OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 7 December 2017

INFORMATION BULLETIN – UPDATE ON THE REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN WAVENEY DISTRICT (REP1733)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This Information Bulletin is a document that is made available with the published agenda papers. It can include update information requested by the Committee, as well as information that a service considers should be made known to the Committee, but is not for discussion at the meeting.

2. This information bulletin provides an update on the review of Public Conveniences in Waveney District

3. Members are advised to contact officers if they have any questions about the Council’s involvement in this area.

Is the report Open or Exempt? Open

Wards Affected: All

Cabinet Member: Councillor Graham Catchpole
Cabinet Member for Operational Partnerships

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee has requested that information bulletins be provided as part of the agenda, where issues are required to be brought to Members’ attention, but are not to be discussed at the meeting.

1.2 Members are requested to contact the officer shown on this report if they have any queries with regards to this information bulletin.

2 UPDATE ON THE 2015 REVIEW OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN WAVENEY DISTRICT

2.1 In 2015, Waveney District Council commissioned a report to review the stock of public conveniences across the district

2.2 The aim of this review was to seek to reduce the planned 2.1million of expenditure over a five year period. This expenditure included the annual running costs of the facilities as well as the planned maintenance programme over the period.

2.3 The survey looked in detail at the full estate of 28 public conveniences in Waveney. A full condition survey was carried out, grouping the facilities into the following condition categories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Poor</td>
<td>0</td>
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2.4 The facilities were then ranked according to a range of criteria including:

- Overall usage (i.e. footfall)
- The overall costs of maintenance over five years
- Overall running costs over five years
- Cost of potential refurbishment
- Whether the facility lends itself to alternative use

2.5 The costs of converting PCs to accommodate charged use (i.e the installation of a pay barrier) were also explored. The costs of installing pay barriers at all facilities were not inconsiderable – in the region of 200,000. It is estimated that – on current usage figures, this investment would be repaid within five years.

2.6 In terms of the options available to WDC to rationalise its PC estate, the report identified opportunities to:

- Transfer ownership to town and parish councils where those organisations are in agreement, along with a three year funding package to cover the running costs of the facility.
- Introduce charging for some facilities, where payback would be achieved within a five year timeframe
- Identify facilities that could be replaced by low maintenance, modular provision.
- Close facilities which have low use or little community value
3 PROGRESS

3.1 Since the report was published, WDC has been focusing on the second of the options above, and engaging with town and parish councils over potential asset transfer. Some of these conversations are ongoing; however the following facilities have either been transferred, or are proposed to be transferred:

Transferred as part of the creation of Lowestoft Town Council, April 2017
- Denes Oval PCs
- Triangle Market PCs
- Sparrows Nest Park PCs
- Kensington Gardens PCs
- Kirkley Cliff PCs

Transferred as part of the creation of Oulton Broad Parish Council, April 2017
- Nicolas Everitt Park PCs
- Boulevard PCs

Transferred to Southwold Town Council, by agreement with funding
- Church Green PCs (and charging system subsequently introduced at the facility)

Proposed to transfer to Halesworth Town Council, as part of a wider asset transfer agreement
- Market Place PCs
- Town Park PCs
- Thoroughfare PCs

3.2 The effect of the above transfers has been to reduce the WDC owned PC estate from 29 to 18. This is a reduction of 37%. If the reduction were applied to the projected running and capital costs of the facilities over the next five years, costs would reduce from a projected 2.1 million for the period to 1.28 million – a saving of around 200,000 per annum for WDC.

3.3 Whilst WDC continues to explore other locations for asset transfer, the remaining sites do not present as clear an opportunity for town and parish councils as those above.

3.4 In terms of future work - further scoping work is being carried out on those facilities where charging could significantly offset running costs, and where the capital cost of installing machinery were low enough to present a short payback period. And in cases where substantial refurbishment is necessary, the costs of installing self contained modular provision such as the Healthmatic is being explored as part of the business case.

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<tr>
<th>BACKGROUND PAPERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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