

REPORT TO FORMARTINE AREA COMMITTEE – 22 AUGUST 2017

REVIEW OF PUBLIC TOILET PROVISION IN TURRIFF

1 Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

- 1.1 **Provide comments to Business Services Committee on the opportunity to replace the public convenience in the Turriff High Street public car park with the site at the Haughs as the permanent public convenience site for Turriff.**

2 Background/Discussion

- 2.1 The Infrastructure Services Committee, which was the appropriate Service and Policy Committee at that time, approved a review of the Public Convenience Strategy in January 2016. The Strategy promoted the focus of facilities on major transportation and tourist routes. This Strategy also included the closure of 9 low use and/or poor condition conveniences of which the site at Turriff Haughs was one. The site at the High Street public car park in Turriff was to remain as the only public convenience site in Turriff.
- 2.2 The Turriff Community Council, following a recent public consultation exercise, have expressed the desire of the community to retain the Haughs site as the preferred site for Turriff. This site had been a seasonal site and open for 6 months each year ending at the end of September each year.
- 2.3 There is local desire to develop and enhance the wider Haughs area as a recreation, tourist and event related space. To open this as a permanent site would require the closure of the High Street site which would then be declared surplus to requirements and would be available for disposal. It is proposed that the Haughs site would remain open 12 months of the year.
- 2.4 The Council operates 50 public conveniences at the moment with a further 19 sites which are comfort partnership arrangements with local businesses and we also have 9 community run sites which the Council supports. Aberdeenshire still has the second highest number of public conveniences in Scotland.
- 2.5 The Council does not have a statutory requirement to provide public toilets. The Service costs £886,000 nett (2016/17) to run, the Public Convenience budget refers (the revised budget figures for 2017/18 is £250,000). With the financial challenges facing both the Service and Council it is still considered appropriate to continually review the level of service provision to allow resources to be focused in those areas where footfall and demand is more evident and prevalent. The cost of maintaining the site at the Haughs, on a 12 month basis is around £8,000 which is very similar to the cost of maintaining the High Street site.

- 2.6 The Service continues to believe it is appropriate to focus attention and resources on a reduced number of improved quality facilities and the accepted Strategy is predicated on a proposal to reduce the number of facilities overall, reduce costs significantly and allow the focus of the remaining resources to increase the quality of the continuing provision particularly on major transport corridors and major tourist routes.
- 2.7 For Members information the views of the Formartine Area Committee in 2016 when it considered the draft Strategy were that:

Facilities that are no longer required, should be available for some form of community benefit; There needs to be consideration of a contingency plan if a Comfort Partnerships failed after current facilities were no longer available; it was noted that there is uneven coverage of facilities available across Aberdeenshire with a lack of uniform provision, Comfort Partnerships should only be set up within well established businesses; consideration should be given for toilet attendants to be given additional duties, for example litter picking or weeding in the vicinity; Consideration should be given to providing facilities within the Transport Hub at Fyvie, and community associations or groups should be given the opportunity to take over the running of facilities within their communities.

- 2.8 Subsequent to the Infrastructure Services Committee considering the Public Convenience Strategy the Property & Facilities Management Service transferred to Business Services. This Policy Committee is now the appropriate locus to consider any issues arising from the Strategy.
- 2.9 The Head of Finance and Monitoring Officer within Business Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report. Their comments have been incorporated within the report and they are satisfied that the report complies with the Scheme of Governance and relevant legislation.

3 Scheme of Governance

- 3.1 The Formartine Area Committee is able to take a decision on this item in terms of Section B.1.2 of the List of Committee Powers in Part 2A of the Scheme of Governance which allows for the views of the Committee to be expressed.

4 Equalities, Staffing and Financial Implications

- 4.1 An equality impact is not required because its purpose is to inform Committee of a proposed change of location of the toilet site and does not have a differential impact on anyone with any of the protected characteristics.
- 4.2 There are no specific staffing or financial implications arising from this report.

Ritchie Johnson
Director of Business Services