

TATTENHAM CORNER CONVENIENCES

Head of Service:	Mark Shephard, Head of Property and Regeneration
Wards affected:	College Ward; Town Ward; Woodcote Ward;
Appendices (attached):	Appendix 1 – Confidential modular toilets designs and finishes including photographs Appendix 2 – Confidential existing toilet block refurbishment cost proposal

Summary

This report considers the options available for the provision or removal of the public conveniences.

Recommendation (s)

The Conservators are asked to:

Agree which option to proceed with based on information within this report:

- (1) Option 1 – Demolition of existing public toilets at a cost of £36,000 funded from the Repairs and Renewals Fund. No toilet facility re-provision.**
- (2) Option 2 - Demolition with potential modular toilet re-provision adjacent to Tea Hut or Downs Keepers Hut at cost of £113,700 leaving a funding shortfall of £39,700 after utilising all remaining reserves.**
- (3) Option 3 - Re-provision of the existing toilet facility at a cost of £240,000 leaving a funding shortfall of £166,000 after utilising all remaining reserves.**
- (4) Option 4 – Demolition of existing public toilets (as per Option 1) together with an undertaking to explore the future re-provision of a toilet facility with stakeholder partners.**

1 Reason for Recommendation

- 1.1 To ensure an affordable outcome for the provision of public toilet facilities on the Downs.

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2 Background

- 2.1 The main Tattenham Corner public toilets have been closed since March 2020 when the UK first entered lockdown. The disabled toilet is still in use as it forms part of the national radar lock access for the disabled scheme.
- 2.2 The toilets are served by minimal parking with tree coverage to the rear of the building providing concealment. Furthermore, their relatively isolated location (set back from the road with no adjacent buildings), render them extremely vulnerable to vandalism.
- 2.3 They are renowned for debaucherous antisocial behaviour which has been a long-term persistent problem that the police have been unable to prevent.
- 2.4 The Conservators are still incurring some costs for electricity, water and jet washing as the public continue to urinate and defecate around the perimeter of the building.
- 2.5 A report was taken to the Conservators on 21 June 2021 explaining the options available for the potential reprovision of the facilities.
- 2.6 The Conservators' 60% preceptor (Epsom & Ewell Borough Council) has set itself a £12,000 saving target on the annual precept it pays to EWDC, agreed at Strategy & Resources Committee on 21 September 2021.

3 June 2021 Conservators meeting: Points / clarifications

The Minutes recorded:

- 3.1 **Reason for proposed locations:** Members spoke about the proposed locations for the conveniences, and asked whether the block could be situated near the Top Car Park. The Officer explained that the block was proposed to be built next to existing adjacent buildings (Tea Rooms or the Downskeeper Hut) to make use of existing services, water and drainage. This would avoid incurring installation costs.
- 3.2 **Clarification of 'timed doors':** Following a question from a Member, the Officer explained that the 'timed doors' that were referred to in the report were doors which are open throughout the day and then locked at a set time in the evening. This would remove the cost involved with employing a keyholder to open and lock up at the end of the day.
- 3.3 **Potential for visitors centre:** Members spoke about the possibility of a visitors centre combining café and toilets at Tattenham Corner. The Officer noted that a development of this scale would require a large sum of money. It would require external funding and would be a long-term project.

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- 3.4 **Potential of refurbishing existing block:** Members spoke about the possibility of refurbishing the existing convenience block, and the Officer implemented an additional recommendation to explore what this may cost.

4 June 2021 Conservators meeting: Recommendations approved

The following recommendations were approved:

- 1) *To explore with the Jockey Club whether a single or double modular toilet facility can be accommodated directly adjacent to the Tea Hut and if suitable, a costed proposal will be brought back to the Conservators for consideration.*
- 2) *If the Tea Hut option is not feasible, to explore the cost of providing a single or double modular toilet facility adjacent to the Down Keepers Hut.*
- 3) *To explore the cost of re-provision of the existing toilet facility, including addressing any anti-social behaviour that exists.*
- 4) *The outcome of 1), 2) or 3) above will be reported back to the Conservators at a future meeting.*
- 5) *To agree that the existing facility should remain closed while the alternative options are explored.*

The actions (as per the approved recommendations above) are considered below.

5 Explore with the Jockey Club whether a single or double modular toilet facility can be accommodated directly adjacent to the Tea Hut

- 5.1 Discussions have taken place and the Jockey Club has reiterated that whilst they own the Tea Hut, the financial responsibility for a potential new toilet facility adjacent to the Tea Hut remains with the Conservators.
- 5.2 The Jockey Club is however, open to the possibility of a single or double modular public toilet built adjacent to the Tea Hut. This would need to be on the basis it is funded from the Conservators budgets, under the normal 60%/30%/10% split of costs if funds were available.
- 5.3 The existing Tea Hut is in relatively poor condition and requires extensive repairs. There is the potential to replace the Tea Hut and provide a combined new Tea Hut and modular toilet unit. This was discussed with the Jockey Club who will take the proposal back to their property team, but caution was expressed that this was unlikely to be of interest.
- 5.4 The Jockey Club has confirmed that both the Tea Hut and Down Keepers Hut are potential locations for a single or double modular toilet facility. Each location offers adequate parking and suitable services for new utility and water connections.

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6 If the Tea Hut option is not feasible, to explore the cost of providing a single or double modular toilet facility adjacent to the Down Keepers Hut

- 6.1 It was initially assumed for operational reasons that the Jockey Club's gated access adjacent to the Downs Keepers Hut would need to be retained. However, the Jockey Club has confirmed that the access could be relocated to accommodate a public toilet facility.

A detailed proposal for a single, twin and triple modular facility is attached at Appendix 1 and confirms the following indicative manufacturer costs:-

- Single - £51,600
- Double - £70,800
- Triple - £87,000

- 6.2 The costs are for a basic specification modular toilet with a flat roof. Additional cost would be incurred to provide a pitched or green roof and oak or brick cladding. To match with the Downs Keepers or Tea Hut buildings would require waney edge oak cladding at a further cost of £1,800.
- 6.3 The supplier has confirmed that the timed opening and closing mechanism would be included as standard at no extra cost.
- 6.4 Other options available are coin operation access and contactless payment for toilet use. Based on a charge of 50p, the income generated of c£6,000 per annum would potentially self-fund the cleaning and maintenance costs (based on c20,000 users per annum). Increasing the charge to £1 would potentially allow an extra contribution to repay the capital investment.
- 6.5 The additional cost of coin operation would be £2,340. Contactless payment is preferred as cash collection would incur additional staff resource at a time when the Council and most organisations are moving away from cash. The cost of a contactless payment system would be £1,500 and considered the preferred option.
- 6.6 The interior of the standard modular toilet is designed to last for 25 years and the structure for 40 years. The new fittings and fixtures would be relatively easy to clean and robust to tolerate public use. However, it should be appreciated that no facility will withstand repeated and sustained vandalism.
- 6.7 Site preparation ground works i.e. foundation and installation of services can be undertaken in advance in readiness for connection. The cost of this work is budgeted at approximately £18,000.

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- 6.8 The total cost to demolish the existing toilets and re-provide a basic single modular toilet re-provision next to either the Tea Hut or Down Keepers Hut is:

Demolition of existing toilets	£36,000
Foundations & services	£18,000
Basic single modular toilet	£51,600
Contactless entry	£1,500
Waney edge cladding	£1,800
Planning permission & survey fees	£4,800
Total	£113,700

- 6.9 £113,700 is the total cost is for a basic single modular toilet only, this provides a clean new modern toilet facility with suitable existing parking. The corresponding cost for a double modular toilet is £132,900 rising to £149,100 for a triple toilet facility.
- 6.10 The advantage of the proposed locations of either the Tea Hut or Downs Keepers Hut is that they are not hidden away benefit from full view of the public. Other benefits include reduced running costs of the new facility and the anticipated reduction in anti-social behaviour.
- 6.11 The annual estimated running costs would be approximately £6,000 for cleaning, consumables and pest control, with a further £2,400 per annum for maintenance.
- 6.12 These figures are based on cost from the Council's existing clearing and FM contractor for a similar sized building.

7 Re-provision of existing toilet facility and addressing anti-social behaviour

- 7.1 A detailed condition survey has been carried out on the existing building and priced by a toilet refurbishment contractor to undertake a full repair and refurbishment. The proposal is attached at Appendix 2 at a cost of £240,000 (inclusive of VAT).
- 7.2 The existing building is in extremely poor condition both internally and externally and requires extensive refurbishment.
- 7.3 The location of the existing structure is isolated with minimal parking, shrouded by trees and due to its isolation, the male toilets suffer from severe sexual deviant behaviour. This is evidenced by the metal cubicle panels and doors being constantly damaged by the drilling of large holes.

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- 7.4 CCTV could be installed but this would not solve the issues as the toilets are not staffed. Without a permanent presence on site, the anti-social behaviour will continue if the toilets are reopened.
- 7.5 The costs include for internal and external refurbishment and repairs but would not deal with the isolated location, the anti-social behaviour, the lack of parking and the fact that the existing toilet provision is in the wrong location for the majority of public using the Downs.
- 7.6 The fundamental issue for the Conservators to consider is that a refurbishment will not deter future anti-social behaviour or vandalism.
- 7.7 There is no guarantee that newly refurbished toilets will be treated any differently than the existing. Furthermore, the maintenance and repair costs of such large public toilets is excessive in comparison to a small modular unit.

8 Demolition of existing public toilets:

8.1 Without re-provision

- 8.1.1 The existing concealed location of the toilets inherently contributes to anti-social behaviour and frequent vandalism. They are also poorly located and not particularly close to the more heavily used public areas such as the Tea Hut and its car park.
- 8.1.2 Demolition would cost approximately £36,000 and would prevent the anti-social behaviour associated with the public toilets and remove all future maintenance and responsibilities.
- 8.1.3 The existing public toilets are located within a Conservation Area and would require planning permission for their demolition.

8.2 Combined with an undertaking to explore the future re-provision of a toilet facility with stakeholder partners

- 8.2.1 If the existing public toilets were demolished, the desire to re-provide a future toilet facility would be explored with stakeholder partners.
- 8.2.2 To retain the option of possible future re-provision on the Downs (being located in the Green Belt), the footprint of the existing building would be preserved by retaining its concrete base foundation.
- 8.2.3 Current discussions with the Jockey Club would be widened to include other potential partners. For example, these may include Surrey County Council and other public organisations with possible access to community funding.

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8.2.4 In addition, charitable organisations (together with commercial companies operating a community funding programme) would be considered subject to meeting their funding eligibility criteria.

9 Options Summary

9.1 The options are set out below in ascending order of cost:-

Option	Capital Cost	Revenue Cost
1. Demolition of existing public toilets. No re-provision.	£36,000	None
2. Demolition of existing public toilets. Single modular toilet re-provision adjacent to Tea or Down Keepers Hut.	£113,700	£8,400 pa (potential to substantially reduce if a 50p charge is implemented).
3. Re-provision (full refurbishment) of the existing public toilets.	£240,000	c£24,000 pa
4. Demolition of existing public toilets. Undertaking to explore re-provision with stakeholder partners.	Immediate cost as Option 1 Future cost unknown	

10 Risk Assessment

Legal or other duties

10.1 Impact Assessment

10.1.1 An Equality Impact Assessment would be undertaken for any decision leading to the closure of the existing public toilets.

10.2 Crime & Disorder

10.2.1 Due to the inherent location and design of the existing facilities as described in this report, the facilities attract anti-social behaviour and frequent vandalism.

10.3 Safeguarding

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10.3.1 Not applicable.

10.4 Dependencies

10.4.1 Planning permission would be required for demolition.

10.5 Other

10.5.1 None.

11 Financial Implications

11.1 The Conservators are unable to recover VAT and accordingly, all figures shown in this report are inclusive of VAT at the standard rate of 20%.

11.2 The Conservators' annual budget to operate the toilets is £19,265 including approximately £1,250 pa attributable to vandalism. The Council contributes £11,560 by way of a 60% precepts contribution, with the Racecourse contributing £5,780 and the Training Board £1,925.

11.3 In reserves, the Conservators currently hold £40,500 in the repairs and renewals fund (which covers any repairs, potholes, vehicles, buildings, gates etc) and £62,000 in the working balance reserve.

11.4 However, as identified in the separate budget monitoring report on this agenda, the reserves are forecast to decrease to £74,000 at 31 March 2022, owing to an in year deficit on the revenue budget and contributions to fund the EARDF project.

11.5 **Section 151 Officer's comments:**

11.6 At a cost of £113,700 for Option 2 and £240,000 for Option 3, the Conservators are significantly short of having funds to deliver either option.

11.7 Options 1 and 4 appear to be the only affordable options within existing resources. The £36,000 demolition cost could be funded from the Repairs and Renewals Fund. Options 1 and 4 could also enable the Conservators to substantially achieve the preceptor's target saving of £12,000 as the current £19,265 budget for operating toilets could be saved.

12 Legal Implications

12.1 There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

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- 12.2 **Legal Officer's comments:** Public toilet provision is an emotive subject. The provision of toilets is however, a discretionary service and therefore Members can decide whether it wishes to continue with the provision of public toilets and if so how. In coming to a decision, it will be necessary to comply with the public-sector equality duty and ensure that appropriate related impact assessments are carried out informed by appropriate consultation. Otherwise the approach advocated / options presented are within the Council's duties and powers and represent a reasonable approach to working through the issue. The report gives options for Members to make a significant step in helping to balance the Council's budget.

13 Policies, Plans & Partnerships

- 13.1 **Council's Key Priorities:** The following Key Priorities are engaged: Opportunity and Prosperity, Effective Council.
- 13.2 **Service Plans:** The matter is included within the current Service Delivery Plan.
- 13.3 **Climate & Environmental Impact of recommendations:** Not applicable.
- 13.4 **Sustainability Policy & Community Safety Implications:** Not applicable.
- 13.5 **Partnerships:** The Jockey Club, Training Board and EEBC are represented by Members on this Committee.

14 Background papers

- 14.1 The documents referred to in compiling this report are as follows:

Previous reports:

- Tattenham Corner Conveniences, Report to EWDC 21 June 2021

<https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=170&MId=1057&Ver=4>

Other papers:

- None