

## Community Services Committee

Monday, 15th July, 2024 at 6.00 pm

Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted

### Agenda

#### Members of the Community Services Committee

Councillor Deb Shiner (Chair)	Councillor Bryan Black (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Ashleigh Bolton	Councillor Louise Case
Councillor Deano Cline	Councillor Annette Evans
Councillor Chris Farr	Councillor Peter Killick
Councillor Richard Mark	Councillor Anna Patel
Councillor Lewis Sharp	Councillor Sarah Sowambur
Councillor Helena Windsor	

#### Substitute Members

Councillor Sue Farr	Councillor Richard Fowler
Councillor Liz Lockwood	Councillor Jeremy Pursehouse
Councillor James Rujbally	Councillor Catherine Sayer
Councillor Lesley Steeds	

If a member of the Committee is unable to attend the meeting, they should notify Democratic Services. If a Member of the Council, who is not a member of the Committee, would like to attend the meeting, please let Democratic Services know by no later than noon on the day of the meeting.

If any clarification about any item of business is needed, contact should be made with officers before the meeting. Reports contain authors' names and contact details.

David Ford

**Chief Executive**

#### Information for the public



This meeting will be held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Oxted and the public are welcome to attend. Doors for the Council Offices will open 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.



The meeting will also be broadcast online at [tinyurl.com/webcastTDC](https://tinyurl.com/webcastTDC). In attending this meeting, you are accepting that you may be filmed and consent to the live stream being broadcast online and available for others to view.



Information about the terms of reference and membership of this Committee are available in the Council's Constitution available from [tinyurl.com/howTDCisrun](https://tinyurl.com/howTDCisrun). The website also provides copies of agendas, reports and minutes.



Details of reports that will be considered at upcoming Committee meetings are published on the Council's Committee Forward Plan. You can view the latest plan at [tinyurl.com/TDCforwardplan](https://tinyurl.com/TDCforwardplan).

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[www.tandridge.gov.uk/Your-council/Councillors-and-committees](http://www.tandridge.gov.uk/Your-council/Councillors-and-committees)

Tandridge District Council, Council Offices, 8 Station Road East, Oxted, Surrey, RH8 0BT

## **AGENDA**

**1. Apologies for absence (if any)**

**2. Declarations of interest**

All Members present are required to declare, at this point in the meeting or as soon as possible thereafter:

- (i) any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPIs) and / or
- (ii) other interests arising under the Code of Conduct

in respect of any item(s) of business being considered at the meeting. Anyone with a DPI must, unless a dispensation has been granted, withdraw from the meeting during consideration of the relevant item of business. If in doubt, advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer or her staff prior to the meeting.

**3. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2024 (Pages 3 - 16)**

To confirm as a correct record.

**4. To deal with questions submitted under Standing Order 30**

Questions must be sent via email or in writing to Democratic Services by 5pm on 11 July 2024 and comply with all other aspects of Standing Order 30 of the Council's Constitution.

**5. Public Conveniences Engagement (Pages 17 - 22)**

**6. Any other business which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency**

To consider any other item(s) which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered as a matter of urgency – Local Government Act 1972, Section 100B(4)(b).

## TANDRIDGE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes and report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 13 June 2024 at 7:30pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Shiner (Chair), Black (Vice-Chair), Bolton, Case, Cline, Evans, Chris Farr, Mark, Patel, Sowambur, Windsor and Sue Farr (Substitute) (In place of Killick)

**PRESENT (Virtually):** Councillor Killick

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Lockwood, Chotai, Gray and Sayer

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors Killick and Sharp

#### **23. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2024**

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### **24. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MAY 2024**

The minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### **25. COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW - JUNE 2024**

The Committee received a presentation from the Community Safety and Partnership Specialist and the Head of Communities updating the Committee on the community safety activities in the District.

The Community Safety and Partnerships Specialist explained that the Council operated a partnership approach to reducing crime and disorder through the Tandridge Community Safety Partnership. The four priorities of the Partnership for 2024/25 were protecting the vulnerable from harm, anti-social behaviour (ASB), strengthening relationships with communities and partners and serious organised crime and prevent. 15 themes had been identified to help achieves these priorities.

In the last 12 months:

- 59 families had accessed the Family Support Programme.
- 692 referrals had been made to the East Surrey Domestic Abuse Services. There had been two domestic homicide reviews.
- 56 adults and five children had been referred to Surrey County Council for safeguarding, and 18 adults and one child had been referred to the Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting (CHaRMM).
- There had been no ASB case reviews.

Officers shared two highlights from the proactive work that had been undertaken:

- Tandridge Frauds and Scams Working Group. This Group had raised awareness of frauds and scams, particularly those who were digitally excluded.
- Tandridge Youth Provision Working Group. This Group had looked at opportunities to work with community groups to improve youth provision by bringing together specialist agencies and those who wanted to improve provision.

The Head of Communities explained the key themes from the 61 safeguarding referrals in 2023/24 included self-neglect, domestic, psychological and physical abuse, neglect and acts of omission.

The Council reviewed its safeguarding policies and procedures annually, provided training to all staff and councillors and held quarterly partnerships meetings with Surrey County Council and the other Districts & Boroughs in Surrey.

Achievements throughout 2023/24 included:

- The completion of the Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board annual quality assurance assessment.
- The progress undertaken on the Section 11 – Surrey Safeguarding Children’s board assessment, which would be submitted in July 2024.
- Raising awareness of mental health across the Council and encouraging staff to use services available to them.
- The completion of an internal re-audit.

The Tandridge Borough Commander, who oversaw the Safer Neighbourhood Team, gave a presentation outlining how the Police worked to ensure communities felt safe. This included:

- Support from division teams including the Neighbourhood Patrol Team, Domestic Abuse Team, Child Abuse Team, CID 24/7, Uniform Proactive Team and the Neighbourhood Policing Investigation Team.
- A focus on shoplifting which had resulted in 7 Community Protection Warning issues, 3 Community Protection Notices and 1 Injunction granted.
- Working closely with partners and cross boundary neighbouring forces on ASB and serious organised crime.
- A dedicated rural Police Community Support Officer to tackle rural crime.

Recent successes included the sentencing of 4 members of an organised crime group, 2 charges of attempted murder, 2 charges of conspiracy to burgle, and charges that related to vehicle crime.

The Tandridge Brough Priorities for 2024 were:

- Improve community engagement across the Borough,
- Continue to build strong cross border relationships,
- Continue to tackle serious acquisitive crime and bring offenders to justice,

- Improve Domestic Abuse performance,
- Increase arrests and charges of offenders causing harm in our community, and
- Continue to use problem solving to tackle chronic and complex issues in the Borough.

In response to Member Questions, the Borough Commander explained:

- a Joint Action Group would be set up to determine the most effective action and enforcement on unauthorised land development. In terms of a recent breach in Shipley Bridge, the Council had issued stop notices at two locations and were looking to progress further enforcement. A core professionals group would meet to discuss the legal options to tackle intimidation and Anti-Social Behaviour.
- reports of shoplifting had increased after the Police had encouraged more reporting from shops. However, solved outcomes had also increased, due to more Police investigations into shoplifting and the use of new technologies.

The Chair thanked Officers and the Borough Commander for attending.

## **26. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REFURBISHMENT PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Committee received a report outlining progress to date on the refurbishment of public conveniences. There were 10 public toilets in the District, and (subject to Strategy & Resources Committee approving a £33k carry forward) the agreed capital budget was £803.1k. The annual maintenance costs were £104k per annum on average. Equipment at one site had recently been replaced, two sites had repairs underway, with contractors instructed to refurbish two further sites. The report outlined a number of challenges in delivering the refurbishment project.

The report sought approval of an asset prioritisation matrix to agree the refurbishment approach for the next two years in light of these challenges, and approval to initiate exploratory discussions with Parish Councils and local businesses to assess their willingness to discuss asset transfers and join the community toilet scheme.

During the debate, Members made the following comments:

- Public conveniences were important to all members of the community. Whilst the Council did not have a statutory duty to provide public conveniences, Members felt it was the right thing to do.
- Discussions with Parish Councils would be welcome, and these discussions should take place promptly.
- The proposed matrix may not be sufficient to give required information to make decisions on closure.

In response to Member questions, Officers explained:

- appendix A of the report was the outcome of a desktop review undertaken in 2022. Officers wanted to do a more complete review which would include consideration of comments, the budget available, and the completion of a prioritisation matrix for return

back to the Committee. This would ensure Members had all the information required to make future decisions on refurbishment or closure.

- the expense figures listed in appendix B of the report were designed to give an indication of costs over the past four years. Officers would circulate further information to Members of the Committee.

Councillor Cline, seconded by Councillor Evans, proposed an amendment to remove recommendations B and C of the report and replace with the following:

*That a public consultation be carried out to assess the views of the public, Parish Councils and Ward Members on all existing public conveniences and their value to the community.*

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was carried.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- A. the progress to date be noted;
- B. a public consultation be carried out to assess the views of the public, Parish Councils and Ward Members on all existing public conveniences and their value to the community.

## **27. PLAYGROUNDS REFURBISHMENT PROGRESS UPDATE**

A report was presented to the Committee which provided an update on the playground refurbishment project. A capital budget had been approved in 2020, but the project had been delayed by Covid-19 and staff resources. Subject to the unspent budget being rolled over, a decision to be taken by the Strategy & Resources Committee on 27 June 2024, the total capital budget was £981,700. A recent assessment carried out by Safe Play estimated a refurbishment budget of £3.2m.

Officers would produce a playground strategy to set out the strategic directions for the ongoing maintenance and refurbishment of the playgrounds. The report sought approval for Officers to initiate exploratory discussions with Parish Council and Community Groups to assess their willingness to contribute to the refurbishment programme.

Members raised a number of issues affecting playgrounds within their wards.

Officers explained, in response to questions from Members, that:

- The Safe Play estimate had been summarised in the report, but an in depth breakdown would be shared with the Committee. The figures were for the replacement of the playgrounds and a summary of how a playground be more DDA compliant.
- Inspections were undertaken by contractors weekly, monthly and yearly across all the sites. The monthly report included photos of the sites.

**RESOLVED** – that:

- A. the progress to date be noted;
- B. the rollover of the 2023/24 capital budget and match funding pot for playground improvement be noted; and
- C. Officers be authorised to initiate exploratory discussions with parish councils and community groups to assess their willingness to discuss asset transfers, contribute to the refurbishment programme and the ongoing maintenance of assets.

## 28. REVIEW OF CESSPOOL SERVICE

The Committee received a report that contained details of a service review of the non-statutory cesspool emptying service and proposals for consideration for future service delivery. Officers drew the Committee's attention to:

- In recent years, the service had struggled to reach its budgeted income and the net service contribution had been overspent against budget. This had resulted in the general fund subsidising the service.
- A new lease vehicle would be an additional cost of £16.5k per annum, this would require more income to be generated.
- The service is non-statutory and the Council are the only authority in Surrey, Kent and Sussex to run the service.
- Officers and operatives would be redeployed to other areas within the Operational Services structure, such as street cleansing, grounds maintenance and waste.
- As an alternative to closure of the service, with additional investment it would be possible for the Council to attract more income but this was not the preferred option as it would divert attention from other more needed Council services.

In response to member questions, Officers explained that the Council are not the only provider of the service in the district and customers have had to use private companies, at a lower price, in the past when the Council has been unable to fulfil the service. Officers also noted Sevenoaks Council ceased their service in February 2024 due to similar concerns, however, it would be unclear how the commercial market would respond.

**RESOLVED** – that the cesspool emptying service be ceased (option 2 arising from the review of the service).

## 29. QUARTER 4 2023/24 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Committee received a report that contained data on the key performance indicators for Quarter 4 2023-24. Officers drew the Committee's attention to:

- Services performed well overall. Street Cleansing was off target for Quarter 4 and the target had been challenging to reach due to the decrease in the number of street

cleansing officers and officer sickness. The team have been supplemented by 2 temporary officers who have improved service delivery.

- Officers have been monitoring the number of safeguarding cases and nominations to the Community Harm and Risk Management (CHaRM) meeting. Officers have continued to work on the Anti-Social Behaviour project and would be recruiting a co-ordinator post.
- Trees have remained a significant risk due to Ash die back and the lack of a Tree Officer. A new Tree and Woodland Officer was expected to start in mid-July 2024 and would focus on woodland management.

During the debate Members asked questions and Officers responded by explaining that they would look at different options to provide resilience to the street cleansing team and would bring a report to Committee in September about how the Council would use the resources from the Cesspool Service elsewhere. Officers would consider using resources on street cleansing, grounds maintenance and waste.

**RESOLVED** – that the most critical Quarter 4 2023-2024 performance Indicators and risks for the Committee be noted.

### 30. 2023/24 BUDGET OUTTURN - COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Committee received a report that contained data on the Budget Outturn for 2023-24. The budget covered a number of services, and Officers drew the Committee's attention to:

- The Committee had an annual budget of £4,568k and an outturn of £4,234k. This was a full-year underspend of £334k. Services, such as fly tipping and unauthorised encampments, are demand led and it is difficult to calculate the extent to which they are needed earlier in the year.
- The waste service which had a £19k improvement on Quarter 3.
- All items were completed on the 2023/24 savings plan with the exception of Productivity Improvements and Standard approach to websites in Environmental Health. These would be carried forward and the Council would aim to achieve these savings in 2024/25.
- The Capital Budget that had not been spent in full during 2023/24 would be carried forward into 2024/25 subject to Strategy & Resources Committee approval.

**RESOLVED** – that the Committee's revenue and capital budget outturn positions as at Quarter 4 / M12 (March) 2023/24 be noted.

### 31. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND - ESTABLISHMENT OF WORKING GROUP

A report was presented to agree the membership of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Working Group for 2024/25 following consultation with Group Leaders.



**RESOLVED** – that the following membership of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Working Group for 2024/25 be agreed:

<b>UK Shared Prosperity Fund Working Group</b>		
1	RA	Peter Damesick
2	RA	Julie Duggan
3	RA	Nicola O’Riordan
4	RA	Richard Smith
5	Lib Dem	Perry Chotai
6	Lib Dem	Ben Horne
7	Con	Michael Cooper
8	Ind Group	Helena Windsor

### **32. PROPOSED CHANGE TO THE COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received a report which proposed that responsibility for pollution control be transferred from the Community Services Committee to the Planning Policy Committee by making the necessary amendments to the both committees’ terms of reference.

**COUNCIL DECISION**  
(subject to ratification by Council)

**RECOMMENDED** – that responsibility for pollution control, including the associated budgetary provision of £132.6k for 2024/25, be transferred from the Community Services Committee to the Planning Policy Committee by amending the terms of reference of those committees as per the track changes shown at Appendix A.

Rising 9.45 pm

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## COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

### 1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- A. To be responsible for formulating and reviewing the Council's policies in respect of the leisure, cultural environmental health and amenity needs of the District, including:-
- (i) Waste and amenity management (street cleaning, refuse collection, cesspool emptying, public conveniences, vehicle parking, abandoned vehicles, fly-tipping, recycling and cemeteries).
  - (ii) Provision and maintenance of leisure facilities, including leisure and sports centres, formal parks, pavilions, and open spaces.
  - (iii) Drainage and sewerage matters.
  - (iv) Health & Safety, Food Safety, ~~Pollution Control~~, Registration of motor salvage and scrap metal operators, Control of Dogs, Street/House to House Collections, Pest Control, water supply, infectious diseases and unauthorised encampments.
  - (v) Control of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.
  - (vi) Grants to voluntary bodies.
  - (vii) Exercise the Council's scrutiny and review functions in relation to local crime and disorder matters and to act as the local Crime & Disorder Committee.
- B. Subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive and in consultation with Members in accordance with Standing Order 46 of Part B of the Constitution, to deal exclusively with any matter that also falls within the terms of reference of another Policy Committee / other Policy Committees and to resolve such matters unless reserved for determination by Full Council.

### 2. TO RECOMMEND

- (i) New policies or changes in policy within the remit of the Committee which would require resources beyond those allocated to the Committee.
- (ii) Financial programmes for overall revenue and capital expenditure as part of the annual budget preparation cycle.
- (iii) Making of Byelaws for good rule and government and the suppression of nuisance within the remit of this Committee.
- (iv) Changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- (v) Other matters under the Committee's jurisdiction which, by virtue of statutory provision, must be determined by full Council.

### **3. TO RESOLVE**

- (i) New policies or changes in policy within the remit of the Committee which can be accommodated within the Committee's overall allocation of resources and/or trading reserves.
- (ii) Requests for assistance in individual cases which fall outside of policy but which do not impact upon resources, or where the individual wishes to appeal against the officer decision.
- (iii) Responses to consultations from the Government, other authorities and external agencies where there is a potentially significant impact upon the delivery of services falling under the remit of the Committee.
- (iv) Provision of Hackney Carriage ranks and variations in fees and fares in respect of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.
- (v) The award of contracts falling under the remit of the Committee and within the allocated budget.
- (vi) Any grant applications referred to the Committee for determination.
- (vii) The seeking of planning permission by, or on behalf of, the Council.
- (viii) Rents and charges for services, accommodation and land.
- (ix) Measures to reduce crime & disorder and to promote community safety, including those delivered via the local Community Safety Partnership.
- (ix) Addition of externally funded schemes to the capital programme.

### **4. DELEGATION TO OFFICERS**

- 1. To the Chief Executive and other MT Members respectively the power to implement Council/Committee policies and deal with the day-to-day management of services relevant to this Committee, including the discharge of all functions of the Council, except for those which are identified above as reserved for determination by the Council, Committee or Sub-Committee.
- 2. The officers referred to in 1. above have the power in turn to delegate to other officers of their choice, the power to deal on their behalf and in their name with any of the above functions. Such delegation shall be in writing and signed by the relevant MT Member and may contain such limitations or be subject to such conditions as that Officer shall decide.

## **PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE**

### **1. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- A. To be responsible for influencing and controlling development, use of land and the administration of Community Infrastructure Levy funds, including:
- (i) Preparation, adoption and review of the statutory Development Plan, including Local Development Documents.
  - (ii) Administration of Building Control regulations.
  - (iii) Transport issues [and Pollution Control](#).
  - (iv) The determination of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allocation criteria and applications for CIL funding.
  - (v) The setting of CIL budgets and the monitoring of CIL income, expenditure and disbursements to Parish Councils.
- B. Subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive and in consultation with Members in accordance with Standing Order 46 of Part B of the Constitution, to deal exclusively with any matter that also falls within the terms of reference of another Policy Committee / other Policy Committees and to resolve such matters unless reserved for determination by Full Council.

### **2. TO RECOMMEND**

- (i) New policies or changes in policy within the remit of the Committee which would require resources beyond those allocated to the Committee.
- (ii) Financial programmes for overall revenue and capital expenditure as part of the annual budget preparation process.
- (iii) Adoption of Development Plan Documents.
- (iv) Publication of draft Local Plans under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- (v) Changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference.
- (vi) Other matters under the Committee's jurisdiction which, by virtue of statutory provision, must be determined by full Council.

### **3. TO RESOLVE**

- (i) New policies or changes in policy within the remit of the Committee which can be accommodated within the Committee's overall allocation of resources.
- (ii) Preparation and review of Local Development Documents, subject to the publication of draft Local Plans (under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012) having to be recommended to Full Council.
- (iii) Adoption of Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- (iv) Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents.
- (v) Confirmation of Conservation Area designations.
- (vi) Responses to consultations from the government, other authorities, external agencies and other bodies, including transportation related consultations, where they would have a significant impact on the delivery of the Local Plan or on the District's environment.
- (vii) The seeking of planning permission by, or on behalf of, the Council.
- (viii) Approving Local Development Orders, Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.
- (ix) Rents and charges for services, accommodation and land
- (x) Revisions to CIL allocation criteria.
- (xi) CIL allocations upon consideration of applications and associated representations.
- (xii) Addition of externally funded schemes to the capital programme.

### **4. DELEGATION TO OFFICERS**

1. To the Chief Executive and other MT Members the power to implement Council/Committee policies and deal with the day-to-day management of services relevant to this Committee, including the discharge of all functions of the Council, except for those which are identified above as reserved for determination by the Council, Committee or Sub-Committee.
2. To the Chief Executive, the power to agree an application for a Neighbourhood Area to be designated (in cases where the Chief Executive is minded to refuse such an application, the matter will be referred to the Committee for determination).
3. To the Chief Executive (subject to the Chair of the Committee being advised of the actions concerned) the power to agree amendments to the Local

Appendix A: Proposed changes to committee terms of references.

Validation Requirements and associated documents; and to publish these on the Council's website.

4. The Officers named in 1. above have the power in turn to delegate to other officers of their choice, the power to deal on their behalf and in their name with any of the above functions. Such delegation shall be in writing and signed by the relevant MT Member and may contain such limitations or be subject to such conditions as that Officer shall decide.

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## Public Conveniences Engagement

### Community Services Committee – 15 July 2024

Report of: Head of Communities

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Purpose: For information

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Publication status: Open

Wards affected: All

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#### **Executive summary:**

On 13 June 2024, the Committee received a report about the future refurbishment of public conveniences. At that meeting, it was agreed that a public consultation should be carried out to assess the views of the public on the value of public conveniences. However, this was agreed in the absence of information about potential consultation costs, risks and timescales and without establishing and agreeing clear objectives about what exactly residents and stakeholders will be consulted on. It was also agreed in the context of an out-of-date review of public conveniences.

Upon reflection, it is considered that Members of the Committee should be made aware of the budgetary implications, risks and timelines of a public consultation together with the impact a consultation is likely to have on current plans for major repairs and improvements at certain sites.

This report sets out a revised plan to begin engagement to assist with developing future proposals and a strategy for public conveniences in the district without delays to the planned repairs and improvement.

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**This report supports the Council's priority of:** Building a better Council

#### **Contact Officer**

Julie Porter, Head of Communities [jporter@tanridge.gov.uk](mailto:jporter@tanridge.gov.uk)

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## **Recommendation to Committee:**

- A. The Committee's previous decision to proceed with a full public consultation be varied as follows:
- (i) initially, officers arrange engagement sessions with key stakeholders, including relevant Ward Members and Parish Councillors, to obtain their views, ideas and information that will enable a strategy and clear proposals to be developed.
  - (ii) Agree the engagement process in (i) will allow the current planned repairs and improvements to proceed, namely the current works to the facilities on Godstone Green, Whyteleafe, Warlingham Green and works due to commence on the facility in the Ellice Road car park, Oxted later in July.

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## **Reason for recommendations:**

To ensure that a strategy is developed, through engagement with key stakeholders, with a clear set of proposals for the Council's public conveniences. Whilst this strategy is being developed, the significant repairs and improvements planned will continue to ensure that several public conveniences across the District can either stay open or re-open.

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## **Introduction and background**

1. The Committee received a report on the public convenience refurbishment plan at its June 2024 meeting. This included an out-of-date appendix outlining the outcome of a desktop review of public convenience sites which had been carried out in 2022. It is acknowledged that inclusion of that appendix may have detracted from the intended aims of the report which were to update Members about the progress of the public conveniences refurbishment and to propose an approach for prioritising future investment.
2. The Committee agreed for a public consultation to be carried out to assess the views of the public, Parish Councils and Ward Members on all existing public conveniences and their value to the community. However, this was agreed without information on potential consultation costs, risks and timescales and without clarifying consultation methods and objectives.
3. A thorough public consultation exercise can take over 6 months to complete which would include design, implementation, an adequate timescale for responses, analysis of responses, and producing a report with recommendations. Such a timeline could mean delaying the delivery of agreed actions until the start of the 2026/27 financial year.

4. Contractors are currently working on Godstone Green toilets and repairing the roof at Warlingham Green. In addition, work is due to start on the facility in Ellice Road car park, Oxted in July 2024. Delaying the planned repairs and improvements pending the outcome of a public consultation is likely to have unintended consequences such as short/medium term closures if investment is needed. For example, following a recent visit to Whyteleafe toilets the roofing contractor has advised that the roof needs replacing as opposed to repairing. Delays to replacing this roof would add to the short/medium term closures. With sites over 30 years old more closures could be imminent.

### **Potential Consultation Costs**

5. An approximate estimated cost of conducting the consultation would be around £25-30k. This would be for a professional consultant to carry out the work and be commissioned via a procurement framework. As part of the scope the consultant could carry out some footfall analysis.
6. An Online survey carried out in house by our communications team would cost around £1000 for a week's worth of work. This would not include any analysing of the results, which would require additional officer time and cost. An online survey would not form a robust consultation approach on its own.
7. To carry out a footfall exercise (with automated equipment installed) is estimated to cost around £20k plus additional insurance costs since the equipment is often vandalised.
8. Holding engagement workshops with an external facilitator would be approx. £5k plus any expenses. In addition, this would require 5 days work of at least two senior officers, plus any one-to-one meetings.
9. There are no amounts in the 2024/25 Revenue Budget for any of the costs to carry out the consultation or engagement so they would have to come out of the funding available for toilet refurbishment.

### **Risks**

10. The methodology for public consultations must be sufficiently robust to provide meaningful feedback.
11. A public consultation would in effect pause any decisions on public conveniences and delay the planned improvements and investment in the Council's public conveniences estate. This could result in short/medium term closures where works are required.

## **Conclusion**

12. To enable officers to progress with the public toilet refurbishment programme, it is crucial to identify the priorities for investment. At this stage, Members' are requested to allow officers to engage in discussions with key stakeholders to explore and develop a set of proposals for public convenience provision within the constraints of a limited budget.
13. Once the strategy is agreed, should the proposals suggest removal of services or a significant change to the operating model, then consulting on these proposals would be the recommended next step.

## **Key implications**

### **Comments of the Chief Finance Officer**

As noted in the report a potential consultation is estimated to cost between £1k - £30k, plus the opportunity cost of officer time to facilitate the consultation process. There are no funds set aside in the budget for 2024/25 for the external costs.

### **Comments of the Head of Legal Services**

The Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer confirms that there are no legal reasons preventing Members from approving the recommendations in this report.

### **Equality**

An equality impact assessment for all ten public conveniences will be carried out as part of the refurbishment project. Any changes to services will need to ensure that it does not discriminate against any resident or visitor to the District, that may fall into a protected group as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

### **Climate change**

Refurbishing public toilets can have several impacts on climate change, primarily through energy efficiency, water conservation and waste management improvements.

- LED lighting could replace incandescent or fluorescent lights, reducing electricity consumption.
- Upgrading ventilation systems with more energy-efficient models can reduce energy.
- Installing low-flow toilets, urinals and faucets reduces water usage.

- Using recycled, locally-sourced or sustainable materials for construction and refurbishment can reduce the carbon footprint.

### **Appendices**

None

### **Background papers**

None.

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