

**TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 25th MAY, 2021
BRIEFING NOTE
PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN TAVISTOCK UPDATE (GUILDHALL)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Arising from the report to Budget and Policy Committee on 5th March 2019, and subsequent reports Members will be aware that Tavistock Town Council endorsed the recommendations of the Public Conveniences Sub-Committee, in short:
- a. To agree transfer of the freehold of the Guildhall Car Park Public Conveniences to it;*
 - b. For a period of 1 year, and subject to review, offer the Borough Council the cleaning contract in respect of the Guildhall Car Park Public Conveniences as set out in the draft Service Level Agreement agreed in principle by WDBC;*
 - c. The Budget and Policy Committee review the operation of Public Conveniences after a period of 4 months and make recommendations to Tavistock Town Council with regard to the Budget and future service provision*
- 1.2 Discussions have been ongoing with Officers of the Borough Council and the necessary due diligence and associated legal aspects have been agreed specific to the transference of the Guildhall toilets asset and associated land (cobble area) to the Town Council. The rationale is widely understood by both parties regarding the delay to transfer (target date 2020), driven by the challenges specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, where the Town Council has been demonstrably impacted from a resource perspective (financial/capacity), for the calendar period of 2020, recognising that the Borough Council were in receipt of COVID-19 grant related funding for the cleaning revenue costs associated with revised daily operational cleaning/maintenance arrangements. The support of the Borough Council in extending the timeline has been most helpful.
- 1.3 Discussions in the first quarter of 2021 have focussed on agreeing and finalising arrangements with the Borough Council regarding cleaning and 'other' revenue costs, and understanding the requirements around routine maintenance and structural maintenance requirements. The starting position being that the cleaning arrangements presently in situ were not proposed to be changed either in terms of hours of opening or provider (not including additional COVID-19 related cleaning arrangements).

These discussions have been concluded and 'in principle, without prejudice' agreement reached with the Town Council. Subject to Council ratification around the intended approach adopted, the target date for the asset transfer is not before Step 4 of the Roadmap out of Lockdown (anticipated 21st June), as detailed below.

2. UPDATE

2.1 Desk Top Exercise:

- a) It was previously reported that all WDBC files relating the Guildhall toilets specific to capital works and on-going maintenance had been placed in storage by Borough Council and were inaccessible. These files have now been located and will be handed over to Town Council for review prior to transfer.
- b) A detailed asset inspection has been undertaken in 2021 by the General Manager in conjunction with the Principal Contractor for the Guildhall refurbishment works which were undertaken in the early 2000s to ensure that the Council is fully conversant with the building alterations, drainage systems, mechanical and electrical installations relating to this asset. This is in addition to the separately commissioned structural surveys by TTC, plus drainage and asbestos surveys commissioned by Borough previously in 2019.

2.2 Capital works: As Members are aware, it has been explained in the most recent General Managers Report the intention has been to reintroduce the works which were previously omitted from the Guildhall public realm contract specific to the Guildhall toilets surround. It is important to note that the Town Council have committed to the expenditure to improve this facility prior to taking possession of the asset. With a clear understanding around practical completion costs for both the public realm and Guildhall complex improvements, the on-going value engineering process has allowed for the reintroduction of these works at this stage. The contract will include the installation of resin bonded finish and granite setts, as well as improvements to the drainage, redecoration of previously painted surfaces and a DOFF clean of the infrastructure. The works will be a continuation of the Guildhall public realm contract, with the construction phase planned for June 21 at an estimated additional cost to the Council of £12,000.

2.3 Cleaning: Discussions have been ongoing around establishing an understanding of the current operating practises with regard to the contractual obligations with the Borough Council's cleaning contractor and what happens in reality to ensure that the service level agreement is appropriate and aligned with the Town Councils future expectations at the point the asset has been transferred.

It has been clarified that currently the Guildhall toilets are cleaned twice a day, aligned with opening and closing of the facility, which

is opened no later than 8am and closed no earlier than 6pm. The cleaning for this contract is carried out daily apart from Christmas Day and New Year's Day, and the schedule is currently aligned with the opening/closing and cleaning of the Wharf and bus station toilet provision. On top of the above there are periodic contractual deep cleans, requiring the hire of scaffolding to undertake maintenance cleaning to the roof and skylights. It is worth noting that currently there is a daily COVID-19 cost which includes an additional clean and also incorporates the cost of PPE related items, and this cost would continue when appropriate, but as an addition and separate to the service level agreement.

- a) Timing of cleaning: Some of the discussion between Officers was to establish whether the current operating practise provided the most effective service for the toilet provision in terms of value for money and if not, how could the contract be reconfigured within the same cost envelope. It was confirmed that there were only two 24 hour cubicles, one ladies and one gents with the disabled also being accessible 24 hours with the use of a radar key. With a clean implemented at closing, carrying out a further clean at opening (only required on three toilets), with a 10-hour cleaning gap during the day, needed to be reviewed and renegotiated to identify what alternative options were viable.

The Borough Council have clarified that their cleaning contractor FCC could change the opening clean to between 10:30-11:00 am which would mean that all the cubicles would be cleaned during the day. To facilitate this contractual change, the Town Council would be required to open all the public toilet units cleaned by FCC within Tavistock under the contract with WD. The practicality of this has been considered and the opening of these facilities can be incorporated within the current operating practice of the market and events team (Tues to Sat), and the depot (Sun/Mon) and considering the only 24 hr provision is at the Guildhall toilets, a cleaning obligation for TTC, when opening would be negligible. If Members are minded to support this approach, this is how both organisations intend to proceed, as this clearly will be an improved service for the community specific to Tavistock's toilet provision.

- b) Costs: Specific to the cleaning costs, the Borough have agreed an approach which represents their intention to continue to support the Town Council with the transition period specific to the Guildhall toilets. This is based over a 5-year period, with the first year being £7785, and by year 5 increasing to £13,800 (subject to RPI).

The year one figure equates to the sum of removing the cleaning of the Guildhall toilets from the overall FCC contract, whereas the year 5 figure relates to the core costs of the Borough Council

managing this contract, which includes inspection regimes, complaint handling and contractor performance. The year 5 figure has been considered by your Officers, falls within anticipated budget allowances and therefore is deemed to represent value for money with the service intended to be provided.

- 2.4 Maintenance: As part of the cleaning costs covered in 2.3 b), FCC are contractually obliged to replace any toilet seats, flushing mechanisms, toilet roll holders, soap dispensers. Any issues specific to maintenance, outside of this scope, would be reported to WDBC and forwarded to TTC and agreement would be sought on who would facilitate a response, depending on the issue. The Borough Council have also provided hourly rates for their mechanical and electrical contractors, and cost would be shared relating to travel if they were already attending with West Devon. Reporting arrangements for dealing with out of hours' issues have also been agreed.

In addition to the cleaning costs, other fixed costs which will be paid to the Borough Council include:

- 1) Legionella testing undertaken by Churchills
- 2) Maintenance of 10 wallgates, (2020/21 costs £140 per annum per unit), which includes two scheduled servicing visits per annum to maintain the appliances in working order and also includes interim visits to repair any breakdowns from wear and tear, with a response time of 3 working days. Note: This is a discounted rate if maintained within the overall Borough contract.

2.5 Summary: The recently negotiated terms above and alteration to the Guildhall toilet provision represents an improved offer for the community which is still deliverable within the endorsed Council budget allocation for 2021/22. Arrangements are therefore proceeding with a view to entering into the agreed Service Level Agreement and thereafter the transfer of the freehold.

Looking slightly wider than the Guildhall car-park toilets, in addition to the above, a clean of the Guildhall Gateway Centre from FCC as an addition to this contract can be aligned with either clean, for a value of £21.94 per clean for the period of 2021/22.

**WAYNE SOUTHALL
GENERAL MANAGER
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
May 17th 2021**