



**COMMITTEE TITLE: Clean & Green Committee**

**DATE: 26 June 2023**

<b>REPORT TITLE:</b>	Public Conveniences, Brentwood High Street
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Marcus Hotten, Director of Environment

## **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report sets out an initial proposal to consider alternative options for the longer-term use of the public conveniences in Brentwood High Street. A further report will be brought back to the Committee setting out the business case for each option.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The current public conveniences located at Brentwood Highstreet, consist of male toilets (4 urinals & two toilets); and female toilets (4 toilets (one with baby changing facilities)). There is also an additional Changing Places unit that benefits from level access to the pavement, whereas the remaining facilities are below pavement level and access via steps down to the toilet lobby.

The public health Act 1936 gives Local Authorities the discretion to provide public toilets, but it imposes no statutory duty to do so.

The toilets have remained closed since February 2023, due to persistent vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Officers are currently undertaking work to make such modest repairs as required to allow them to re-open. However, the toilets are of a design that will continue to attract antisocial behaviour, due to the below ground element to the siting, and a layout that incorporates a large lobby space allowing for congregation of visitors whilst obscured from the adjacent public pavement.

It is proposed that a report will be brought back to this Committee to consider three broad options of service delivery:

- To close the public conveniences without establishing any further provision. Potentially the asset could be sold or leased to a third-party. The closing and sale of the toilets will give the greatest certainty in terms of saving that can be achieved and realising the value of asset. This could clearly have a significant impact on the community.

- To partially close a portion of the public conveniences, rationalising and modernising the current provision – seeking to alleviate, where possible the opportunities for anti-social behaviour that the current design fosters but allowing a proportion of the space to be leased to a third-party for commercial or community use.
- To overhaul and modernise the toilet block in its entirety, seeking to alleviate, where possible the opportunities for anti-social behaviour that the current design fosters. This would aim to secure the current level of provision and access that the residents benefit from.

## **2.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Tim Willis, Director – Resources & Section 151 Officer**  
**Tel & Email: 01277 312500 / tim.willis@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

This report is for noting and has no financial implications. A further report may well have cost implications and they will be addressed at that stage.

## **3.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Claire Mayhew, Joint Acting Director People & Governance & Monitoring Officer**  
**Tel & Email 01277 312500 / claire.mayhew@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

As stated within the report, the public health Act 1936 gives Local Authorities the discretion to provide public toilets, but it imposes no statutory duty to do so.

## **4.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

None, the report is at this time, effectively setting out the scope of the proposed project.

## **5.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

Consultation with relevant stakeholders will be considered as set out in the report to follow, once the business case for the different options has been established

## **6.0 EQUALITY & HEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Kim Anderson, Corporate Manager - Communities, Leisure and Health**  
**Tel & Email 01277 312500 kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful

- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

Currently the toilets in the High Street have a Changing Places facility which allows disabled adults to be changed. There is another Changing Places facility located within the Town Hall building, but this would only be accessible during the normal opening hours of the building. These facilities are registered on the Changing Places website so any new proposal option that would mean closure will need to bear that in mind.

## **7.0 ECONOMIC AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

**Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director - Place**

**Tel & Email 01277 312500 / phil.drane@brentwood.rochford.gov.uk**

Provision of public conveniences more generally may have an impact on the local economy in terms of the visitor experience and footfall. The options identified should be discussed with the council's Economic Development team as part of liaison with High Street businesses and related work.

### **REPORT AUTHOR:**

**Name: Marcus Hotten**

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### **APPENDICES**

None

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

### **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

None