

PUBLIC TOILETS

Item OS 22/12 referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 10 March 2022

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided an update on the current position regarding Borough Council owned public toilets in Hadlow, Snodland and West Malling. A proposed way forward for each was set out in the report.

Careful consideration was given to the written response of West Malling Parish Council which detailed their views in respect of the future of the public toilets in the town centre. Reference was made to the current location of the facilities, the temporary funding arrangements organised by the local County Member and the views of local residents, businesses and visitors. It was felt by the parish council that the permanent closure of the public toilets would have implications for footfall and discourage people from visiting the shops, the Farmers Market and the various events held throughout the year.

The Committee recognised that there was no funding allocated to public toilets in these locations after 2020/21 and this position had been approved when setting the budget for 2022/23. Any changes in arrangements would represent budget growth.

In conclusion the wishes of West Malling Parish Council had to be balanced against the Borough Council's difficult financial position and the views of other parish/town councils to ensure a consistent approach was applied across the Borough.

However, the Borough Council remained open to exploring alternative venues, grant funding streams, outside of the Borough Council, and community toilet schemes with West Malling Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) it be noted that the future of the toilets in Borough Green, Wrotham, Tonbridge, Larkfield, East Peckham and Aylesford, as set out in 1.1.2 of the report, was resolved;
- (2) the toilets in Hadlow and Snodland remain closed and that a report be taken to a future meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board to consider alternative uses and/or disposal; and
- (3) in respect of West Malling, the toilets remain open until July 2022, as funded under the current arrangement with the County Member, and a further report be taken to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board to consider alternative uses and/or disposal.

***Referred to Cabinet**