

OVERVIEW COMMITTEE (SPECIAL)

19th November 2001

PRESENT:-

Labour Group

Councillor Bell (Chair), Councillor Richards (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Harrington and Routledge.

Conservative Group

Councillors Bladen and Mrs. Robbins.

OV/11. **PUBLIC TOILETS**

The Chair reminded Members that the Committee had been requested by the Development Services Committee to examine the issues in connection with this matter and report back on recommendations. The Technical Services Manager, Mr. Hansed, advised of the background to this matter, reporting that the public toilets in Newhall, Overseal, Repton, Willington and Woodville had been closed during the Spring of 2000. He also advised of the locations of the ten public toilets for which the Council had responsibility, including the two toilets in Swadlincote Town Centre. The Chair reminded Members that the decision to close the toilets outlined above had been made in connection with the Council's financial crisis at the time, which now appeared to have eased somewhat.

It was reported that a survey on the toilets in the Town Centre had indicated a very high usage and accordingly, it was considered essential to retain these facilities. Although two facilities in a town centre of the size of Swadlincote may be considered relatively high provision, the survey results confirmed that this level of provision was justified. Mr. Hansed outlined the opening hours of the toilets and reported that the Council retained full service costs and was also responsible for the costs of vandalism. The toilets were cleaned daily during the morning and were also inspected once throughout the day. He outlined the costs of vandalism for the current year and the existing partnership schemes with the parishes, where appropriate, appeared to be working well.

The Committee reviewed each location where toilets had been closed, considering individual circumstances in each case. Mr. Hansed confirmed that he had recently written to Etwall and Melbourne Parish Councils requesting their agreement to continue on the present partnership basis until at least March 2003. In this regard, it was understood that both Parish Councils would agree to this course of action and it was also understood that Ticknall Parish Council was satisfied with the current arrangements.

The Committee considered the level of service provision for the toilets within Swadlincote Town Centre and the Chair advised that he had visited both locations earlier in the day and considered the cleansing at both facilities to be adequate. Mr. Hansed advised that the toilets adjacent to the Delph had recently been refurbished with SRB funding. However, both facilities in the Town Centre attracted most complaints, perhaps due to the high usage. In general, no complaints were received regarding the other toilets in the District. The Council's level of spend on the facilities appeared to represent approximately half that spent by other similar Authorities. Councillor

Harrington expressed disappointment at the disabled toilet facility in the East End toilets of the Town Centre which appeared outdated and indeed, had not been refurbished in recent times. Other Members considered that the East End toilets required upgrading. Mr. Hansed advised that he had previously submitted improved maintenance growth items but these had not been approved by the Committee and indeed, the toilets had a history of an inadequate budget.

Mr. Evans, the DSO Manager, advised that one additional daily clean to the toilets on the Delph would involve an additional cost of approximately £4,000 per annum. Last year's cost of cleaning of both toilets in the Town Centre together with those at Ticknall was in the sum of approximately £7,500. He suggested that based on the current workforce, the two daily cleans should be undertaken at approximately 6.30 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. Members felt it necessary to consider the recruitment of an additional cleansing worker, following the earlier reduction in the workforce from six to four staff as part of the financial crisis. The Committee also discussed a charging policy but it was felt that this would be inappropriate for the facilities available and it would also be necessary to employ additional staff.

The Committee considered that an increase in the level of workforce was necessary to achieve an overall improvement in the cleanliness of the toilets in the Town Centre.

RECOMMENDED:-

That action be taken in respect of the public toilets currently closed at the following locations, as indicated:-

- (1) (a) Newhall – That the site be disposed of.***
 - (b) Overseal – That consideration be given to partnership arrangements.***
 - (c) Repton – That the site be disposed of.***
 - (d) Willington – That consideration be given to partnership arrangements, otherwise the facilities remain closed.***
 - (e) Woodville – That consideration be given to partnership arrangements in respect of an alternative location and the present site remain closed.***
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- (2) That consideration be given to an increase in the level of workforce by one member of staff to achieve an improvement in the cleanliness of the toilets in Swadlincote Town Centre.***

R. L. BELL

CHAIR

The meeting terminated at 5.45 p.m.