

Public Toilets Refurbishment and Renewal Project

Cabinet	24 October 2024
By	Tony Marmo, Head of Coastal and Public Realm
Cabinet Portfolio Member	Cllr Steve Albon, Cleansing & Coastal Services
Key Decision	No
Decision classification	Unrestricted
Call in status	Yes
Ward:	All Wards

Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the progress made against the decision it took on Thursday 14 December 2023 to invest £1.25m in public toilets across the district. This investment is the start of an anticipated wider and longer term programme of public toilet improvements subject to further funding being identified. The report confirms that all revenue works have been completed at a lower cost than anticipated and makes recommendations as to how the unspent funds can be reallocated for further public toilets revenue repairs.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approves that £93k of the original £279k revenue repairs budget be reallocated to the following public toilets as all revenue repair works agreed at Cabinet on Thursday 14 December 2023 have been completed:
 - Minnis Bay, Birchington (£50k)
 - Victoria Gardens, Broadstairs (£43k)

1. Summary of Reasons

- 1.1 The Council is responsible for maintenance of 27 public toilets and commissioned a condition survey of the public toilets in 2022. The survey identified that £1.3m of repairs were required, and that of this £1m would need to be spent within the next few years.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 At the Cabinet meeting on Thursday 21 September 2023 the budget monitoring report confirmed that there was an approved capital budget of £749k for the public toilets refurbishment and renewal project.
- 2.2 To ensure the project moved forward at pace and had appropriate project management capacity, the consultant AECOM was contracted to this project in October 2023. Their role was to conduct an exercise in conjunction with officers to determine what works shall be recommended to the Council to take forward, within the confines of the funding available.
- 2.3 For the schedule of works prioritisation exercise the following criteria was used:
 - Visitor numbers – frequency of use for the toilet.

- Significance of area – proximity to landmark/attraction.
- Need for improvement of disabled access.
- Bathing water quality issues.
- Need for improvement of current baby changing facilities (if any).

2.4 For each toilet, the above determinants were ranked either low, medium or high status. This exercise then produced a list of the toilets the Council should focus on first with the funding available.

2.5 A report was taken to Cabinet on Thursday 14 December 2023 that proposed a schedule of repairs and capital improvements at 10 locations across the district.

2.6 The Council made available a budget of £279k of revenue funding towards revenue repairs at 7 locations as follows:

- St Mildred's Bay, Westgate (£18k)
- West Bay, Westgate (£36k)
- Joss Bay, Broadstairs (£21k)
- Harbour, Broadstairs (£72k)
- Viking Bay (chalet block), Broadstairs (£80k)
- The Centre, Margate (£13k)
- Pier Yard, Ramsgate (£39k)

2.7 The Council made available a budget of £971k of capital funding towards new build accessible toilets at 2 locations as follows:

- Margate Main Sands, Margate (£400k)
- Stone Bay, Broadstairs (£571k)

2.8 The report also factored in £250k of additional external funding from Southern Water. This external funding was earmarked for a new build accessible toilet at Botany Bay, as well as refurbishment of the existing toilets. However, Southern Water have retained this funding and are undertaking this project internally, with support from the Council's Coast and Engineering team.

3. Relevant Issues

3.1 The revenue repair works identified at the locations above have been completed and have come in under budget by £93k. The total budget was £279k and the spend was £186k. The break down of the spend is as follows:

- St Mildred's Bay, Westgate (£44k)
- West Bay, Westgate (£19k)
- Joss Bay, Broadstairs (£9k)
- Harbour, Broadstairs (£21k)
- Viking Bay (chalet block), Broadstairs (£24k)
- Botany Bay, Broadstairs (£7k)
- The Centre, Margate (£9k)
- Buenos Ayres, Margate (£30k)
- Pier Yard, Ramsgate (£23k)

3.2 In addition Cabinet reports have been presented on Thursday 26 September 2024 that ensure officers have permission to undertake the procurement and award of a contract for the capital works to refurbish and build new toilets at Margate Subterranean toilets and Stone Bay, Boardstairs.

3.3 The highest number of red defects left to undertake, those which are the most urgent to complete, are located at Minnis Bay Public Toilets in Birchington and Victoria Gardens

Public Toilets in Broadstairs. It is therefore proposed to undertake revenue repairs at these locations, as detailed in Appendix 1, using the unspent budget.

- 3.4 Due to budget constraints and cost benefit analysis, the following toilets will not be taken forward at this time: Alpha Road, Station Road, Dumpton Gap, Harold Road, College Walk, King George VI Park, Royal Esplanade (Ramsgate), Cavendish Street, Ramsgate Cemetery, Hopeville Avenue, Vere Road, Crofts Place. Works to these toilets have been costed, and improvement works will be subject to future funding being identified within the 2025/26 budget setting process.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 It is open to the Cabinet to decide not to allocate the funds requested and not to undertake refurbishment of the existing proposed public toilets because of budget constraints. This is not the preferred option as there is a recognised need to improve the public toilets in Thanet.
- 4.2 It is also open to the Cabinet to allocate the funds to other public toilets. The toilets proposed however have been assessed to be in the greatest need of works as they have the largest number of red defects. This is not therefore the recommended option.
- 4.3 The recommended option is rather that funds are allocated to those toilets which have the greatest need for further refurbishment, Minnis Bay in Birchington and Victoria Gardens in Broadstairs.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 There is no public law or statutory duty to consult in relation to the decisions sought in this report.

6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Finance and Resources

- 6.1.1 There are no budget implications from undertaking this decision as the budget for revenue repairs of the public toilets has not been exceeded, and is being reallocated to further works due to works undertaken costing less than originally estimated.

6.2 Legal and Constitutional

- 6.2.1 This report seeks Cabinet's authority to reallocate funds remaining from the refurbishment of the public toilets referred to in the body of this report and agreed by Cabinet decision on the 14 December 2023. There are no particular legal implications arising from the decision sought in this report and Cabinet has the authority to take the decision sought.

6.3 Council Policies and Priorities

- 6.3.1 This report relates to the following corporate priorities:
- To create a thriving place
 - To keep our district safe and clean

6.4 Risk

- 6.4.1 There is a risk that the refurbishment of the public toilets has been underestimated and the returned tenders are cost prohibitive. This risk has been mitigated through extensive design and cost planning.

6.5 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 6.5.1 Environmental and climate change implications have been reviewed and mitigated as far as practicably possible. The new and refurbished buildings will be significantly more energy efficient than the existing building.

7. Equality, Equity and Diversity Implications

- 7.1 The Council will be undertaking an open procurement exercise to ensure equality of opportunity is provided to companies to provide a cost effective option for the delivery of the project. An equality screening tool has been completed. This demonstrates that there are no particular equalities considerations arising from the decision sought.

8. Crime and Disorder Implications and Community impact

- 8.1 Crime and disorder implications have been reviewed and the design of the new facilities has taken account of the high likelihood of antisocial behaviour occurring in and around the facility.

9. Subject History

- 9.1 [Cabinet Report from 14 December 2023.](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Phase 2 schedule of works for revenue repairs

Background Papers

None

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Report Sign Off

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