

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REMOBILISATION UPDATE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the remobilisation of public conveniences (PCs) across Argyll and Bute, and advises of the position as regards a core set remaining open and available over the winter season. These PCs continue to receive a cleaning regime which is greater than that which was in place pre-COVID, as per national guidance.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to:

- 2.1 Note the current position.
- 2.2 Welcome the interest of community partners in running public conveniences.

3.0 DETAIL

Background

- 3.1 In response to the national lockdown in March 2020 the Council closed all of its PCs. Working with other local authorities, SCOTS, COSLA and the Scottish Government, national guidance was developed and published on 27 June. That guidance specified that cleaning arrangements should be enhanced over and above pre-COVID levels, and that specifically this included increased cleaning frequencies.
- 3.2 Amenity Services have been the subject to a number of budget cuts over the last 10 years and resources are now so closely matched to service delivery specifications that there is little, if any resilience within the service to accommodate, in this case, a requirement for additional cleaning. Therefore an increased cleaning regime could not be provided at all PCs without significant additional costs and/or an unacceptable reduction in other services. On 2nd July the Leadership Group agreed to the phased re-opening of PCs between 3rd and 15th July which saw 35 of the Council's 57* facilities reopen. .
- 3.3 A report on public convenience remobilisation was considered by the BCC committee on 13th August. That report highlighted an estimated additional expenditure to 30th July of just over £25,000 and an estimated ongoing monthly

expenditure of just over £10,000. The BCC agreed to keep the 34* open until the end of October (coinciding with the main tourism season) then revert to only a core set that remain open and can be managed [to the enhanced cleaning arrangements] within the normal budget.

- 3.4 It is important to note that those toilets which have not re-opened have not been permanently closed. Rather they have only remained closed because the resources are not available to re-open them and provide enhanced cleaning.

Current position

- 3.5 The current position is that 31 [30 Council and one partnership] PCs can remain open within the normal budget, which sees four close from the original 34 which re-opened. In continuing to service these PCs to the COVID standards there will continue to be a reduction in other services such as street cleansing. There will be the need to pay some staff overtime mainly in the Lorn area, but this is expected to be able to be absorbed within existing service budgets e.g. this will not incur an overspend.

- 3.6 The position is better than expected. Principally this is because there have been small savings in payments to external contractors for those PCs which are closed, in vacancies and because the consumables [materials e.g soap, hand sanitiser] budget has not seen the predicted pressure, likely because of lesser use than predicted and because of bulk-buying materials at more favourable rates.

- 3.7 Over and above the PCs remobilised in July, one community partnership is now in place and there are discussions are ongoing in another seven areas which may allow additional facilities to re-open at no cost to/resource commitment for the Council.

- 3.8 Individual PC detail is available in the following table:

Area	PC	Open	Partnership discussions [new]	Close 31 Oct	Not reopened
Mid Argyll	Inveraray	Open			
	Lochgilphead	Open			
	Tarbert	Open			
	Ardrishaig	Open			
	Kilmartin		Partnership discussions		Not reopened
	Crinan		Partnership discussions		Not reopened
	Tayvallich		Partnership discussions		Not reopened
Kintyre	Machrihanish				Not reopened
	Southend				Not reopened
	Bolgam St	Open			
	Pensioner's Row	Open			
	Gigha				Not reopened
	Carradale		Partnership discussions		Not reopened
	Islay	Bowmore	Open		
Bridgend					Not reopened
Port Ellen		Open			
Port Askaig		Open			
Feolin		Open			

	Craighouse				
	Bruichladdich				
	Portnahaven				
Lorn	Ganavan				
	North Pier				
	Ellenabeich				
	Port Appin				
	Cuan Ferry				
	North Lismore				
	South Lismore				
	Taynuilt				
	Pulpit Hill				
	Mull	Craignure			
Bunessan					
Calgary		New partnership			
Fionnphort					
Iona					
Salen					
Ulva					
Tiree	Scaranish				
Coll	Middle Pier				
Bute	Rothesay Pier (terminal)				
	Port Bannatyne				
	High Street				
	Chapel Hill				
	Kilchattan Bay				
Cowal	Glenmorag				
	Kames				
	Tighnabraich				
	Sandy Beach				
	Colintraive				
	Sandbank				
	Lochgoilhead				
	Riverside				
	Carrick				
	Dunoon Ferry Terminal				
Lomond	Helensburgh Pier				
	Rhu				
	Kilcreggan Pier				
TOTAL		30 Council; 1 partnership	7	4	22

3.9 The national guidance on enhanced cleaning remains in place and there remains no longstop date. Given the general picture across Scotland it seems unlikely that the guidance will change in the short-term to medium-term, therefore the above is likely to remain the service standard for some time. In the unlikely event that there is an update to that guidance and cleaning standards reduce to the extent that facilities can be re-opened within existing resources then they will be, with any updates circulated to members in a briefing note in advance.

*The previously reported plan had Lochgoilhead noted twice, and also included Campbeltown Old Quay toilet among 35 to re-open. The latter facility is primarily for fishermen so does not appear in this list, rather it should be considered as a customer toilet. The list therefore shows 57 publicly available facilities.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Council has now reverted to a core set of 31 open PCs [30 Council and one partnership] which are being managed within existing service budgets. Discussions are ongoing in seven areas about community partnerships which could allow further facilities to reopen. Short of any update to the national guidance this is likely to remain the position for the remainder of this financial year at least.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Policy – this report summarises previously agreed [temporary] changes to the public convenience service as a result of COVID
- 5.2 Financial – the core set of 31 can be managed within existing service budgets.
- 5.3 Legal – the Council has no statutory requirement to provide PCs
- 5.4 HR – none
- 5.5 Fairer Scotland Duty:
 - 5.5.1 Equalities - protected characteristics – none known
 - 5.5.2 Socio-economic Duty – none known
 - 5.5.3 Islands – none known
- 5.6 Risk – none known
- 5.7 Customer Service - the remobilisation of PCs provides a service for customers and is partly in response to customer demand. There has not been a significant increase in complaints as a result of the revised service provision.

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