facilities, beyond repositioning.
- ii. The DSGOS referred to listed values, and asked whether these were sales values, insurance values or something else. The EASM replied that the prices were calculated using depreciation and sales values would likely be different dependent on the available use of the land. In response to a follow-

up question, it was noted that the size and location of the land available at the current Stalham facility may limit its use. The EASM stated that any suitable locations could be considered for conversion to commercial use.

- iii. Cllr J Rest noted that Highfields Road facility was underused, and suggested that it could be considered for future potential repurposing.
- iv. The CPPM reminded Members that a funding allocation had been set aside for assessment work, which could be utilised to survey all existing facilities to better understand the current level of provision from an external perspective. Cllr L Withington suggested that surveying facilities would be helpful to better understand the level of provision and determine which facilities should be treated as a priority.
- v. The DSGOS noted that comments raised by the Panel would be summarised and presented at the next meeting to form potential recommendations, with the various conditions, equipment and age of current stock taken into account. The CPPM noted that in order to do this, it would be beneficial to commission a funded survey of the existing provision so that any decisions would be evidence-based.
- vi. The Panel agreed that they were supportive of recommending survey work be undertaken, though the specifics of this would need to be agreed in advance. It was agreed that this could form part of the final recommendations discussed at the next meeting, that would likely take place on 30th June.

AGREED

Final recommendations to be discussed and agreed at June meeting.

The meeting ended at 2.21 pm.

Chairman

Declarations of Interest at Meetings

When declaring an interest at a meeting, Members are asked to indicate whether their interest in the matter is pecuniary, or if the matter relates to, or affects a pecuniary interest they have, or if it is another type of interest Members are required to identify the nature of the interest and the agenda item to which it relates. In the case of other interests, the member may speak and vote. If it is a pecuniary interest, the member must withdraw from the meeting when it is discussed. If it affects or relates to a pecuniary interest the member has, they have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Have you declared the interest in the register of interests as a pecuniary interest? If Yes, you will need to withdraw from the room when it is discussed.

Does the interest directly:

1. Affect yours, or your spouse / partner's financial position?
2. Relate to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to you or your spouse / partner?
3. Relate to a contract you, or your spouse / partner have with the Council
4. Affect land you or your spouse / partner own
5. Affect a company that you or your partner own, or have a shareholding in

If the answer is "yes" to any of the above, it is likely to be pecuniary.

Please refer to the guidance given on declaring pecuniary interests in the register of interest forms. If you have a pecuniary interest, you will need to inform the meeting and then withdraw from the room when it is discussed. If it has not been previously declared, you will also need to notify the Monitoring Officer within 28 days.

Does the interest indirectly affect or relate to any pecuniary interest you have already declared, or an interest you have identified at 1-5 above?

If yes, you need to inform the meeting. When it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

Is the interest not related to any of the above? If so, it is likely to be another interest. You will need to declare the interest, but may participate in discussion and voting on the item.

Have you made any statements or undertaken any actions that would indicate that you have a closed mind on a matter under discussion? If so, you may be predetermined on the issue; you will need to inform the meeting and when it is discussed, you will have the right to make representations to the meeting as a member of the public, but must then withdraw from the meeting.

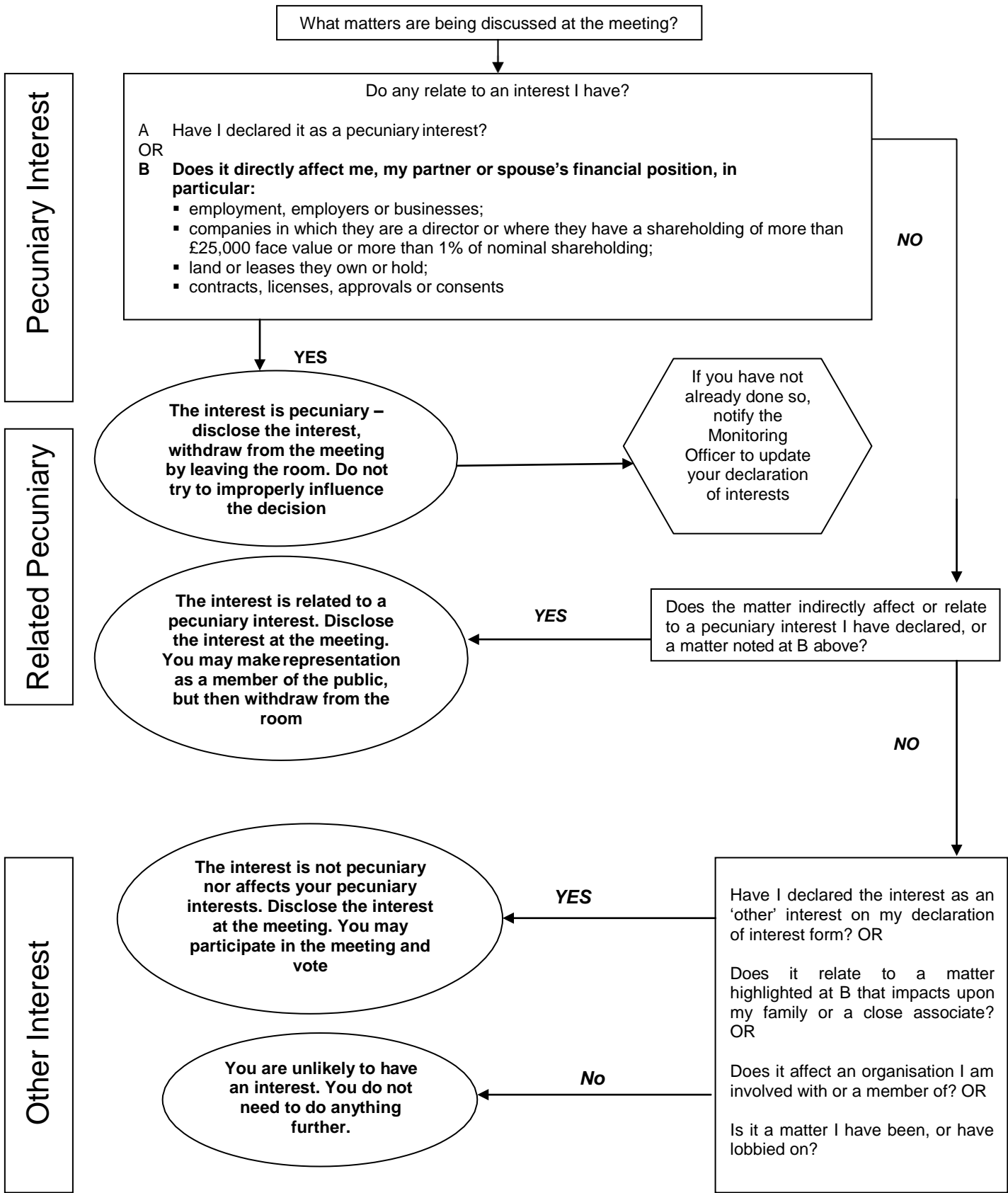
FOR GUIDANCE REFER TO THE FLOWCHART OVERLEAF

PLEASE REFER ANY QUERIES TO THE MONITORING OFFICER IN THE FIRST INSTANCE

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS SHOULD ALSO REFER TO THE PLANNING PROTOCOL

Declarations of Interest at Meetings

DECLARING INTERESTS FLOWCHART – QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY – ENVIRONMENT & QUALITY OF LIFE PANEL: PUBLIC CONVENIENCE STRATEGY REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Summary** The Council has sought to prepare a Public Convenience Strategy aimed at providing a clear path to future management of this non-statutory function that is felt to be essential for both visitors and the local population. Public toilets are crucial to tourism and town centre economies but are facing ever increasing costs to provide.
- Options considered** The panel has reviewed in-depth over the past 6 months, the Draft Public Convenience Strategy and sought expertise and guidance from both officers and external consultants regarding a range of options and ideas. The group also sought opinions from local Town and Parish Councils.
- Conclusion** In general the panel supports the provision of a Strategy to ensure a holistic approach to the future management of the Council's extensive portfolio of 38 public conveniences across the District. The following recommendations are made regarding the Draft Public Toilet Provision Strategy Document.
- The Panel reviewed current provision, sought to identify options for the future and reviewed means of obtaining and achieving customer expectation.
- Recommendations** **The working group has made fourteen recommendations which are listed throughout the report and summarised in Appendix 2 on page 10 of the report.**
- Reasons for Recommendations** To ensure that the Council's public conveniences are managed and maintained efficiently and effectively to a high standard for public use by residents and visitors.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW

(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)

Public Conveniences Strategy

Cabinet Member(s): Ward(s) affected: All

Contact officer, telephone and email:

Maxine Collis Maxine.collis@north-norfolk.gov.uk

01263 516256

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Following the delivery of a report to Cabinet on the Council's public toilet provision and its current challenges, Cabinet requested the provision of a Public Convenience Strategy to satisfy the following Corporate Delivery objective:

Corporate Plan Theme: Financial Sustainability and Growth

Objective 1: Continuously reviewing our service delivery arrangements, fees and charges to ensure that we deliver value for money

The Over view & Scrutiny Working Panel were requested to review the Public Convenience Strategy in December 2021 and offer its comments and recommendations.

2. Findings and recommendations

- 2.1 At the first meeting it was agreed to look at the four elements of the document pertaining to the four areas given in the diagram below.



2.2 Quality of Provision

The panel supports greater analysis of customer complaints to inform improvements.

The panel felt that as part of ongoing provision a 'standard' of cleansing should be agreed as part of the SERCO cleansing contract thus ensuring cohesive approach and clear expectation of performance.

The Panel actively supported the installation of new changing places facilities.

The Panel was pleased to be assured that Property Services are taking steps to standardise equipment use across the portfolio and to review and embrace environmentally friendly solutions on a regular basis.

2.3 Auditing Current Facilities

It was felt that whilst the Council holds various types of financial and operational information on our assets, there is not one comprehensive audit of our facilities to best inform change. The counters that were installed in 2018 have provided an insight into use but there are many elements that could be included in such an audit. Many of the desirable features, from both a customer service and asset management point of view, are illustrated in the British Toilet Association best practice guidelines and Appendix A) gives details of key elements we believe should be included in the initial audit suggested as point 2 in the Action Plan, but this is not exhaustive and could be tailored to the needs of the service area.

Also as part of the audit some assessment of site suitability should be undertaken to identify where provision is hampered by site location or accessibility.

2.4 Current Opinion

The Panel sought feedback from Town and Parish Councils on the current public convenience provision. Feedback was mixed and highlighted some key areas for focus. It is anticipated the audit will help to consolidate and evidence required changes/improvements.

QUALITY OF PROVISION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **To recommend that an external audit of the Council's public conveniences is undertaken to review factors including: lighting, signage, cleanliness, site position, energy efficiency etc.**
- **To recommend that a review of the outcomes of the external audit alongside current structural surveys is undertaken during winter 2022-23 to provide a way forward for the facilities in 2023-24.**
- **To recommend that a simple customer feedback system is created and promoted to obtain and maintain ongoing feedback to support and evidence need for future changes or address any issues.**
- **To recommend that the Strategy is reviewed and updated every 4 years**
- **To recommend that a cleansing standard is established and approved to ensure it is achieved in all facilities across the District.**

2.5 Location

The Panel felt that some public toilets did not function well because of their location. It was felt that greater effort should be made to review /rate each assets location as part of the audit undertaken. Facilities should be easy to locate, feel safe to use and be in key locations.

The Panel acknowledged alternative options are not always available but that facilities should be subject to consideration prior to installing new-build facilities.

2.6 Decision Matrix

The panel reviewed and 'tested' the decision matrix and felt, as a tool for Officer and Members to determine need, it was not without merit and should be used as part of the assessment of provision in future.

LOCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

- To recommend that the decision making matrix be used and refined to determine future need.
- To recommend that location suitability be assessed as part of the PC external audit/review.
- To recommend that consideration be given to extend and enable out of hours accessibility of disabled toilets in major tourism locations, through security improvements.

2.7 Costs & Opportunities

The panel acknowledged that building, repairs and maintenance are equally suffering from current rising prices so reducing annual spend was unlikely without reduced provision. The suggestion of standardising equipment and spares and new build design may help reduce costs.

The panel discussed experience of other coastal locations to only provide banks of self-contained units which prevent wasted building, fitting and cleaning of internal lobbies which also may reduce opportunity for vandalism. Individual units could be opened to reflect need (ie close some units during winter) to again reduce costs and vandalism.

Automatic opening and closing systems was also briefly discussed as a means to reduce costs but this had been tried at North Walsham and was found to be very problematic with issues of people being locked in as well as breakdowns and failures.

COSTS AND OPPORTUNITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

- To recommended that a standard design 'type' be adopted that is flexible enough to fit most locations where new build may be an option. The use of single self-contained WC cubicles would eliminate wasted lobby areas, address equality and diversity needs and allow partial closures during quieter months or maintenance works.
- To recommend that design and cost-benefit analysis of gender-neutral cubicle facilities are undertaken for all new public conveniences or major refurbishments (where possible).
- To recommend that all opportunities are regularly explored to improve the financial sustainability and continuation of public conveniences across the District, to include new technology, advertisement and commercial opportunities.

2.8 Environment and Future proofing

The Panel is supportive of these facilities using green technology and solutions to reduce carbon footprint. The panel was pleased to learn a carbon-neutral facility is being designed and costed for installation in North Walsham.

The Panel discussed the issues caused by campervans emptying their waste in public facilities – a situation acutely felt at Weybourne where such practices has swamped the eco facility. It was mentioned that Emily Capps had sought solutions with camp sites in the area with little positive result. The Panel wondered if County Council managed waste disposal sites could accommodate such waste.

ENVIRONMENT AND FUTURE PROOFING RECOMMENDATIONS

- To recommended that when a new build or major refurbishment is required that the decision matrix is used to determine if the facility is of an appropriate size (ie numbers of cubicles) and in a desirable location (see audit/review results).
- To recommended that any major refurbishments or new builds include costings for green/renewable technology and cost efficiencies so that Members can select the most appropriate course of action for each location.
- To recommend investigation of the potential for installation of campervan waste disposal facilities at County run public recycling centres with subsequent advertisement.

3. Implications and Risks

It is felt the inclusion of the recommendations made would have positive implications for the Strategy and reduce risk by clarifying overall objectives.

4. Financial Implications and Risks

It is understood a budget has already been agreed for the audit process. There may be financial implications regarding setting cleansing standards. Otherwise there are no additional financial implications to the recommendations made.

5. Sustainability

Sustainability options and future proofing of facilities are discussed in this report.

6. Equality and Diversity

The public conveniences provision and this Strategy does support equality and diversity and recommends these are considered and embraced in future provision.

7. Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations

Crime and Disorder considerations should form part of the audit report. Public toilet designs are always reviewed by the Police to highlight any design concerns.

Appendix 1

External audit of current public toilet facilities

An audit of facilities should look at assessing the following features of 'good, quality toilet provision'. The review should take into account an assessment of each facility and offer recommendations for improvements. The audit should be made from the customer perspective and an understanding of expectation and knowledge of public toilet use is expected.

It may be possible to solicit public opinion as part of this process.

The check list can be used to help ensure new facilities meet these standards.

1. Signage & Communication
2. Décor and Maintenance
3. Fixtures and Fittings
4. Cleanliness & Hygiene
5. General comfort and customer care
6. Accessibility
7. Additional facilities
8. Opening hours
9. Security
10. Energy efficiencies and green technology
11. Location

The following list is not exhaustible and some answers can easily be provided in house.

Ideally costed recommendations for change should be provided as part of this review.

Public Convenience Provision Audit

Facility	
Location (address)	
Day and Date audited	
Opening hours	

	Criteria	Score 1-5¹
1) Signage and communication		
1.1	Is the facility well signposted from key areas such as, main pedestrian routes and town centres?	
1.2	Has the facility got an identifiable name?	
1.3	Are the opening times and other key information clearly displayed? Including contact details and ownership including cleansing?	
1.4	Is any other information provided? (ie health promotion)	
1.5	Are there 'No Smoking' signs?	
2) Décor and Maintenance		
2.1	Is the external décor clean and tidy/ well maintained?	

¹ 1 is not existent, 2 is some provision or provision is poor, 3 is acceptable provision, 4 is good but could easily be improved further, 5 is excellent. Where an answer is Yes or NO. If the response is NO =1 and if YES - then rate the quality/quantity of provision. (eg: Yes there is some natural light but overgrown bushes outside means the overall light provided naturally is poor – 2)

2.2	Is the internal décor clean and tidy/ well maintained?	
2.3	Is the facility well lit in all areas?	
2.4	Is lighting low energy, vandal resistant, flush fitting?	
2.5	Is safety flooring fitted?	
2.6	Is there good ventilation?	
2.7	Do the windows open?	
2.8	Are there any areas poorly maintained or showing signs of degradation?	
3) Fixtures and fittings		
3.1	Does the facility provide a family room?	
3.2	Are baby change facilities accessible and in good condition?	
3.3	Are the hand drying units energy efficient?	
3.4	Is at least one ambient cubicle provided?	
3.5	Do urinals have flush control systems to reduce water consumption?	
3.6	Is there suitable/sufficient sanitary and nappy waste disposal facilities?	
3.7	Is the facility decorated to the corporate colours/style?	
3.8	Do cubicle door open inwards?	
3.8	Are locks easy to open and close?	
3.9	Are handbag /coat hooks provided on backs of doors?	
4) Cleanliness		
4.1	On a scale of 1 – 10 how would you rate the standard of cleanliness during your visit?	
4.2	How often is the facility cleaned (Serco)?	
4.3	Are the facilities monitored at peak times?	
4.4	Are there any signs of graffiti?	
4.5	Is there evidence to suggest wilful damage?	
4.6	Are the soap dispensers hands free?	
4.7	Are the toilet roll dispensers fit for purpose? Maintained (ie not run out)?	
4.8	Is there an electric air ventilation system?	
4.9	Are there air freshening units in busy toilets?	
4.10	If waste bins are provided are they overflowing?	
5) General comfort and customer care		
5.1)	How often are the toilets inspected by senior providers.. For hygiene? For maintenance?	
5.2	Is hot water available for washing?	
5.3	Are bags and disposal units provided in women's cubicles?	
5.4	Are vending machines provided? (eg: nappies, sanitary products)	
5.5	Are the cubicles easy to access/use/ exit safely and comfortably	
6) Accessible toilets and changing places		
6.1)	Do entrance doors open outwards?	
6.2)	Are doors of a contrasting colour?	
6.3)	Is an extractor fan fitted/working?	
6.4)	Are grab rails fitted adjacent to WC?	
6.5)	Are hand basins close enough/ accessible from the WC?	
6.6)	Are coat hooks and mirrors fitted at the correct height?	
6.7)	Are details given on where a radar key can be purchased?	
6.8)	Are emergency alarm cords or buttons within reach at both floor and waist level?	
6.9)	How is help provided when alarm cord pulled?	
6.10)	Is all the changing places equipment in good, clean order and working?	
6.11)	Is there signs of deterioration/misuse or damage?	
6.12)	Is the access easy to enter and exit the facility for an incumbent user?	

6.13)	Are all access ways ramped or level?	
7) Baby change facilities		
7.1)	Does the facility have a wide door for double buggy access?	
7.2)	Is the baby change unit; clean, sturdy,	
7.3)	Are the straps clean, useable and safe?	
7.4)	Are the lights bright and the water warm?	
7.5)	Is a toddler toilet seat fitted?	
7.6)	Is the room decorated to provide a child friendly environment?	
8) Opening Hours		
8.1)	What are the opening hours	
8.2)	BTA recommends at least 12 hours per day – does this facility comply?	
8.3)	Is a 24 hour facility available in each locality?	
8.4)	Is provision made for longer openings at peak periods?	
9) Security		
9.1)	Is the lighting provided ensure ALL the external areas are well lit?	
9.2)	Is the facility subject to antisocial behaviour? (ie: 4 or more incidents in 12 month period)	
9.3)	Are security/attendance visits undertaken daily?	
9.4)	Are CCTV cameras in operation on external areas or lobbies on high risk facilities?	
9.5)	Are prosecution warning signs clearly visible?	
10) Energy efficiencies – are any of the following installed?		
10.1	PIR sensor lights?	
10.2	Infra-red flushing systems	
10.3	Solar powered lighting	
10.4	Solar powered heating?	
10.5	Non-concussive taps installed?	
10.6	Toilet cistern reduction systems?	
10.7	Is there good natural light?	
10.8	Recycled products	
10.9	Are the cleansing chemicals environmentally friendly products?	
11) Location		
11.1	Is the location well situated for users?	
11.2	Is parking or a transport hub located close by?	
11.3	Is the site (within NNDC ownership) well maintained?	
	TOTAL SCORE	

An example of a cleansing guidelines ²

A Step By Step Guide on How to Clean Public Toilets

DAILY

Step 1) Use the correct COSHH approved cleaning products including, cleaning chemicals, cleaning tools, dispenser refills, personal protection and safety signs.

Step 2) Initial Inspection

- Place safety signs to prevent visitor entry
- Wear the correct protective clothing including gloves and goggles.
- Report any misuse, vandalism or malfunctioning equipment

Step 3) Clean toilets and urinals

- Pour a generous amount of cleaning solution into the toilet bowl and allow to soak for approx 10 minutes.
- Using a toilet mop swab inside the toilet bowl thoroughly and flush.
- Using a damp microfiber cloth soaked in cleaning solution wipe the exterior including seats and handles.
- Repeat the above for urinals

Step 4) Sweep floors and remove litter

- Remove bin liner and sanitize the bin
- Replace bin liner
- Remove bin liners and replace for feminine care receptacles. These are to be placed in a separate offensive waste stream.

Step 5) Clean cubicles, sinks, mirrors and all surfaces – pay extra attention to key surfaces such as push plates and taps, flush mechanisms

- Work from top to bottom
- Use glass cleaning solution for mirrors

Step 6) Refill dispensers

- Refill toilet paper
- Refill hand soap dispensers
- Check metered air fresheners if necessary replace cartridges

Step 7) Mop floor

- Prepare buckets with water and cleaning solution
- Rinse the mop in between different areas

Step 8) Final Inspection

- Check everything is in working condition
- Restroom should be free from litter and odour
- Remove safety sign

WEEKLY

Step 9) Clean/dust high level surfaces as appropriate

MONTHLY

Step 10) Clean external windows inside and out, clean associated signage (opening times etc)

² [A Step By Step Guide on How to Clean Public Toilets \(thenugroup.co.uk\)](http://thenugroup.co.uk)

Appendix 2

Recommendations Summary

1. To recommend that an external audit of the Council's public conveniences is undertaken to review factors including: lighting, signage, cleanliness, site position, energy efficiency etc.
2. To recommend that a review of the outcomes of the external audit alongside current structural surveys is undertaken during winter 2022-23 to provide a way forward for the facilities in 2023-24.
3. To recommend that a simple customer feedback system is created and promoted to obtain and maintain ongoing feedback to support and evidence need for future changes or address any issues.
4. To recommend that the Strategy is reviewed and updated every 4 years
5. To recommend that a cleansing standard is established and approved to ensure it is achieved in all facilities across the District.
6. To recommend that the decision making matrix be used and refined to determine future need.
7. To recommend that location suitability be assessed as part of the PC external audit/review.
8. To recommend that consideration be given to extend and enable out of hours accessibility of disabled toilets in major tourism locations, through security improvements.
9. To recommended that a standard design 'type' be adopted that is flexible enough to fit most locations where new build may be an option. The use of single self-contained WC cubicles would eliminate wasted lobby areas, address equality and diversity needs and allow partial closures during quieter months or maintenance works.
10. To recommend that design and cost-benefit analysis of gender-neutral cubicle facilities are undertaken for all new public conveniences or major refurbishments (where possible).
11. To recommend that all opportunities are regularly explored to improve the financial sustainability and continuation of public conveniences across the District, to include new technology, advertisement and commercial opportunities.
12. To recommended that when a new build or major refurbishment is required that the decision matrix is used to determine if the facility is of an appropriate size (ie numbers of cubicles) and in a desirable location (see audit/review results).
13. To recommended that any major refurbishments or new builds include costings for green/renewable technology and cost efficiencies so that Members can select the most appropriate course of action for each location.
14. To recommend investigation of the potential for installation of campervan waste disposal facilities at County run public recycling centres with subsequent advertisement.