



**Report to: Environment Committee, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

**Report of: Corporate Director – Operations, Homes and Communities**

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**Subject: FEASIBILITY OF PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION AT ST JOHNS CEMETERY**

**1. Recommendation**

**That Committee:**

**1.1 Notes the contents of this report, and**

**1.2 Endorses the proposal to raise awareness of the provision of local publicly accessible toilet facilities, via site signage and use of the Council's website in order to support people to plan their visit to the site.**

**2. Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting of November 2021, the Chair of Environment Committee agreed to a report being provided to the January 2022 Committee that looked into the feasibility of public toilet provision at St Johns Cemetery.
- 2.2 St Johns cemetery is seven hectares in size and has approximately 9,000 burial plots as well as cremated remains. At its current rate of usage, it has 3 years' worth of space remaining before it will be at capacity.
- 2.3 Until 2010 the site used to provide a public toilet; however, the facilities were consistently vandalised and a source of anti-social behaviour, including illicit substance abuse. As a result of this they were closed, and for the last few years, the building has been used as a break area for staff attending the site following some modification work carried out.
- 2.4 This report has investigated the feasibility of reintroducing public toilet provision at St Johns Cemetery taking into account actual demand versus capital and ongoing revenue costs of such a project.

**3. Information**

- 3.1 The Bereavement Services Business Manager has discussed with his staff, many of whom have worked in the service for several years, whether they had had any engagement with residents or visitors whilst working at St Johns regarding public toilet provision. Feedback is that twice in the last two years has the issue been raised.

- 3.2 No formal complaints or service requests have been received by the service in respect of the matter either and therefore in terms of demand for public toilet provision, at the very least it would seem unknown or with the information available it may be considered insignificant.
- 3.3 A cost analysis has been carried out on three options to determine both initial capital costs and ongoing revenue costs associated with each. The options include –
- a) Revise internal layout of existing building to provide a new fully accessible toilet
  - b) Refurbishment existing toilet provision to make outward facing and to current standard
  - c) Provision of portable toilet on rental/lease basis
- 3.4 The options for capital cost range between £50,000 (Option C) and £2,500 (Option A) and if reprovisioning toilet facilities the expectation would likely be from the public that not only should it be legally compliant but also fully accessible. It is therefore prudent to assume that capital outlay would be towards the upper end of this spectrum.
- 3.5 The revenue costs are fundamentally based on security and cleaning requirements associated with maintaining the appropriate standards for public use and safety and are calculated in the following way:
- 3.6 **Cleaning / checks** - reviewing the common management practises of other public toilet facilities across the city, typically, the toilets in the City Centre are checked around 5 times a day @ 20 minutes per time.
- 3.7 For a fully accessible disabled toilet with baby changing facilities, we wouldn't envisage a cleanse and a re-stock taking much longer than 30 mins. This would be dependent on the volume of usage. Overall, this equates to £21 per day for an Ops 1 cleaner with annual cost amounting to £7,665.
- 3.8 **Security** – the facility would need to be opened and closed by our existing security provider at a monthly rate of £240 for weekdays and £288 for weekends with annual costs amounting to £6,336
- 3.9 The combined and ongoing annual revenue costs therefore would stand at £14,001
- 3.10 Therefore, with currently unknown or insignificant demand for public toilet provision and clear capital and revenue financial implications currently unbudgeted for, this report is not recommending that public toilet provision be reinstated.
- 3.11 In order to support people who use the site however and who may have the need for such provision then it is the intention of officers to work with local businesses that are generally open to the public and who will provide toilets as part of their customer offer in order to advertise these facilities via signage at St Johns Cemetery key entry points and via the Council's website.
- 3.12 This it is hoped will support those people who require such facilities whilst on the site but also those planning a visit to the site and who may be coming from distance or be infrequent visitors etc.

3.13 Within close proximity of the site there are at least two premises including a leisure facility and a public house that the Council would want to have a conversation with about signposting visitors with clear information on location, pedestrian routes and times of operation etc.

#### **4 Preferred Option**

4.1 Due to insufficient evidence of demand and related prohibitive costs, the preferred option is to signpost visitors clearly to local publicly accessible toilet provision via site signage and use of the Council's website.

#### **5. Alternative Options Considered**

5.1 Proceeding with a capital project with a lack of demand evidence and no readily available budget is not considered a prudent use of public resources, particularly given the ongoing budget pressure that the Council will face over the coming years.

5.2 In response to the lack of demand evidence it was considered whether it would be useful and prudent to install some sort of footfall counter at the site to ascertain demand. It was quickly established however that although the device would be able to provide information on attendance at the site, what it would not be able to do is provide any qualitative information in respect of this matter. It was concluded therefore not to proceed with such a device on the basis that it would not add any value.

#### **6 Implications**

##### **6.1 Financial and Budgetary Implications**

The capital and revenue costs of each option are set out in the table below having worked closely with colleagues in Property Services.

<b>Public Toilet Provision Option</b>		<b>Estimated Cost (£'000 excluding VAT)</b>				
		<b>Initial Capital Cost</b>	<b>Cleaning (per annum)</b>	<b>Security (per annum)</b>	<b>Total Cost Year 1</b>	<b>Ongoing Annual Revenue Impact (Year 2 onwards)</b>
1	New Accessible toilet	50	7.7	6.4	63.9	14.1
2	Refurbishment of existing	30	7.7	6.4	43.9	14.1
3	Lease/Rent Portable toilet	2.5	7.7	6.4	16.4	14.1

There is no identified budget for such spend and this report does not recommend proceeding with such a capital project given the insignificant or unknown demand that exists. If however contrary to the recommendation of this report, Members wished to proceed with any of the above options then further detail would need to be provided on the project to the Policy & Resources Committee at its 8<sup>th</sup> February meeting for a budget decision ahead of Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February.

6.2 Legal and Governance Implications

There are no legal or governance implications arising from this report.

6.3 Risk Implications

The lack of evidence around demand for public toilet provision indicates that at this current time there is little or no risk in continuing without such provision. This risk is further mitigated by the proposal to advertise on the site and via the Council's website, the nearest available public toilets to help people plan and manage their visit.

6.4 Corporate/Policy Implications

There are no corporate/policy implications in respect of this report.

6.5 Equality Implications

The report outlines the Council's intention to advertise both at the site and on the Council's website, the nearest available public toilet provision to assist those planning on visiting the site.

6.6 Human Resources Implications

There are no human resource implications in respect of this report.

6.7 Health and Safety Implications

There are no health & safety implications in respect of this report as there is no legal requirement from a health, safety or welfare point of view to provide public toilet provision at a graveyard.

6.8 Social, Environmental and Economic Implications

There are no social, environmental or economic implications in respect of this report

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**Background Papers:** None