

**PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ARRANGEMENTS WITH TOWN COUNCILS
(Report by Head of Environment & Transport)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cabinet at their meeting on 4 November 2004 authorised further negotiation with Town Councils regarding possible future arrangements for the operation of town centre public conveniences.
- 1.2 This report informs Cabinet of the outcome of those negotiations.

2. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 2.1 The public conveniences in St Neots are cleaned and maintained by St Neots Town Council under an agency agreement that has been in place for several years. An annual payment, currently £33,290, is made to the Town Council.
- 2.2 The cleaning of all other town center units is undertaken by Turner Industrial Cleaning Systems Ltd and is managed by Operations Division. Repairs to these units are managed by the Environmental and Transport Division. Expenditure on these activities will be £63,390 in 2004/05.

3. FUTURE ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.1 Godmanchester and Ramsey Town Councils have declined the offer of becoming involved with the operation of public conveniences. Prior to the report to Cabinet in November 2004 the remaining three Town Councils, Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots, had indicated an interest in forming a consortium to undertake the operation of public conveniences in all towns. Subsequent discussion has indicated that this has ceased to be an option, at least in the short term.
- 3.2 The position now is that –
- St Neots Town Council wishes to continue its existing arrangement with the District Council;
 - Huntingdon Town Council wishes to secure an agency arrangement for the cleaning and minor repairs of public conveniences in Huntingdon and Godmanchester; and
 - St Ives Town Council does not wish to pursue the matter further at this time.

- 3.3 The Head of Operations Division does not anticipate that removal of units from the arrangement with Turners will give rise to any difficulties.

4. AN AGENCY WITH HUNTINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

- 4.1 An arrangement with Huntingdon Town Council would cover the public conveniences located at –

- Huntingdon Bus Station
- Hartford Road (Riverside Park)
- Godmanchester (Chinese Bridge)

- 4.2 The public conveniences at the Bus Station are within the building providing the waiting room and other facilities. It is appropriate, therefore, to include the cleaning of the waiting room with the cleaning of the toilets.
- 4.3 Budget provision in 2004/05 for the cleaning of the facilities identified in Huntingdon amounts to £26,700. The total building repair budget for these units amounts to £17,000. The Town Council has indicated that it would deliver the service with a single operative calling on other existing employees to cover periods of leave/sickness.
- 4.4 It is proposed that an agency agreement would include the following provisions –
- a specification detailing standards of cleanliness to be maintained (as opposed to frequency of visits);
 - the scope of minor repairs to be undertaken;
 - arrangements for providing performance reports;
 - arrangements for inspection by the District Council and penalties/incentives for non-compliance/compliance with specification;
 - the fee and payment arrangements; and
 - agreement review arrangements.
- 4.5 An initial agency period of two years has been proposed. The Town Council has indicated that it would be interested in the District Council providing a van to support the delivery of the service and the agency fee adjusted to take account of this.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The long term future of town center public conveniences has yet to be determined. The Public Conveniences Members' Advisory Group will not conclude its study until later in the year. Any agency agreement, therefore, will need to provide the flexibility to be able to respond to the eventual decision of the Council with regard to its Town Centre public conveniences.
- 5.2 Subject to a suitable agency agreement being concluded the arrangement would allow Huntingdon Town Council to develop the capacity to operate public conveniences and this may be of benefit to both councils.
- 5.3 A key consideration for the District Council in concluding any agency agreement is that overall it would be cost neutral.
- 5.4 Having prepared a new agency agreement the opportunity could be taken to seek to secure the transfer of the existing arrangement with St Neots Town Council onto a similar basis.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) authorise the Head of Environment & Transport, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Waste and Streetscene, to agree the form of an agency arrangement with Huntingdon Town Council;
- b) considers the details of the agency arrangement at a future meeting prior to any agreement being implemented; and
- c) subject to its decision in respect of recommendation (b) authorise a review of the existing agency arrangement with St Neots Town Council.

Background papers

Specification for the cleaning of public building (1990)

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