

Cabinet Response to the Adequate Toilet Facilities at Thanet Beaches Petition

Cabinet	19 November 2020
Report Author	Mike Humber - Director of Operations
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Albon, Cabinet member for Operational Services
Status	For Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted
Key Decision	No
Ward:	All wards

Executive Summary:

A petition was received in June 2020 with 147 valid signatures. The petition Prayer reads:

“We the undersigned petition the council to hold a thorough review of the facilities available around the Thanet beaches to ensure the safety and wellbeing of both visitors and residents and to invest in adequate infrastructure to meet the outcomes.”

This report sets out the proposed response to this petition.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet note the concerns raised and respond to confirm that toilet facilities serving Thanet beaches will be reviewed by officers and members over the winter season with the review and recommendations to be reported back to Cabinet in March 2021.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

The proposed review of toilet facilities will be undertaken by officers and members and there is no revenue or capital budget impact from the review itself.

Legal

There are no known legal issues associated with the ongoing review of toilet facilities.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, those petitions signed by 25 or more petitioners but fewer than 650 will be presented to Council and referred to the Cabinet or another appropriate committee without debate, for report to the Council within three ordinary meetings. This petition was reported to Council on 9th July 2020 and, subject to members' decision, will be reported back to Council within the required timescale.

Corporate

Thanet District Council like many coastal authorities has historically provided and managed a large number of public toilets, although this has reduced over several years, At the present time there are 28 toilets open during the summer months, 13 of these toilet facilities are on or near to Thanet beaches and are a fundamental requirement in achieving blue flag status. Of all the 28 toilets, 16 remain open all year round.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

The proposed review of toilet provision relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

This report is in response to the petition received and the proposal in that petition to review toilet facilities. Any proposals for future toilet provision will be subject to the requirement to further the aims of the Equality Act.

A customer impact assessment will be prepared for any proposals to be taken forward.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Environment*
- *Communities*

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 A total of 28 public toilets were open to the public over the summer season (May to September 2020) 13 of these toilet facilities are on or near to Thanet beaches. A total of 16 toilets across the district will remain open over the 2020/21 winter period.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 The Covid19 pandemic presented significant challenges to the safe opening of public toilets around Thanet beaches and in the wider district following the relaxation of the national lockdown in May. Measures were put in place to allow social distancing to be maintained in public toilets. Additional temporary toilets were also provided at Margate and Botany Bay. The temporary toilets and social distancing measures have impacted significantly on limited budget provision for public toilets. However the seasonal toilets remained open until late september 2020.
- 2.2 A petition has been received requesting a thorough review of the facilities available at Thanet beaches. Options for response are set out in Section 3 of this report.

3.0 Options

- 3.1 OPTION 1: That Cabinet note the concerns raised and respond to confirm that toilet facilities serving Thanet beaches will be reviewed by officers and members over the winter season with the review and recommendations to be reported back to Cabinet in March 2021.
- 3.2 OPTION 2: That Cabinet makes an alternative proposal in response to this petition regarding the review of toilet facilities.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 Report the decision of cabinet regarding this to the next meeting of Council on 10th December 2020.

Contact Officer: Mike Humber - Director of Operations
Reporting to: Gavin Waite - Corporate Director - Communities

Annex List

none

Background Papers

none

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell - Director of Finance
Legal: Estelle Culligan - Director of Law and Democracy