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## **Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Advisory Panel**

**15 October 2008**

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

### **City of York Council Public Toilets Review - Update**

#### **Summary**

1. This report informs the Executive Member as to the progress to date on the complete review of public toilet provision for York and updates the position reported on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

#### **Background**

2. The provision of clean, safe, accessible public toilets affects all local people and visitors to York. For older people, those with medical conditions such as diabetes and parents with young children, public toilets are an important factor in quality of life and in making the city centre user-friendly. Quality of public toilets plays a major role in defining the image of a city.
3. There is no statutory obligation for local authorities to provide public toilets but many people perceive that this is the responsibility of local authorities.
4. York is a major tourist destination and has a thriving economy therefore it is important that the standard of toilet provision is of the highest standard possible maximising the use of existing financial resources.

#### **Scope**

5. The scope of the review covers the following issues and options:
  - A condition survey for each of the current sites, including cost implications to bring the current range of facilities up to modern standards.
  - A customer survey to establish the current level of use and cost effectiveness of existing sites.
  - Investigate the potential for a community toilet scheme in partnership with local retail outlets and public houses as in other large cities in the UK. In order to significantly increase the level

and quality of provision by inviting local businesses to allow members of the public to use their facilities.

- Consider options for the introduction of hydraulic urinals that are stored underground during the day and raised in support of the evening economy.
  - Examine alternatives adopted by authorities such as Leeds City Council who operate quality mobile units that are available in the city centre at weekends or other locations and events where high volumes of customers are expected.
  - To consider the charging regime across the range of attended and unattended toilet facilities, and ensure that future arrangements make the city fully compliant with equalities legislation, and considered how to cover the cost of ensuring that compliance.
  - To consider access issues to ensure that whatever solution was recommended improved facilities for a range of disabled residents and customers and their carers.
6. In carrying out the review the team will have consideration for the following regulations and policies relating to the public toilet provision and standards:
- **Public Health Act 1936** - The provision and maintenance of toilets in public places is at the discretion of local authorities, who have powers to provide public conveniences, but not a duty to do so. It is expected that Section 87 (3c) of this act will be amended during 2008.
  - **The Public Lavatories (Turnstiles) Act 1963** – prohibits the use of turnstiles in any part of public lavatory controlled or managed by a local authority.
  - **Building Regulations and Building Standards** – The British Standard (BS 6465 – 1:2006) is a code of practice for the design of sanitary installations.
  - **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995** – Part 3 of the DDA includes provisions covering access to services and facilities.
  - **The Equalities Act 2006** – gives local authorities general and specific duties.

## **Project Plan - Update**

7. The project plan is set out in Annex 1 to this report.
8. The core members of the project team are Assistant Director, Environmental Services, Head of Neighbourhood Pride Service and Neighbourhood Services Performance Manager with invitees as required.

9. Most of the condition surveys have been carried out by Property Services to assess the overall conditions of the structures. Work is still to be completed on Exhibition Square. So far the reports are indicating that the buildings are structurally robust with only minor works needed at a few of the facilities. This work will be done as part of the maintenance programme. Most of the other work is cosmetic, interior work, such as re-decorating, new tiles, doors etc. The full report will be presented to Members on completion.
10. A private sector organisation have completed their initial review of the buildings and are awaiting the outcome of our user number counts to conclude their suggestions. Overall they consider the locations to be good but would suggest improved lighting, decoration and signage.
11. A meeting has been held with York Access Group who are undertaking their own survey of each of the facilities. The work is ongoing and Officers will be meeting with them again to go over their findings.
12. A work specification for consultants has been drawn up and tendered to meet our financial regulations. Following evaluation ENCAMS have been appointed to carry out the support work for the 'Community Toilet Scheme' and to carry out their own independent survey of our current facilities. The survey has been completed and they too are awaiting the results of our user number count before completing their recommendations.
13. They have written to around 20 national businesses in York who are participating in 'Community Toilet Schemes' in other parts of the country. This work is ongoing with meeting scheduled over the coming weeks.
14. Part of the review is to calculate the utilisation of each of the sites. However, other than Union Terrace, there is no controlled access to give user numbers. Consideration was given to user numbers at Union Terrace against the amount of water being used, to try to establish if there is a correlation between users and water consumption. The outcome of this work indicated that there was too great an error factor to give any meaningful control data. It was therefore agreed that we should carry out a survey over the summer months at each site.
15. A limited number of electronic counters have been purchased and are now in use at a various sites. These will be moved around to ensure as many facilities as possible are covered. There have been some interesting results to date, with counters remaining at sites both to verify the findings and assess any seasonal changes. These are the data findings so far:

### St Georges Field - Gents

Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	1,588	159
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	1,277	160
Device removed		

### St Georges Field - Ladies

Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	1,410	141
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	1,146	143
Device removed		

### Nunnery Lane - Gents

Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	2,724	272
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	1,371	171
Device removed		

### Nunnery Lane - Ladies

Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	1,506	151
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 22 <sup>nd</sup> July	1,265	158
Device removed		

### Acomb - Gents

Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	1,534	153
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 24 <sup>th</sup> July	1,533	153

25 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	2,568	143
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#### **Acomb - Ladies**

<b>Date Range</b>	<b>User Numbers</b>	<b>Average per day</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	927	93
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 24 <sup>th</sup> July	1,092	109
25 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	2,279	127

#### **Haxby - Gents**

<b>Date Range</b>	<b>User Numbers</b>	<b>Average per day</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	503	50
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 24 <sup>th</sup> July	611	61
25 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	1,149	64

#### **Haxby - Ladies**

<b>Date Range</b>	<b>User Numbers</b>	<b>Average per day</b>
4 <sup>th</sup> July to 14 <sup>th</sup> July	335	33
15 <sup>th</sup> July to 24 <sup>th</sup> July	413	41
25 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	779	43

#### **Toft Green - Gents**

<b>Date Range</b>	<b>User Numbers</b>	<b>Average per day</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	3,688	205
12 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	6,304	210
Device Removed		

#### **Toft Green - Ladies**

<b>Date Range</b>	<b>User Numbers</b>	<b>Average per day</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	1,493	83
12 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	2,848	95

Device Removed		
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#### Exhibition Square - Gents

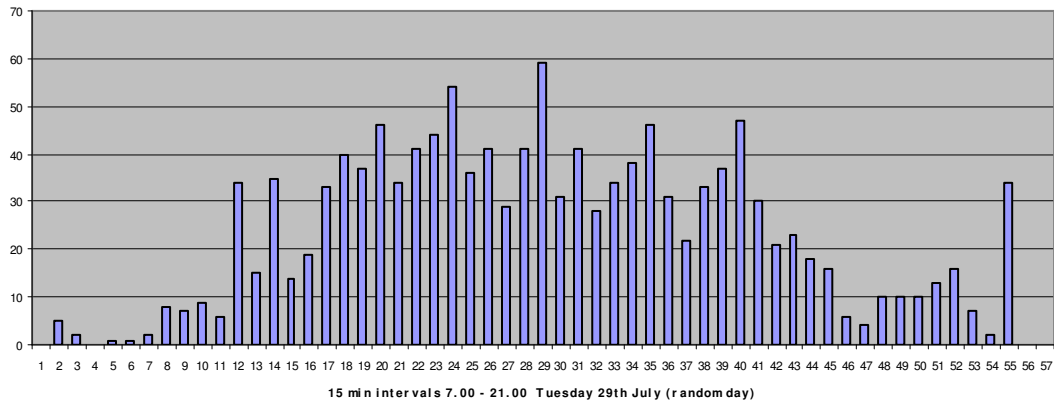
Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
24 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	10,877	604
12 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	19,059	635

#### Exhibition Square - Ladies

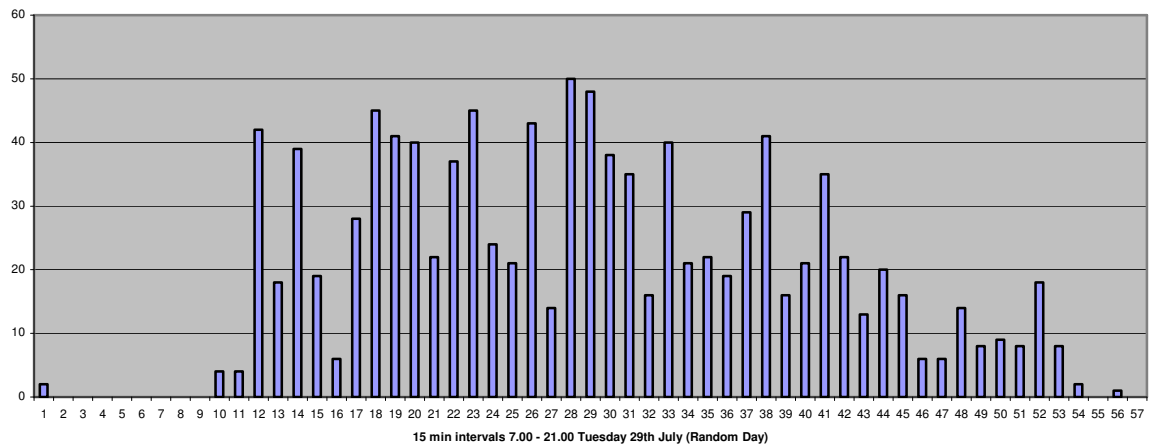
Date Range	User Numbers	Average per day
24 <sup>th</sup> July to 11 <sup>th</sup> Aug	8,890	494
12 <sup>th</sup> Aug to 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept	14,363	479

16. Based on income figures, the total users of Union Terrace between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 24<sup>th</sup> August was 38,352 and average of 261 users per day. The average daily users of Parliament Street ladies is 341 and Coppergate ladies 126, makes Exhibitions Square by far, the most used facilities in York.
17. The monitoring of user numbers at Exhibition Square will continue in order to access any seasonal changes, but if user number continue to be high through the winter months, a business plan, in the light of the idea of the 'Cultural Quarter' and changes with the Museum Gardens facilities will be required.
18. Some of the counters in use are able to monitor user numbers by 15 minutes interval. There is a great deal of data to go through but here is an example of a typical day at the Exhibition Square gents facility.

Exhibition Sq - Gents



Exhibition Sq - Ladies



## Silver Street Development

19. Final drawings are with planning for approval. Work on site is expected to start mid to late October with the removal of the asbestos and the decontamination of the site. Building works are being tendered, with expected completion in May 2009.

## Consultation

20. A significant amount of consultation with a range of interested parties is built into the project plan.

## Options

21. Executive member to note the programme timetable.
22. Executive member to make recommendations and suggestions as to alternative approaches.

## Analysis

23. The option to note the timetable will allow the review to continue as planned.
24. It is important that an early start is made of collecting the user numbers. Changes and revisions to the timetable could jeopardise the completion date, depending on the degree of the suggested changes.

## **Corporate Priorities**

25. This report is important for the following corporate priority:
  - Improve the actual and perceived condition of the city's streets, housing estates and public spaces.

## **Implications**

### **Financial**

26. The costs of the surveys will be within the existing budgets. The outcome of the review will give an overall indication as to the levels of investments needed to deliver the agreed service.

### **Human Resources (HR).**

27. There are no HR issues associated with this report.

### **Equalities**

28. This paper has taken access issues into account. There will be regular update meetings with the councils Equality Team and access groups will be encouraged to participate in the surveys.

### **Legal.**

29. There are no legal implications at this stage.

### **Crime and Disorder.**

30. The review is taking community safety issues into account, and in particular look at ways to improve facilities during the evenings and thereby potentially reduce environmental crime.

### **Information Technology (IT).**

31. There are no direct IT implications at this stage, but electronic counters are being tested.

### **Property**

32. The outcome of the surveys, particularly the conditions survey will give some indication as to the current build conditions.



## Risk Management

33. In compliance with the council's risk management policy the main risks that have been identified in this report are those which could lead to the inability to deliver a service review of sufficient quality (operational) which could lead to damage to the Council's image and reputation and failure to meet stakeholders' expectations (governance).
34. Measured in terms of impact and likelihood, the risks at this point need only to be monitored as they do not provide a real threat to the achievement of the objectives of this report.

## Recommendations

35. Members are asked to note the report and project plan.
36. Reason: To inform the Executive Member of work completed to date.

### Contact Details

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**Director of Neighbourhood Services**

Report Approved  Date 18/9/08

### Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Property – Neil Hindhaugh – Head of Property Service

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

### Background Papers:

City of York Public Toilet Review – Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Advisory Panel – 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008.  
City of York Public Toilet Review – Update Meeting of the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Advisory Panel – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

### Annexes

Annex 1 - Project Plan.