

260602 – Item 21 – Toilet Task and Finish Group

Recommendations for Council

Council is asked to consider the following:

1. **To make an in-principle decision** on one of the three options for the future operation of the public toilets:
 - **Option 1:** Accept the toilets as they are (24/7 opening)
 - **Option 2:** Accept with night-time closure (e.g., mag-lock door closing around 6/7pm and reopening at 7am)
 - **Option 3:** Accept with charging for use
2. **To waive Regulation 5.13** (three-quote requirement) to enable the Clerk to use local specialists to accelerate technical due diligence.
3. **To approve the draft Terms of Reference**
4. **To note** that, if an in-principle decision is made, the Clerk will proceed to investigate:
 - Detailed cleaning options, including potential shared arrangements with neighbouring councils
 - Maintenance and operational costs
 - Feasibility and costs of charging infrastructure

Summary of meeting held on 11th May

1. Governance

- Cllr Fileman Wright was appointed Chair of the Task & Finish Group.
- Terms of Reference will be drafted confirming that:
 - The Group is time-limited until a final decision is taken or the transfer occurs (expected April 2027).
 - The Group is advisory only and non-decision-making.
 - Its role is to support due diligence on handover, operational implications, budget considerations and recommended actions.

2. Background and Timeline

- The Chair provided an overview of work to date, referencing the April Item 17 report.
- A final decision on whether to take on the public toilets is required at the September 2026 Full Council meeting, to inform budget setting in October.

3. Information Gathering and Evidence

Footfall and Usage

The Clerk will:

- Calculate and circulate average footfall data to the group.
- Contact Country Bus and regular coach operators regarding the impact of closure.
- Summarise and circulate the public survey result to the group

Community Sentiment

- The Chair noted ongoing resident concern and periodic social media discussion about potential closure.

Funding Options

- The Clerk will seek DALC advice on whether the Parish Council may use crowdfunding to support public toilet provision.

Business Engagement

- Councillors will speak with local hospitality businesses about:
 - Impact of closure on trade
 - Whether they would allow public use of their toilets if closure occurred
 - Whether they could contribute financially or through a working party
- The Clerk will draft a standard set of questions to ensure consistency.

4. Future Configuration and Negotiation Points

- Long-term reconfiguration options to raise income were discussed but agreed to be future work.
- Negotiations with Teignbridge District Council (TDC) should proceed on the basis of accepting the toilets as they currently are.
- MW suggested emphasising the link between toilet provision and car park usage when negotiating with TDC.

5. Technical Due Diligence

Building Condition

- The Clerk presented two RHS survey quotes.
- MW (retired surveyor) offered to inspect:
 - Brickwork

- Rainwater goods
- Waterproof surfaces

He advised that funds are better directed to technical tests, including:

- Drainage
- Pipework
- Electrical systems
- Water systems and legionella considerations

Local electricians, plumbers and drainage specialists are recommended.

Information Required from TDC

The Clerk will request:

- Drainage plan
- Clarification of responsibility for boundary walls
- Details of easements, cables or utilities
- Confirmation of whether TDC will cover legal costs

Additional Group Actions

- The Group will consider and agree the preferred title plan boundary (e.g., whether to exclude the utility boxes).

Legal Support

- The Council will need to commission a solicitor to advise on:
 - Key questions for TDC
 - The business case
 - Transfer terms, liabilities and risks
- The Clerk will ask TDC whether they will cover the Council's legal costs.
- The Group will research examples of other councils that have appointed solicitors for similar asset transfers.

6. Next Meetings

- 8 June, 10am
- 13 July, 10am