

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Refurbishment of Armada Way Toilets
Committee: Cabinet
Date: 13 September 2011
Cabinet Member: Councillor Michael Leaves
CMT Member: Director for Community Services and Assistant Chief Executive
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Ref: IG/JD Toilet Paper
Key Decision: No
Part: I

Executive Summary:

This paper recommends the £500k refurbishment of the public toilets in Armada Way significantly improving the appearance, safety and cleanliness as well as improving disability access.

Consistent with other authorities investing in public toilets as part of the refurbishment a charge of 20p will be required on users. The income raised will be re-invested in the cleaning and maintenance of the toilets in Plymouth.

The Council will review the learning from these changes 6 months after Armada Way has been re-opened. This review will inform the direction for the other public toilets in Plymouth.

Corporate Plan 2011-2014:

This refurbishment supports the Corporate and City priorities for growth and reducing inequalities.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land

Subject to approval this paper commits resources to the improvements in public toilet provision. A summary of the additional (not currently budgeted) costs associated with these changes is shown below:

	FY 11/12		FY 12/13		FY 13/14	
	Rev	Capital	Rev	Capital	Rev	Capital
Public Toilets	£200,000	£500,000	£235,000		£235,000	
Totals	£200,000		£235,000		£235,000	

This additional investment adds a further requirement to our Capital Receipts for funding. Our Capital Receipts programme is already under significant pressure. The change required to the Capital programme will require approval by Council.

These proposals also add to the Revenue pressures the Council are facing. The refurbishment of these toilets will add an on-going budget pressure of £235k each year. This will have implications in terms of additional delivery plans which will need to be developed to off-set the shortfall from the non-delivery of savings from the planned out sourcing of Plymouth's toilets. Extra savings will be needed to keep the Council's budget in balance. These additional plans will be considered at CMT and reported back in the next Joint Performance and Finance Report for quarter ending September 2011.

The recommendations made in this report allow for an additional FTE to support cleaning and maintenance at the toilets

Other Implications: e.g. Community Safety, Health and Safety, Risk Management and Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion:

- Equality, Diversion and Community Cohesion

These changes will improve the disability access and toilet provision within the city centre.

Recommendations & Reasons for recommended action:

1. Subject to Council approval of the change to the Capital programme refurbish Armada Way toilets and introduce a charge of 20p for use. Armada Way toilets are the busiest public toilets in Plymouth, situated in the heart of the retail centre. They are used by visitors and residents and their refurbishment will further re-enforce the commitment made by the Council to support businesses in the city.
2. A review takes place 6 months after the introduction of charging for use. This will offer the Council an opportunity to learn about public reaction and usage levels so as to inform a review of the other toilets.
3. Recommend the change required to the Capital programme to Council.

Alternative options considered and reasons for recommended action:

Consideration was given to the prospect of inviting a contractor to invest in refurbishing public toilets in Plymouth and cleaning and maintaining them. This option proposed using the income from charging customers to pay for their costs. However, analysis of the number of users of the toilets showed that this option wouldn't have been economically viable for potential bidders.

Consideration was also given to whether doing nothing with the toilets was an option, however this was ruled out as it failed to adequately support the growth of the city.

Background papers:

None

Sign off:

Fin	DJN1 112.0 11	Leg	1274 7/ALT	HR		Corp Prop	CJT/0 81/02 0911	IT		Strat Proc	JK/S PU/2 55/09 11
Originating SMT Member											

Refurbishment of Armada Way Toilets

- 1.1 The Armada Way toilets are used more than 10,000 times per week, with an estimated annual number of users of over 500,000. They are considered integral to the retail “offer” in Plymouth.
- 1.2 There is a strong commitment in the Council to public toilet provision in the city and the works at Armada Way support this commitment at a time when a number of Authorities are closing their public toilets.
- 1.3 The refurbishment will greatly improve the current provision in Armada Way creating a safer cleaner more accessible convenience.
- 1.4 The refurbishment will require Capital investment of £0.5m this will allow a number of issues to be addressed and improvements to be made including;
- The modernisation of the site
 - Disability compliance
 - Accessibility for pushchairs
 - Baby change facilities
 - Easier cleaning
 - Extended opening hours
 - Improved safety
- 1.5 The income generated from charging 20p per use which is estimated to generate around £60k p.a. based on 2011 usage figures and allowing for a reduction in use from implementing charging will be used to supplement the existing cleaning and maintenance budget, ensuring that the refurbished toilets are maintained to a high level.
- 1.6 Charging 20p for usage of public toilets is something other authorities such as Exeter, Cambridge, Blackpool and Reading (and many others) have introduced, with many other authorities now actively considering charges. The charges for public toilets in London are frequently as high as 50p.
- 1.7 The charge and additional revenue will allow the Council to have a dedicated member of staff on site at the Armada Way toilets during the day. This will allow for improved cleaning and improved security for users of the toilets.
- 1.8 The Council will review the learning from these changes 6 months after Armada Way has been re-opened. This review will inform the direction for the other public toilets in Plymouth.
- 1.9 The following timeframes are based on Cabinet agreeing the recommendation(s) on the 13 September 2011 Cabinet meeting and Council approval to the change required to the Capital programme.

Commence Procurement	September 2011
Contract award	December 2011
Appoint supplier	December 2011
Works commence	January 2012
Works complete	April 2012