



OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 September 2015

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REVIEW – PROGRESS REPORT (REP1170)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Provide the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the progress to date relating to the Public Conveniences Review.
2. Refer options to Cabinet for discussion, for suitable proposals and recommendations to be taken forward and considered for the future of Waveney District Council's Public Convenience provision.

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| Is the report Open or Exempt? | Open |
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| Wards Affected: | All |
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| Cabinet Member: | Cllr Stephen Ardley, Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships & Lowestoft Rising. Cllr Letitia Smith, Cabinet Member without Portfolio |
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| Supporting Officer: | David Gallagher Head of Commercial and Leisure Partnerships 01502 523007 david.gallagher@waveney.gov.uk |
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of the Council's governance for Waveney Norse the Partnership Board (comprised of Waveney District Council and Norse representatives, set up to oversee the contract) maintains a register of projects that include aspects such as service reviews, with car parks and public conveniences being just two currently being monitored that are also on the Overview and Scrutiny work programme.
- 1.2 Previous reviews of public conveniences have generally looked at the condition of the facilities on offer and have informed the appropriate budget allocation within the Council's Capital Programme, which has led to an improvement to the overall standard of the assets. Other aspects such as the implementation of a Community Toilet Scheme(s) and the divestment of public conveniences to town and parish councils have not been successful. Some public toilets were closed, mainly due to the usage, condition and cost of refurbishment, following the previous review in 2004.
- 1.3 In February 2015 the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) discussed by Cabinet showed a budget gap for 2016/17 of £2.561m, rising to £4.109m in 2017/18 and £4.591m in 2018/19.
- 1.4 Given the potential shortfall in the budget it is critical that the Council looks closely at all services in order to consider prioritising future spend, public conveniences being just one area under review to support the process.

2 PUBLIC CONVENIENCE PROVISION

- 2.1 The objective of the review was to provide Waveney District Council with a comprehensive, informative and balanced tool to review public convenience provision within the district.
- 2.2 Whilst the district, town and parish councils are empowered by section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 to provide public conveniences, there is no statutory duty for provision. The service is therefore discretionary.
- 2.3 Waveney District Council currently operates 28 public conveniences.
- 2.4 The current annual revenue cost is around £390k (including all overheads, which is likely to increase year on year) with a Capital Programme requirement of approximately £500k over the next 5 years.

3 PROGRESS ON REVIEW

- 3.1 For the purposes of the review a 'Decision Matrix' has been created based on previous works undertaken; this allows for indicative purposes, a table of results to be presented. The Council may of course wish to vary and change the weighting and criteria to match a more specific need as required.
- 3.2 The data capture provides a breakdown of condition, usage and costs for each facility, projecting capital spend and programme of works over a five year period.
- 3.3 This is supplemented by an overall quality standard and perception of value to the community in various categories. Clearly to quantify these items alone is very subjective, although in broad terms it is considered that the quality range depicted for each is a very good starting point to inform decision making.
- 3.4 The presentation attached at Appendix A provides the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with details on all facilities.

4 POSSIBLE OPTIONS AND PROPOSALS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 Facilities deemed to have low use and little community value should be considered for closure and disposal. Where this is a consideration, other suitable local facilities should be looked at to provide alternative provision.
- 4.2 Consult with town and parish councils on possible divestment options.
- 4.3 Rationalise number of units and opening times where possible, in geographical areas.
- 4.4 Look at self contained, modular provision as an alternative in high user areas (example as in Appendix A, 'Healthmatic').
- 4.5 Consider investment opportunities, or continued investment in existing (could be linked to 4.2).
- 4.6 Consider community provision (could be linked to 4.3).
- 4.7 Consider charging in various locations.
- 4.8 Consider leasing options (if any).
- 4.9 Other options as considered appropriate by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5 FINANCIAL AND GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.2 Cabinet are due to consider this item during November 2015, therefore it is important that options are progressed without delay. Members may wish a further report to be brought back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to November Cabinet, in order to shape the review further, prior to a formal decision being made.

6 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To provide Cabinet with a range of options to take forward and progress.
- 6.2 To provide budget efficiencies and alternative service provision where possible, supporting the needs identified within the Council's medium Term Financial Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That the contents of the report and progress made to date be noted.

RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

- 2. That the options set out in Section 4 above be reviewed, and that recommendations on these options be made to Cabinet for consideration and approval.

APPENDICES

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| Appendix A | Presentation of Review Findings |
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BACKGROUND PAPERS - None