

## 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 15 July 2024 at 6:00pm.

**PRESENT:** Councillors Shiner (Chair), Black (Vice-Chair), Case, Cline, Evans, Chris Farr, Killick, Mark, Sowambur and Windsor

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councillors Sue Farr, Sayer, Allen and Gray

**ALSO PRESENT (Virtually):** Councillors Lockwood, Pursehouse, Gaffney, Bloore and Chotai

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

#### 68. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2024

These minutes were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

#### 69. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ENGAGEMENT

A report was submitted setting out the budgetary implications, risks and timelines of a public consultation following the Committee's decision (on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2024) to proceed with a consultation "*to assess the views of the public, Parish Councils and Ward Members on all existing public conveniences and their value to the community*". The report set out a revised proposal to begin engagement with key stakeholders.

Various cost alternative estimates were provided in the report, including up to £30k for a comprehensive, externally facilitated public consultation exercise; £20k plus insurance for a footfall exercise with automated equipment; £1k for an online survey undertaken by the in-house consultation team; £5k plus expenses for engagement workshops with an external facilitator. Any such costs would need to be funded from public convenience refurbishment budget.

It was also explained that a thorough consultation exercise could take over six months to complete, which could delay the delivery of much needed refurbishment works. Such works were already scheduled on the facilities at Godstone and Warlingham Greens, with work due to start on the site in Ellice Road car park, Oxted later in the month. Furthermore, a recent survey of the Whyteleafe conveniences had identified the need for a complete roof replacement, a delay to which could result in temporary closure. Similar risks applied to other sites where imminent investment was required.

The report concluded that a strategy, informed via engagement with key stakeholders, for prioritising works within current budgetary constraints was required in the first instance. Should the strategy suggest removal of services, or a significant change to the operating model, consulting on the detailed proposals would be the recommended next step.

Members debated the report and made the following comments:

- it was important that communities were consulted on the future of the public conveniences, especially where there were proposals to remove the service or change the operating model.
- the recommendations provided a pragmatic process for engagement which would not delay the refurbishment work already scheduled.

In response to Member questions, Officers explained:

- stakeholders would be engaged over the next few months. Proposals would be presented to a meeting of the Committee later in the year.
- the level of consultation, if necessary, would be determined by the nature of the proposals.
- the proposals would be based on both views provided during the stakeholder engagement and on available data.
- there would be no change in the plans to start works at Warlingham Green or Ellice Road car park.
- the refurbishment project would be managed through a project plan, which would identify costings.
- there was a wider procurement project that was underway to consider the future delivery of cleaning public conveniences along with other District Council sites.

**RESOLVED** – that 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; and
- (ii) 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 and Warlingham Green and works due to commence on the facility in the Ellice Road car park, Oxted later in July.

Rising 6.45 pm