



REPORT TO:	BOSTON TOWN AREA COMMITTEE
DATE:	5TH AUGUST 2021
SUBJECT:	PUBLIC CONVENIENCES COSTS AND OPTIONS AROUND CHARGING AND OPENING TIMES
KEY DECISION:	NO
REPORT AUTHOR:	DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE & SECTION 151 OFFICER
EXEMPT REPORT?	NO

SUMMARY

This report sets out both the financial details and the provision of the service so that decisions can be made on charging and moving the service forward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That BTAC approves up to £20k of reserves to have a full options appraisal undertaken for future provision of the service, and

That BTAC agree a way forward for charging or whether or not to defer this pending a full options appraisal.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To allow a more strategic and integrated provision of the service that fits in with future development work that will be taking place within the Town.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Options as set out in the report plus do nothing.

REPORT

1. Background and Introduction

- 1.1. As part of the BTAC Budget Setting Process for 2021/22, members requested an additional paper from officers on public conveniences to help inform their views and decision making on future charging levels and opening times.
- 1.2. This paper outlines the financial details around the service and the current provision of service.

2. Financial Details

- 2.1. Appendix A shows that the total cost for the 3 toilets combined in 2019/20 was £209k. Income received in the year was £14k. The current charge for the use of the toilets is 20p.
- 2.2. The removal of the 20p charge would result in a modest loss of income and could be accommodated within the BTAC budget and be met from the as yet unallocated new initiatives budget that totals £74k for 2022/23.
- 2.3. The greater issues though are around potential increased levels of vandalism, antisocial behaviour, and rough sleeping. Indeed, these were part of the rationale for introducing the fee previously.

3. Current Service Provision

- 3.1. The provision at each of the BBC sites is as follows:

	Ladies	Gents	Disabled Persons	Baby changing
Central Park	5 cubicles	2 cubicles 3 urinals	2 external access	1 in Gents 1 in Ladies
Wide Bargate	5 cubicles	2 cubicles 4 urinals	2 external access	1 in Gents 1 in Ladies
Lincoln Lane	4 cubicles	1 cubicle 3 urinals	1 external access	1 in Ladies

- 3.2. The three BBC facilities are open from 8 am until 6pm, 7 days per week all year round, except Wednesdays and Saturdays when they open at 7 am for the Market. Central Park toilets previously remained open until 8pm from 1st April to 3rd week of September as people are using the Park into the evening, however since Covid restrictions were implemented these toilets also close at 6pm.
- 3.3. Extended hours operate during special events such as May Fair, events in the Park etc. Toilets are closed on Christmas Day, but usually the Park toilets open on Boxing Day and New Year Day.

- 3.4. Entry into the Disabled Persons' facilities is by use of a RADAR key which can be obtained from the Council upon proof of eligibility. This allows key holders to access the facilities at Lincoln Lane 24 hours a day, the disabled persons' facilities at Wide Bargate and Central Park are only accessible during the opening hours of the main facility.
- 3.5. The facilities are cleaned and serviced by 2 fulltime staff (37 hours per week) and 1 part-time (27 hours per week) This provides 101 hours per week spread over the 7 day opening period which varies from a minimum of 72 hours to a maximum of 86 depending on the time of year. This enables 2 staff to be on duty Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Saturdays, whilst they are alone on other days except at times of cash collection. Team members cover any vacant hours to maintain at least 1 member of staff on duty.
- 3.6. Currently the operation is supervised by the Facilities Manager who reports to the Property Services Manager.

4. OPTIONS

- 4.1 Assuming that members wish to maintain the service, and the reason for bringing the report forward was around whether or not to continue levying a charge for the service, the main options are around if there should be a charge and if so how much this should be.
- 4.2 A further option would be to look at commissioning a full review of the service generally so that a more strategic plan can be devised for the service going forward. This would include elements such as future investment required, how the service can be delivered, and how this can be integrated with the overall aims of the Council.
- 4.3 This seems particularly relevant with the Towns Fund work and other potential funding streams that will develop over the next few years. This would also allow a more integrated approach within the Strategic Alliance.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Members are requested to consider whether or not a change to charging should be made and whether or a full review of the service should be undertaken.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The current level of income from public conveniences is around £14k per annum. It is expected that a full review of the service would be between £10k and £20k.

BTAC's estimated usable reserves in 21/22 is £70k.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

None

EQUALITY AND SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

The Council is required to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty. A full equality impact analysis will be undertaken at the appropriate time to ensure new equipment will consider the needs of all individuals.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

CONSULTATION

Consultation on the development of this report has been undertaken with Officers in Finance, Assistant Directors for Operations and Assets as well as Councillor Deborah Evans, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services, and Councillors Paul Goodale and Stephen Woodliffe, Chair and Vice Chair of BTAC respectively.

APPENDICES

None.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THIS REPORT

None.

REPORT APPROVAL

Report author:	Adrian Sibley, Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer
Signed off by:	Councillor Deborah Evans, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services
Approved for publication:	Councillor Paul Goodale, Chairman of BTAC