

RESPONSE TO PETITION REGARDING TOILETS

Council:	11 July 2024
By:	Committee Services Manager
Cabinet Portfolio Member:	Councillor Albon, Cabinet Members for Cleansing and Coastal Services
Key Decision:	No
Decision classification:	Unrestricted
Call in status:	No
Ward:	All

Purpose of the Report

The report outlines a petition that was received by the Council. The petition requests that the Council extend public toilet opening hours.

Recommendation(s):

This report is for information only.

1. Summary of Reasons

- 1.1 Petitions are an important way of the public engaging with the Council on matters of importance to them and responses should be timely and in accordance with the Council's agreed procedures.

2. Background

- 2.1 The petitioner submitted the following petition to the Council:

"To EXTEND PUBLIC TOILET opening hours at our beaches. As residents and visitors of Thanet, we are concerned about the limited opening hours of public toilets on our beaches. Currently, beach toilets are being closed from 3.30 pm onwards, leaving many people without access to essential facilities.

This is particularly concerning for families with young children who may need to use the toilet more frequently or for those who have medical conditions that require regular access to facilities.

We believe that extending the opening hours of beach toilets would be a simple yet effective solution to this problem. By keeping them open until later in the evening, we

can ensure that everyone has access to clean and safe facilities when they need them most.

According to a survey conducted by VisitEngland in 2019, over half of all visitors (54%) said that public toilets were an important factor when choosing where to visit. This highlights just how crucial it is for local councils like Thanet district council to provide adequate toilet facilities for residents and tourists alike.

We urge Thanet district council to take action and extend the opening hours of beach toilets so that everyone can enjoy our beautiful coastline without worrying about where they will find a toilet. Let's make sure that Thanet remains a welcoming destination for all!"

2.2 The petition received 365 valid signatures.

3. Relevant Issues

3.1 Part 5 of the Council's constitution provides that Ordinary petitions are those petitions signed by 50 or more petitioners but fewer than 1500. These are to be presented to a senior Officer of the Council who, after consultation with the relevant portfolio holder will respond. Then a report on that Petition noting what action has been taken will be referred to the next meeting of Cabinet or Council for their information.

4. Consultation

4.1 There is no public law or Statutory duty to consult in relation to this matter.

5. Corporate Implications

5.1 Finance and Resources

5.1.1 The annex to this report sets out the additional resourcing and value for money implications arising from this petition.

5.2 Legal and Constitutional

5.2.1 There are no particular legal issues arising from this report. The Council's constitutional provisions in respect of petitions are set out in Part 5 of the Constitution and are referred to in the body of this report. In accordance with those provisions a response to this petition has been provided and is attached to this report.

5.3 Council Policies and Priorities

5.3.1 This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *To keep our district safe and clean*
- *To create a thriving place*

- *To work efficiently for you*

5.4 Risk

5.4.1 There are no risk implications to this report.

5.5 Climate Change and Biodiversity

5.5.1 There are no climate change or biodiversity implications to this report.

6. Equality, Equity and Diversity Implications

6.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

There are no specific equality issues arising from this report.

7. Crime and Disorder Implications and Community impact

7.1 There are no crime and disorder implications to this report.

Subject History

N/A

Appendices

Annex 1 - Response to Toilet Petition

Background Papers

None

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Report Sign Off

Legal Ingrid Brown-Head of Legal and Democracy and Monitoring Officer

Finance Chris Blundell (Director of Corporate Services - Section 151)