



PRCC.19 11/12

Prosperous Communities  
Committee

2 November 2011

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**Subject: Review of Public Convenience Provision throughout West Lindsey.**

Report by:

James Nicholson

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Purpose / Summary:

To review the provision of Public conveniences and consider the options for rationalisation leading to a reduction in expenditure.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

- 1) That Members approve the alterations to Roseway Public Conveniences to include a single cubicle night time facility, and that these alterations be carried out during the current financial year.**
- 2) That Members approve the closure of Whittons Gardens Public Conveniences upon completion of the alterations to the facility at Roseway (recommendation 1 refers); and**
- 3) That Members support officers in continuing to seek the transfer of the facilities at Caistor and Market Rasen to the Town Councils.**

## IMPLICATIONS

**Legal:** There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

### **Financial:**

If Members accept the recommendation there will be an expenditure of £10,900 for the conversion of Roseway conveniences and the revision of street signs. This can either be met from savings in the current year or through invest to save.

### **Staffing:**

If Members accept the recommendation there would be a reduction of working hours for the toilet cleaner in Gainsborough. However following skills training already completed the staff member can be accommodated within either street cleansing or customer services.

### **Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:**

*NB: A full impact assessment **HAS TO BE** attached if the report relates to any new or revised policy or revision to service delivery/introduction of new services.*

### **Risk Assessment:**

In the short term there may be a risk of increased anti social behaviour in and around the site of Whittons Gardens public conveniences however this is likely only be short term until the site is redeveloped.

### **Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:**

The reduction of one public convenience will result in reduced carbon emissions as energy usage will be less.

**Background Papers:**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If none were used then please state.

Title:	Location of Background Papers:
None	

**Call in and Urgency:**

Is the decision one to which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

**Key Decision:**

Yes

No

## Introduction

1. The objective of report is to review the expenditure on public conveniences and to identify potential budget savings whilst still maintaining an acceptable level of service.
2. As part of the budget challenge process in October 2010, members of the public were asked to consider the following options those in favour of the suggestions were:-

Rationalise provision of public conveniences	Remove WLDC facilities and find alternative existing facilities	Close all public conveniences with no other provision made
17.35%	75.51%	7.14%

3. The Citizens Panel were asked a similar question in May:-

With 56% either strongly or slightly agreeing to “Reduce public convenience provision e.g. by facilitating provision of toilets via retail and other private sector outlets”

4. It is clear that residents were only interested in the rationalisation of public conveniences if there were suitable alternative toilets available in the private sector.
5. Throughout the district there are currently four public conveniences managed by the Council. They are:-

Caistor  
Whittons Gardens, Gainsborough  
Roseway. Gainsborough  
Market Rasen

6. All the facilities are fairly modern and in good condition although the facilities are prone to vandalism as they are not permanently staffed, this is especially true of Whittons Gardens. All the conveniences have baby changing facilities and access for disabled people.
7. In addition, in Gainsborough, there are new facilities open to the public in Marshall’s Yard and within the Councils own offices at the Guildhall.
8. There is a further facility at Bridge Street, Saxilby which was transferred to Saxilby Parish Council on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2011

9. The annual budget for 2011/12 for each convenience is as follows:-

	<b>Caistor</b>	<b>Market Rasen</b>	<b>Whittons Gardens</b>	<b>Roseway</b>
Salaries superannuation/NI	6,000	10,703	10,703	10,704
Repairs and Mtce	2,298	2,298	3,587	3,587
NNDR/service charges	5,696	5,710	4,805	4,785
Cleaning Materials/supplies/protective clothing/sanitary services	1,625	1,578	2,149	2,148
Building Insurance	200	200	200	200
Equipment new	165	165	165	165
Fire fighting equipment	10	10	10	10
Portable appliance testing	7	7	8	8
Mobile phones	0	40	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16,001</b>	<b>20,711</b>	<b>21,627</b>	<b>21,607</b>

10. The current opening times of the facilities are:-

	<b>Caistor</b>	<b>Market Rasen</b>	<b>Whittons Gardens</b>	<b>Roseway</b>
<b>Monday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	8-30 – 17-00	8-30 - 17-00
<b>Tuesday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	8-30 – 17-00	7-00 – 17-00
<b>Wednesday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	8-30 – 17-00	8-30 – 17-00
<b>Thursday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	8-30 – 17-00	8-30 – 17-00
<b>Friday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	8-30 – 17-30	8-30 – 18-30
<b>Saturday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	8-30 – 17-30	8-30 – 18-30
<b>Sunday</b>	7-00 -18-00	7-00 -18-00	CLOSED	10-00 – 16-30

Caistor and Market Rasen are closed at 17-00 during the winter months.

11. A count of weekly usage has been undertaken for each facility and is set out below. The figures are of a single week count.

	<b>Caistor</b>	<b>Market Rasen</b>	<b>Whittons Gardens</b>	<b>Roseway</b>
<b>Monday</b>	117	86	193	296
<b>Tuesday</b>	168	357	253	582
<b>Wednesday</b>	85	248	316	346
<b>Thursday</b>	110	240	44	337
<b>Friday</b>	283	355	57	389
<b>Saturday</b>	262	195	225	684
<b>Sunday</b>	140	97	Closed	55
<b>Total</b>	<b>1165</b>	<b>1578</b>	<b>1088</b>	<b>2689</b>

12. In Gainsborough, anecdotally, there was a suggestion that the Market Traders had some issues over the lack of provision of public conveniences and therefore as part of the investigation they were consulted as a particular group. They advised that there were no facilities available to them early morning when they are setting up the markets on Tuesday and Saturday mornings.

13. There is also evidence from the street cleansing staff that some people are urinating and defecating on the highway during the evening which may be as

a result of there being no facilities open during the night. The toilet cleaning staff report that within the Whittons Garden convenience particularly there is evidence of alcohol consumption within the building during the day.

## **Options**

### **Market Rasen and Caistor.**

14. There is only one public convenience in each town, both towns provide a good range of local shops and both are popular with both residents and visitors.
15. The Market Rasen facility is in the centre of the town which not only caters for shoppers but also is used by visitors to the Market Rasen Races whilst the Caistor facility is just on the edge of the town and is appreciated by people walking in the Wolds especially at weekends.
16. The recently opened heritage centre and the proposed new church centre in the old library building in Caistor would provide additional facilities that could be made available to the public.
17. It is suggested that for these two towns closing the only facility is not an option at the current time and therefore it is proposed that as part of the Councils localism agenda these facilities be offered to the Town Councils in a similar way to the facility transferred to Saxilby Parish Council.
18. Detailed discussions have already taken place with the Clerk to Caistor Town Council who advises that the Council is not prepared to take over the facility at the present time.
19. It is proposed that should agreement be reached at a future date with Caistor and Market Rasen separate reports be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

## **Gainsborough**

### **Community toilet Scheme**

20. Within Gainsborough it was proposed to investigate the introduction of a Community Toilet Scheme which is a partnership scheme working with local retail and licensed businesses that would agree to allow the general public access to their toilet facilities during their opening hours. In return the Council will give an annual contribution towards the upkeep of the facilities. The Council would also undertake to provide Public Liability insurance.
21. Local businesses have been approached and initially two businesses expressed an interest in the scheme, unfortunately that interest has now been withdrawn.

## **Whittons Gardens**

22. Whittons Gardens Public conveniences are immediately adjacent to the site of the old Guildhall and a supermarket. There are plans for future development in the area and there would be opportunities to incorporate the site of the public conveniences into any future plans.
23. As previously mentioned the facility suffers from excessive misuse both through vandalism and on-street drinkers. The facility is not well used with only 1088 visits per week, this being the lowest of the four facilities operated.
24. It is proposed that the site be closed with a view to redevelopment. Any future development could include the provision of toilets accessible by the general public.

### **Roseway**

25. The Roseway facility is contained within one of the Council's main car parks being fairly centrally positioned within the town centre. Given its location within the car park there is no opportunity for redevelopment of the site for other uses.
26. It is proposed that the site be retained and that consideration be given to providing facilities for the market traders who arrive early in the morning on market days and for the night time economy.
27. Within Roseway it is possible to make alterations to the building to incorporate a night time facility accessed via a separate external door, allowing the rest of the facility to be locked in the normal way. The facility would be just one cubicle with toilet and hand wash facilities, it would be designed to be as vandal proof as possible. The capital cost of carrying out the alterations would be about £10,000. Such a facility would provide facilities for the night time economy and for the market stall holders. In the short term to provide for the market traders usage the facilities could be opened early at 6.00 am on Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Once the facilities were altered or open for longer hours then publicity would be provided to ensure that market traders knew about the enhanced hours and also visitors to the town.

### **Signing**

28. As part of the changes in Gainsborough it is suggested that the facilities in Marshall's Yard and within the Guildhall should be signposted by the provision of additional signage. Marshall's Yard have agreed to this proposal. In addition signage would be provided near the closed Whittons Gardens toilets directing towards Roseway. Existing signage would also be amended to show that Roseway was a 24 hour facility. The estimated cost would be £900

### **Charging Option**

29. Consideration has been given to charging for use of the facilities, however, the design of the buildings do not readily allow for the installation of turnstiles or barriers. This coupled with the cost of collecting and accounting for the cash and the likely negative reaction from the public leads to the conclusion that this option should not be pursued.

## **Staffing implications**

30. Should the changes suggested above be implemented then the working hours for the Gainsborough Toilet Cleaner would reduce by half from four hours per day to two hours per day. It is anticipated that this reduction in hours could be accommodated by re-deployment within the Council.
31. Should any agreement be reached with either Caistor or Market Rasen Town Council's in the future it is likely that TUPE arrangements would apply.

## **Financial Implications**

- 32 By closing Whittons Gardens there would be a revenue saving of £23,000 per annum. There would be a capital expenditure of £10,900 to carry out the alterations to Roseway and to provide the additional signage.

### **Implementation.**

- 33 It is proposed that the alterations to the facility at Roseway should be carried out during the current financial year and that upon completion the facility at Whittons Gardens be closed.

### **Conclusion**

- 34 Given the low usage and the potential for redeveloping the site the facilities at Whittons Gardens be closed.
- 35 Alterations to Roseway Gardens, Gainsborough to provide a facility for the benefit of the night time economy and market stall holders which can either be funded through in-year savings or through invest to save.
- 36 Work with Market Rasen and Caistor Town Councils with a view to transferring the facilities in their respective towns to their control.



## EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

<b>Section:</b>  <i>Operational Services</i>	<b>Names of those undertaking assessment:</b>  <i>Steve Leary, Waste Service Team, Lyn Marlow, Marina Di Salvatore, David Kirkup</i>	
<b>Name of Policy to be assessed:</b>  <i>Review of public convenience provision throughout West Lindsey – Closure of Whitton Garden’s PC’s and improvements to Roseway PC’s</i>	<b>Date of Assessment:</b> <i>17 October 2011</i>	<b>Is this a new or existing policy?</b> <i>Review of existing policy / service</i>
<b>Policy aims</b>		
<p><b>What is the purpose of the policy or function? What outcomes are required?</b></p> <p><b><i>Purpose of public conveniences policy in West Lindsey:</i></b>  <i>The Council is responsible for the provision, management, maintenance and cleansing of toilet facilities in the District for the benefit of residents and visitors. There are 4 public toilets in West Lindsey that are currently operated by WLDC</i></p> <p><i>This is not a statutory service and WLDC has no legal obligation to provide public conveniences,</i></p> <p><i>WLDC’s public convenience service has a good reputation in terms of quality, cleanliness and accessibility with both the residents and visitors. Our officers work hard to provide a high quality of service.</i></p> <p><b><i>Outcomes required from review of Public Conveniences</i></b>  <i>Review the expenditure on public conveniences and to identify potential budget savings whilst still maintaining an acceptable level of service.</i></p> <p><i>Closure of toilets that are less well used with a view to reinvesting saved monies into remaining facilities to improve access and quality.</i></p>		
<p><b><i>Who is intended to benefit from the policy?</i></b>  <i>The service affects all residents and visitors to West Lindsey</i></p> <p><i>The users expect provision of an adequate number of public toilets in the main population centres and that these toilets are in good repair, clean, safe with correct provision for all.</i></p> <p><i>User satisfaction with this service means that residents are able to better enjoy their leisure time spent outdoors, and visitors can enjoy a trip to West Lindsey - hopefully encouraging more frequent or longer duration visits. This in turn promotes economic development to the benefit of all community groups. PC’s also benefit those working outdoors such as market traders. The PC’s also provide benefit to the evening economy.</i></p>		



**Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy?**

**External**  
*Residents*  
*Visitors*  
*Disability groups*  
*Religious groups*  
*Local businesses*  
*Outside workers eg postal workers, council workers, market traders*  
*Cleaning contractors*  
*Emergency services*  
*Social Services & residential care homes on excursions*  
*Health Services*  
*Coach/bus companies*  
*Taxi drivers*  
*Evening economy*

**Internal**  
*Property Services*  
*Councillors*  
*Staff who deliver the service*  
*Cleaning Staff*  
*Regeneration Services*  
*Out of hours service*  
*Customer Services*

*All stakeholders want clean, hygienic, safe toilets, open at appropriate times, in the right locations.*

**Does the policy contribute to the achievement of the Council’s Equality and Diversity Policy? Can any aspects of the policy contribute to inequality?**

*.PC’s are available to all West Lindsey residents to use. All the conveniences have baby changing facilities and access for disabled people.*

**Evidence**

**What are the existing sources of evidence and mechanisms for gathering data?**

*The Council have for many years operated public toilets. Evidence collected in this time includes*

- General feedback and comments, compliments, complaints logged*

- *Customer Satisfaction with service recorded via citizens panel surveys*
- *Budget consultation events on introducing changes to toilet provision in Nov/Dec/Jan 2010/11*
- *Evidence collected on budget expenditure, incidents of vandalism / anti-social behaviour*

*In addition to the existing sources of evidence, further consultation was carried out through:*

- *Questionnaire to Market Traders earlier in 2011.*
- *Letter and questionnaire to local businesses in Gainsborough*
- *Usage survey carried out at all facilities*
- *Desktop research examining evidence from existing toilet community schemes in other local authorities.*
- *Citizen's Panel survey in May 20011 (56% agreed with the option to reduce PC provision)*

**Is there any evidence, or other reason to believe, that there is a higher or lower level of participation or uptake among different groups?**

*The PC's are open to all users as the service is provided to all across the district. Evidence has been collected as to number of users in each location, but no evidence collected of type of users.*

**Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy or function?**

*.Different users have different priorities, but facilities are provided for all in each location*

**Is there any informal feedback from managers, staff or voluntary organisations?**

*Anecdotally, WLDC's public convenience service has a good reputation in terms of quality, cleanliness and accessibility with both the residents and visitors.*

**What further evidence is needed to understand the impact upon equality?**

*Not applicable*

### **Impact**

**Does the data show different impact upon different groups? What existing evidence is there for this?**

<b>Race</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Religion</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<b>No</b>

**Do these differences amount to an adverse impact?**

*No*

### **Future actions:**

Disability network meeting to be attended on 3 November (**Steve Leary / Lyn Marlow**)  
Publicity campaign to inform stakeholders of changes to the service. To be agreed with the Communications Manager after decision from Prosperous Communities Committee

**(Steve Leary / Geoff O'Neill, Feb 2012)**

**Signed:**

**Date: 17 October 2011**