

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR (COMMERCIAL SERVICES)
TO THE EXECUTIVE
17 OCTOBER 2008

Review of Public Conveniences Service

1.0 Introduction and Report Summary

- 1.1 This report relates to a scheme for the modernisation of the service provision of Council owned public conveniences.
- 1.2 The contact officer for this report is Bill Farrar, Deputy Director (Commercial Services), telephone: 01235 540356, email address: bill.farrar@whitehorsedc.gov.uk

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 *That the Executive approves the new service arrangements for Council owned public conveniences.*

3.0 Relationship with the Council's Vision, Strategies and Policies

- 3.1 This report relates to the Council's Vision. It does not conflict with any Council Strategies and supports the following Corporate Aims and Priorities:
- *Provide and support high quality public services which are effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of people within the Vale*
 - *Create a safer community and improve the quality of life among Vale residents*
 - *Creating a cleaner, greener, safer and healthier community and environment*
 - *Improving and modernising access to our services*

4.0 Background

- 4.1 On 6 June 2006, the Council took back in-house the cleaning of all its public conveniences, placing the function with the Direct Service Organisation (DSO).
- 4.2 Three operatives were transferred, under TUPE, from the contractor (Cannons Hygiene PLC) to the Council. At that time, their working hours were not clear but purported to be 96 hours. Following a period of illness, one cleaner resigned in March 2007 and several months later the part-time "closer" also retired. It became clear that there was inadequate cleaning staff to carry out all the tasks within the time constraints and therefore a local agency was used to provide additional support.
- 4.3 The Deputy Director (Commercial Services) having reviewed the resources required to provide an acceptable and sustainable service which is controllable, flexible and cost effective, has concluded that new arrangements should be implemented as soon as is practicable.
- 4.4 The fundamental components of the new scheme involves:
1. Reducing opening hours
 2. Relocating 2 APCs

3. Increasing Automatic Public Conveniences (APCs) charges (from 10p to 20p) and introduce in-house collection of revenue
4. Accommodating the existing cleaner's request for reduced working hours and his transfer to Council conditions of contract and employment
5. Establishing and recruiting a suitable team of cleaning staff
6. Minimising agency support
7. Refurbishing premises

The detailed proposals are set out in Appendix A to this report.

- 4.5 It should be noted that the DSO maintained services within the same fixed budget (£91,000 per annum), without inflationary growth, for the fourth consecutive year since 2005/06. Under the proposed new arrangement the expenditure (inclusive of materials, contingency and absence cover) is expected to remain within this budget at an estimation of £80,905. The APCs are under contract until the end of 2012. During this period the Council will monitor performance of the toilet facilities and review the longer-term prospects for the Community assets. Any balance of the expenditure budget will be used to commence a vital refurbishment scheme of all premises.
- 4.6 On 18 September 2008, the Personnel Committee approved the updated establishment of the DSO with respect to its cleaning technicians providing a total of 92 hours per week for this function. This proposal was based on the new arrangements as set out in Appendix A.
- 4.7 The benefits of the new arrangement include:
1. reducing repairs and maintenance costs
 2. reducing cleaning costs
 3. reducing risk of vandalism
 4. maintaining the same staffing establishment
 5. achieving staff flexible working arrangements
 6. improving standard of cleanliness
 7. refurbishing premises
 8. introducing an income stream

5.0 Alternative Options Rejected

- 5.1 One alternative to directly employed staff would be to re-tender the cleaning contract to an external service provider. This will remove the control and flexibility preferred by the Council and may well exceed the existing budget.
- 5.2 The second option, that of continuing to employ casual staff and agency support on an ad hoc basis, is practically unreliable and ineffective as well as being financially unpredictable and uneconomical.
- 5.3 A third option would be to stop cleaning the public conveniences completely and seek to either:
- 3A - simply close all of the premises or
 - 3B - transfer ownership to Town and Parish Councils
- 3A may be politically unacceptable whilst 3B could fail if not all Town and Parishes agree.

6.0 Additional Information

- 6.1 Details of the existing and proposed facilities are set out in Appendix A to this report. Details of the proposed opening and closing times are set out in Appendix B to this report. An analysis of the service is set out in Appendix C to this report.

BILL FARRAR
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (COMMERCIAL SERVICES)

Proposed Changes

Location of Conventional PCs	Existing Facilities	Proposed Changes
Manor Road Recreation Park, Wantage	Small detached brick building within park - comprising separate male and female/disabled access facilities 8am – 8pm everyday	New APC – existing unit transferred to this venue from Post Office Lane, Wantage. Available all year round Existing Toilets - open to public 22 weeks per annum (i.e. April – Sept) and opening hours compressed Possible refurbishment in future
Portway Car Park, Wantage	Small detached brick building on car park site - comprising separate male, female and disabled people facilities 8am – 8pm everyday	No change except opening hours compressed Possible refurbishment in future
Southampton Street Car Park, Faringdon	Small detached brick building on car park site - comprising separate male, female and disabled people facilities 8am – 8pm everyday	New APC – existing unit transferred to this venue from West St Helens St, Abingdon. Available all year round Existing Toilets - open to public 6 days per week (Weekdays and Saturdays) 52 weeks per annum and opening hours compressed Possible refurbishment in future
Chapel Way, Botley	Small integral unit within ground floor of office building - comprising separate male, female and disabled people facilities 8am – 8pm everyday	No change except opening hours compressed Possible refurbishment in future
Charter Car Park, Abingdon	Small integral unit within ground floor of multi-storey car park - comprising separate male, female and disabled people facilities 8am – 8pm everyday	No change except opening hours compressed Commence refurbishment
Abbey Meadows, Abingdon	Small detached brick building in riverside meadow - comprising separate male, female and disabled people facilities (open summer months only) 8am – 8pm everyday	No change except opening hours compressed (i.e. 22 weeks per annum April – Sept) Possible refurbishment in future

Location of Automatic PCs (Superloos)	Existing Facilities	Proposed Changes
West St Helen Street Car Park, Abingdon	1 unit 24 hours, every day	Relocate to Southampton Street Car Park, Faringdon
Post Office Lane, Wantage	1 unit 24 hours, every day	Relocate to Manor Road Recreation Park, Wantage
Hales Meadow Car Park, Abingdon	2 units 24 hours, every day	No change
Millbrook Square Shopping Centre, Grove	1 unit 24 hours, every day	No change

PROPOSED OPENING AND CLOSING TIMES

Conventional Public Conveniences

	Manor Road Park, Wantage (Summer)	Portway Car Park, Wantage	Southampton St. Car Park, Faringdon	Chapel Way, Botley	Charter Car Park, Abingdon	Abbey Meadows, Abingdon (Summer)
Weekday Open	8.30 am	8.00 am	9.00 am	8.30 am	8.00am	8.00am
Weekday Close	6.00 pm	6.30 pm	5.00 pm	6.00 pm	6.00 pm	6.0 pm
Saturday Open	9.00 am	9.00 am	9.00 am	8.45 am	8.30 am	9.00am
Saturday Close	5.00 pm	6.30 pm	5.00 pm	6.00 pm	6.00 pm	5.0 pm
Sunday Open	9.00 am	10.00 am	-	10.00 am	10.0 am	9.0 am
Sunday Close	5.00 pm	4.00 pm	-	4.00 pm	4.0 pm	5.0 pm

Note:

The opening and closing times for the premises vary according to (a) the likely usage demand and (b) the logistics of programming cleaning staff.

Automatic Public Conveniences

	Manor Road Park Wantage (1no.)	Southampton St. Car Park Faringdon (1no.)	Hales Meadow Abingdon (2no.)	Millbrook Square Grove (1no.)
Availability	24 hrs/day All Year	24 hrs/day All Year	24 hrs/day All Year	24 hrs/day All Year

COST ANALYSIS

<i>Item</i>	<i>Hours</i>	<i>£</i>
Vale Direct Employees	88.5	39,117
Agency	11	8,108
Summer – Agency	28	8,680
ABSENCE COVER		5,000
Labour Costs		60,905
Fuel		5,000
Vehicles		-
Contingencies		6,000
Tools / Equipment / Chemicals		9,000
Total Cost – Public Conveniences		80,905
<i>+ Cost of APC relocation</i>		<i>6,000</i>