

Brighton & Hove City Council

City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

Agenda Item 53

Subject: Public Toilets Update

Date of meeting: 12 March 2024

Report of: Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report provides Committee with a proposal on how the public toilet service will operate following Budget Council's approval of a £0.178m reduction from the public toilet budget.
- 1.2 The report also provides Committee with an update on the reopening of the Royal Pavilion Gardens public toilet following Budget Council's approval of the annual allocation of £0.120m towards reopening and maintaining the site.
- 1.3 The report also provides an update on the toilets at Royal Pavilion Gardens and the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Committee approves the proposed 'single shift' operating model detailed in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.7 in order to deliver the approved budget saving of £0.178m to the public toilet budget.
- 2.2 That Committee notes the reopening of the public toilets in Royal Pavilion Gardens using the approved annual additional budget of £0.120m.
- 2.3 That Committee notes the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme updates.

3. Context and background information

Budget saving

- 3.1 At Budget Council on 22 February 2024, Council approved to reduce the public toilet budget by £0.178m. This represents a 17% reduction in the staffing related budget and a 12% reduction of the overall budget.
- 3.2 The proposal is that this saving delivered by changing the shift patterns of the public toilet cleansing operatives to a 'single shift'. This method of operation would come into effect on Friday 29 March 2024 to coincide with summer operating hours. The saving would be achieved by reducing the number of seasonal positions that are required.
- 3.3 Public toilet cleansing operatives currently work a 10-hour shift on a four-on, four-off shift pattern. In winter months (1 October to Good Friday) operatives work one shift between the hours of 7am and 6pm. In summer months, operatives currently work on two different shifts – either AM (7am to 6pm) or PM (10am to 9pm). This results in all toilets being opened by 9am. Many are opened earlier but times vary due to traffic and resources as staff travel around the city to open facilities and ensure they are clean. Therefore, 9am is the earliest guaranteed opening time.
- 3.4 The 'single shift' method of operating is characterised by staff working on one single shift all year around, as opposed to the current arrangement where two shifts operate during summer opening hours.
- 3.5 The proposed move to a 'single shift' operating model would mean that opening hours will be as follows:
- During summer hours (Good Friday to 30 September) sites with walking attendants, namely, The Colonnade, Daltons, Shelter Hall, West Pier Arches, and Kings Road Playpark will continue to open between the hours of 9am and 8pm.
 - During summer hours (Good Friday to 30 September) all other sites will be open between the hours of 10am and 6pm. This differs from the current summer opening hours all sites are fully open by 9am and close at 6pm.
 - During winter hours (1 October to Good Friday) sites with walking attendants, namely, The Colonnade, Shelter Hall, West Pier Arches, and Kings Road Playpark will continue to open between the hours of 9am and 6pm.
 - During winter hours (1 October to Good Friday) all other sites will be open between the hours of 10am and 4pm. This differs from the current winter opening hours whereby all sites are fully open by 9am and close at 4pm. The toilets at Black Rock, Greenleas, and Hollingbury Park will now open for 12 months of the year (they used to close during the winter season).
- 3.6 These are the minimum opening times. In reality, operatives start a shift before this opening time and go around opening toilets, so many toilets will

be open before the times listed above. Where there is an event planned, such as a regular Park Run, toilet opening will be prioritised to facilitate this. So the four council operated toilets that serve parks/seafront areas with Park Runs will be open by 8:45am on those days, ahead of the 9am event time.

- 3.7 It is proposed that four seasonal operatives will be recruited to manage the significant extra demand on the public toilets over the summer months. This differs from the 10 that are currently required. The appointment and retention of seasonal operatives has proved challenging, despite a concerted communications campaign ahead of summer 2023, so less reliance on seasonal operatives will improve the reliability of the service.
- 3.8 Under the current operating model, four sites (Black Rock, Daltons, Greenleas, and Hollingbury Park) close over winter months. Owing to the savings which the 'one shift' operating model delivers, it is proposed that Black Rock, Greenleas, and Hollingbury Park will now remain open over winter months. Daltons would remain closed over winter months as public toilets are available at The Colonnade public toilets nearby and Daltons caters for the much higher demand in the summer months.

Royal Pavilion Gardens

- 3.9 The public toilets at the Royal Pavilion Gardens have been closed since October 2022. The toilets are in a poor condition and subject to high levels of antisocial behaviour. The orientation of the current building leads to this antisocial behaviour as the entrance does not benefit from natural surveillance, which is advised in the design of public toilets. The toilets are to be reoriented and completely gutted and refurbished as part of the recent successful bid to the National Heritage Lottery Fund (NHLF).
- 3.10 In the meantime, as part of the budget setting process, Budget Council on 22 February 2024 agreed to allocate £0.120m towards the costs of reopening the toilets at Royal Pavilion Gardens until they are closed for the NHLF works.
- 3.11 Work has started to reopen this site as soon as possible. This includes recruitment of a permanent attendant and security, as well as planning for the necessary maintenance.

Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme

- 3.12 In 2023, four public toilet sites were refurbished as part of Phase 1 of the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, namely, Daltons, Kings Esplanade, Saltdean Undercliff, and Station Road. Park Road, Rottingdean was also refurbished with financial support from Rottingdean Parish Council.
- 3.13 Phase 2 of the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme has now started with two further sites being refurbished. These are Goldstone Villas and Ovingdean Undercliff. In addition, The MacLaren Pavilion at The Level will be transformed into a café and new public toilets. The indicative time scales are:

- Goldstone Villas, due to close summer 2024 and reopen in spring 2025
 - Ovingdean Undercliff, due to close autumn 2024 and reopen in spring 2025
 - The MacLaren Pavilion, due to open autumn 2024
- 3.14 The Refurbishment Programme aims to enhance current provision, where possible, and make sites more accessible. For the three sites in Phase 2 this includes the introduction of family rooms and ambulant cubicles as part of the improvement works.
- 3.15 The Hove Lagoon public toilets are also being refurbished as part of the Kingsway to the Sea Programme. They have been closed to the public for construction since January 2024 and are due to be reopened this spring. The Outdoor Sports Hub is also being constructed as part of the Kingsway to the Sea Programme. This will house public toilets which will provide a replacement to the toilets at Western Esplanade.
- 3.16 Additional Changing Places Toilets are also being introduced across the city. A new facility in the Stanmer Park One Garden will open in conjunction with Plumpton College in March 2024. Plans are also in place to introduce sites in Preston Park and St Ann's Wells Gardens to improve accessibility to the city's green spaces. The indicative opening dates for these sites is June 2024.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 This report provides an update on the public toilet service following Budget Council decisions and there are no alternative options for consideration resulting from this report's recommendations.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 No specific consultation has taken place regarding the report's recommendations.
- 5.2 Appropriate staff consultation is taking place regarding the introduction of the 'single shift' operating model.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report provides Committee with an update on the public toilet service following decisions at Budget Council on 22 February 2024. It also provides an update on the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report which is for noting. The change to a single shift will allow the savings agreed at budget council to be achieved within the Public Toilets budget. Not engaging the single shift would result in likely overspends to the service as the budget would not be sufficient to maintain the current method of operation.

- 7.2 £0.120m service pressure has been allocated following Budget Council towards the costs of reopening the toilets at Royal Pavilion Gardens until they are closed for the NHLF works. This allocation will support the costs of operatives required, maintenance and utilities. Any significant variation to budget will be reported as part of the councils monthly Target Budget Monitoring process.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 15/02/2024

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 No legal implications have been identified as arising from this Report, which is for noting only.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted: 09/02/2024

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed as part of the budget setting process in relation to the move to a 'single shift' operating model. This is available at Appendix 1.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 There are no direct sustainability implications arising from the report's recommendations.
- 10.2 The Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme is introducing motion sensor lighting, taps and hand driers, reducing electricity and water consumption.

11. Other implications

Crime & disorder implications

- 11.1 As indicated in the main body of the report, the Royal Pavilion Gardens public toilets suffer from high levels of criminal and anti-social behaviour. The staffing model to be implemented at this site once it reopens is to mitigate this and reduce the risk posed to users, staff and the building.

Public health implications

- 11.2 The importance of public toilets to public health is acknowledged. Through the changes to the staffing model, three (out of four) sites that are currently closed in the winter will now open in the winter months, providing additional provision.

Supporting Documentation

Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessment

Background documents

1. [Public Toilets Report](#) presented to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 17 January 2022 (item 77)
2. [Public Toilet Update Report](#) presented to Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on 14 March 2023 (item 87)
3. [Princes Place Public Toilets Report](#) presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 16 March 2023 (item 148)
4. [The MacLaren Pavilion Report](#) presented to City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee on 14 November 2023 (item 31)