

Present: Councillor Bill Bilton (*in the Chair*),
Councillor Calum Watt, Councillor Liz Bushell, Councillor
Jane Loffhagen, Councillor Bill Mara and Councillor
Mark Storer

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Pat Vaughan

1. Confirmation of Minutes - 16 March 2021

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were received.

3. Public Conveniences-Service Review

Steve Bird, Assistant Director Communities and Street Scene:

- a. presented a review of Public Convenience Services for comment prior to consideration by Executive.
- b. referred to paragraph 2 of the report and advised on the financial challenges faced by the Council and explained that there was a requirement to review the net cost of the Public Conveniences Services, with a requirement to reduce the net cost by circa £82ka (plus annual inflation)
- c. explained that the report sought to:
 - rationalise facilities to provide a level of service that could still be delivered with the reduced level of staffing resources available.
 - reduce staffing numbers (the staff costs making up the largest part of the service budgets), and hence deliver the required contribution to the Towards Financial Sustainability Programme.
 - move to contactless payments on all charging facilities
 - charge event organisers / seek imposed cost recovery (with discretion subject to Director agreement in consultation with Portfolio Holder).
 - continued consultation with appropriate groups with the ultimate aim of moving away from Radar key access, to a better, more modern, controlled access system.
- d. gave the background of the report and highlighted the impact of the Covid19 pandemic which had impacted significantly on the Council's financial position.

- e. outlined the current staffing levels and advised that prior to the closure required by Covid-19, staff had operated a seven day service across numerous facilities including two open air urinals.
- f. referred to paragraph 4.2 of the report and detailed the proposed new level of provision.
- g. advised the proposal was predicted on establishing a new level of service that was viable to maintain with the cut in resources necessary to achieved the savings.
- h. clarified that under the proposal services would be maintained open with mobile cleaning as they had been pre-covid except: Sincil Street (ladies) would be replaced with a new improved facility within the refurbished market, Westgate would be reduced to Radar key access only, Lucy Tower would be events only, and the two urinals would close.
- i. explained that the proposals would move to a system where mobile staff would provide the core provision with only the Bus Station, which was heavily used and also had other cleansing demands for the site, would retain a staff presence for a significant part of each day.
- j. further advised that it was hoped that following the reorganisation of this service, a contactless payments service could replace the Radar key access with an electronic trackable electronic access system. Additionally, greater income could be achieved by charging event organisers for the facilities.

The Committee discussed the content of the report and made the following main points;

The Committee stressed that the review of these services was not preferred however, due to the financial restraints of the Council they had to be considered.

The current signage of the facilities within Lincoln was discussed and it was confirmed that a review of signage would take place to install improved signs to direct people to the public conveniences with the correct facilities for their needs such as Changing Places facilities.

Members expressed concern that the closure of the urinals would result in anti-social behaviour after the pubs closed in the evening. Members suggested that Lincoln BIG could work with pubs to encourage customers to use the facilities before leaving. Officers advised that the spread of facilities across the City was not ideal and it was acknowledged that there was a gap in the provision between the Bus Station and Castle Square. It was hoped to address this in the longer term, but this was not possible short term in the face of budget cuts. The committee requested that the provision of better facilities to replace the urinals be considered in the future once the financial position has improved.

The proposed mobile cleaning service was discussed and Officers explained that each facility would be cleaned as many times as possible each day, but this would be subject to demand. A phone number would be advertised to report any hygiene issues in between routine visits so that they could be addressed as soon as possible.

Members asked if more staff would be available when the facilities were opened for events. Officers clarified that the staffing levels would be proportionate to the size of the event, including for agency staffing if required, and the cost would be transferred to the event organiser (with discretion subject to agreement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder).

The suggested contactless payments system was discussed and it was confirmed that the system would use contactless bank cards, and if it was agreed the system would be installed as soon as possible.

Members questioned whether any compulsory redundancies were possible as a result of the proposals, as opposed to voluntary redundancies. Officers confirmed that compulsory redundancies were a possibility and discussed the nature of the proposed new roles and structure.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be supported and the comments be referred to Executive for consideration.

4. Public Conveniences-Service Review

Minute number 3 included details of the discussion associated with this item. (Only Appendices relating to financial implications and the consultation were contained here as exempt information.)