

**REPORT FROM:** HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENGINEERING SERVICES  
MANAGER

**TO:** NELSON COMMITTEE

**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> JANUARY, 2020

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## **PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION IN NELSON**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider the options for improving public toilet provision in the Town Centre.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee await the outcome of the Future High Streets Fund bid and if that is successful look at opportunities to improve provision.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

It is no longer Council policy to provide and operate public toilets.

### **BACKGROUND**

1. At the meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020 concerns were expressed that the public toilet facilities in the town centre were inadequate. It was acknowledged that a decision had been made some years ago to close the public toilets on Market Street and for the public to be able use facilities in the ACE Centre, Morrisons and Pendle Rise. It was felt that Morrisons was too far away from the town centre; the facilities in the ACE Centre had been misused some time ago and so only users of the Centre were allowed to use them; and the facilities in Pendle Rise were not felt to be adequately clean.
2. It was resolved that a report be submitted to a future meeting setting out the options available for additional public toilet facilities in the town centre including costings.

### **ISSUE**

#### Existing situation

3. The Council has no statutory duty to provide public conveniences. Following a Scrutiny Review in 2010 it was decided to close the toilets at Market Street, Nelson but toilets were retained within the Market Hall. Under the Transfer of Facilities and Services to Town and

Parishes Councils programme it is implicit that Pendle Council will itself no longer provide and operate public toilets.

4. In recent years toilet facilities have been provided at Morrisons and the ACE Centre through the Community Toilet Scheme. The toilets at Morrisons are still available but those at the ACE Centre, along with the rest of the Centre, have been closed since the first Covid lockdown. Further privately owned public facilities exist at Pendle Rise but there have been some issues of repair and it is understood that these are currently closed. In addition, cafes and pubs have toilets for their customers.

#### Options

5. The previous toilets at Market Street were sold in October 2015 for £8,502. Planning permission was subsequently granted for demolition and the construction of three apartments in August 2016 but this has not been built. The site was sold on at £29,000 in August 2017. As the toilets have been closed for several years it is likely that substantial refurbishment would be required. There would also be ongoing costs for opening and closing the facilities, cleaning and maintenance. If they could be repurchased the cost could be £30K+ and an estimate (produced without inspection) is that £50K would be required to recommission them and £10k annual running costs. If the Committee wished to see these toilets being brought back into use it should be left to Nelson Town Council to be responsible for funding and managing this, or any other new facility.
6. The toilets at Morrisons and the ACE Centre were made available under a Community Toilet Scheme, which was an approach that many other local authorities were adopting at the time. It is not known whether any other town centre occupiers such as cafes and pubs would be prepared to allow use of their facilities for non-customers, but that seems unlikely. Costa Coffee is one of the larger cafés and only allows customers to use their facilities. Pubs would not be an ideal option for all sectors of the community, including those with children.
7. Pendle Council have submitted a funding bid for Future High Streets Fund. The key focus of this bid would be acquiring and remodeling Pendle Rise Shopping Centre with subsequent sale to the private sector. This would provide the opportunity to look at the provision of new toilet facilities within the Centre. The ongoing management and maintenance costs of new facilities could be included in any service charge to retail occupiers of the Centre.

#### Conclusion

8. Any new toilet provision is likely to involve capital and revenue costs, unless any existing town centre occupiers are prepared to allow non-customers to use their facilities. If the Future High Streets Fund bid is successful the Council could look at opportunities for new provision in Pendle Rise as part of its remodeling and refurbishment. Alternatively the Town Council may wish to consider new provision.

#### **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** None

**Financial:** Any additional toilet provision is likely to require capital and revenue provision and there are no budgets currently available

**Legal:** None

**Risk Management:** None

**Health and Safety:** None

**Sustainability:** None

**Community Safety:** Any new provision would need to ensure that it did not become a focus for anti-social behaviour

**Equality and Diversity:** Lack of toilet provision may impact on people with disabilities, older people and people with young children using the town centre

## **APPENDICES**

None

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

*None*