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**Customer & Corporate Services Scrutiny Management  
Committee (Calling In)**

3 April 2018

Report of the Corporate Director of Economy and Place

**Draft Report to Decision Session of Executive Member for Transport and  
Planning on 12 April 2018: Removal of Parliament Street Fountain and  
Saint Sampson Square Toilets**

**Summary**

1. York is one of the most visited places in the UK with over 7 million visitors and each year hosts a number of events and festivals. Parliament Street is a key part of the city centre; it is not just a focus for retail but hosts many of the events and festivals that make York such a vibrant thriving city.
2. However, Parliament Street has a number of items of redundant life expired public realm infrastructure that blight the space. The fountain at the centre of Parliament Street is beyond repair and the toilet block at Saint Sampson Square is no longer used. Removal of both would significantly improve the city centre.
3. The fountain is a landmark and key focal and meeting point for the city. Therefore it is not appropriate to just replace the fountain with paving, a replacement is needed. This is a more significant decision for the city and a working group will be established by York Businesses Improvement District; Make it York and the Civic Trust to establish a replacement.
4. This report recommends the removal of both the Fountain and the Toilet Block with a temporary feature installed at the former fountain site. The York BID have requested proposals for a floral display and additional seating to coincide with this year's floral celebrations. The removal of the toilet block is subject to planning permission.

## **Recommendation**

5. *This is currently being worked upon and will be available in the final report having taken into consideration pre-scrutiny debate.*

## **Background**

6. The toilet block at Saint Sampson Square has not been used since 2010, it offers no value to the public, and it merely houses some electrical and mechanical plant that can be removed or relocated.
7. New and improved accessible facilities were located within the new facilities in Silver Street.
8. This year will see the Council invest £70,000 to refurbish the public toilets in the Coppergate Centre and on Silver Street.
9. The toilet block does not complement the historic setting of Saint Sampson Square.
10. Its removal will enable the square to be better used offering increased space for the temporary cultural, recreational and retail events that happen in the city. The water and drain connections will remain to allow toilet facilities to be provided for such events if needed.
11. The building is greater than 50 cubic metres and therefore planning permission will be required for its demolition.
12. The fountain was installed back in the 1990s. Key issues about the fountain are:
  - The fountain has not worked for a number of years due to failure of the associated plant.
  - It should also be noted that fountains carry significant running / maintenance costs for which no budget currently exists.
  - *[Costings are being prepared for the final report for Fountain options].*
13. The fountain is a valued landmark and meeting point for the people of the city, as such it is not considered appropriate to just remove the fountain without identifying a replacement. Planning Permission is not required for the demolition of the fountain.

14. A permanent replacement will need to be considered by key stakeholders including the Civic Trust, York Business Improvement District, Make it York and will need to be sufficiently iconic that it may well require planning permission.

### **Consultation**

15. York BID and Make it York have both been consulted and support the proposal.
16. The Civic Trust Planning Committee have been briefed about the proposal to remove the redundant public realm facilities. They support the principle of removal of the fountain and Saint Sampson toilet block. The Committee did observe that the reinstatement (of the ground surfaces) or replacement (with other street furniture) would have to be correct and in keeping with the historic character of the area.
17. Public interest in the fountain is significant. In 2015 we received two petitions with a combined total of over 600 signatures calling for the fountain to be restored to life.

### **Options for Consideration**

18. Currently being worked upon and will be outlined in the finalised report.

### **Council Plan**

19. The above proposal contributes to the Council Plan of:
  - A prosperous city for all,
  - A council that listens to residents

### **Implications**

20. This report has the following implications:

**Financial** – A budget proposal will be made in the final report including York BID contribution.

**Human Resources** – None

**Equalities** – None.

**Legal** – None

**Crime and Disorder** – None

**Information Technology** - None

**Property** – None

**Other** – None

**Risk Management**

21. None.

**Contact Details**

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**Date:** 22 March 2018

**Specialist Implications Officer(s)**

**Wards Affected: Micklegate**

**All**

**For further information please contact the author of the report.**

**Background Papers:**