

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 31 March 2021

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

---

**Request for additional budget for enhanced Covid secure public toilet cleaning until restrictions lift.**

**Report summary:**

Request for additional budget of **£19,854** to extend the enhanced cleaning of public toilets from 1 April to the 21 June 2021.

Request a further contingency budget of **£51,308** to provide 6 months of enhanced cleaning of public toilets from the 21 June 2021 to the 31 December 2021 if required.

**Is the proposed decision in accordance with:**

Budget Yes  No

Policy Framework Yes  No

**Recommendation:**

That Cabinet recommend to Council the approval of £71,162 of additional budget. This includes £19,854 to cover enhanced public toilet cleaning from the 1<sup>st</sup> of April to the 21 June 2021 and a further £51,308 contingency budget to potentially extend this enhanced cleaning from the 21 June 2021 to the 31 December 2021 if required due to a continuation of government restrictions or advice.

**Reason for recommendation:**

Due to continued Covid-19 secure guidelines and site specific risk assessments, enhanced cleaning is still required of our public toilets, covering the period 1 April until the 21 June 2021 in line with the Government's roadmap and steps of restriction easing.

On the 23 March 2020 public toilets were closed across the district in response to the covid-19 pandemic. 10 Category-A toilets were re-opened on the 22 May 2020 with enhanced cleaning implemented between 8am-4pm within existing budget and resources.

On the 18 June 2020 Cabinet approved a 9 month budget of £76,962 which allowed Streetscene to open an additional 4 toilets with enhanced cleaning and extend the opening times for all 14 toilets from 8am-8pm from the 29 June -30 September and from 8am -7pm from 1 October 2020 to 31 March 2021.

Now we are coming to the end of that agreed budgetary period it is recommended to continue with the enhanced cleaning of our public toilets until the 21 June 2021 at the earliest, in line with the phased ending of government restrictions.

Further to this it is recommended that a £51,308 contingency budget should be set aside, should government restrictions or guidance extend beyond June 21<sup>st</sup> to cover an additional 6 months enhanced cleaning up to 31 December 2021.

Officer: Tom Wood – Deputy Operations Manager [twood@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:twood@eastdevon.gov.uk) Andrew Hancock – Service Lead StreetScene [ahancock@eastdevon.gov.uk](mailto:ahancock@eastdevon.gov.uk) 01395 571611

---

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergencies
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Culture, Tourism, Leisure and Sport
- Democracy and Transparency
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities

### **Equalities impact Medium**

We received complaints in the summer of 2020 about only having 14 toilets open across the district and the difficulties this poses for certain groups who need access. In response to this demand we have managed to open another 5 facilities, either within existing resource or through funding from Town councils (toilets currently open listed below in main report).

The 19 toilet sites currently open do give access to a public toilet within opening hours of 08:00-19:00. The proposal will see these facilities continue to be open from 8am -8pm 7 days a week from the 1 April until the 21 June 2021. With more shops and services re-opening from Monday the 12 April the availability of these toilets becomes important so that it does not impact negatively on protected groups and the wider public.

### **Climate change Low Impact**

**Risk:** Medium Risk; The risk of not continuing with the enhanced cleaning of the public toilets is twofold, one of public health and two of public dissatisfaction as the government guidance is clear on the measures needed as is the risk assessments we have carried out for each toilet block (see link in background information). There is a risk in reverting to pre Covid-19 cleaning regimes which are not to the standards we believe are reasonable and required given the guidance below; *[Public toilets, portable toilets and toilets inside premises should be kept open and carefully managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Steps that will usually be needed: Using signs and posters to build awareness of good handwashing technique, the need to increase handwashing frequency and to avoid touching your face, and to cough or sneeze into a tissue which is binned safely, or into your arm if a tissue is not available. Consider the use of social distancing marking in areas where queues normally form, and the adoption of a limited entry approach, with one in, one out (whilst avoiding the creation of additional bottlenecks). To enable good hand hygiene consider making hand sanitiser available on entry to toilets where safe and practical, and ensure suitable handwashing facilities including running water and liquid soap and suitable options for drying (either paper towels or hand driers) are available. Setting clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets, with increased frequency of cleaning in line with usage. Use normal cleaning products, paying attention to frequently hand touched surfaces, and consider use of disposable cloths or paper roll to clean all hard surfaces. Keep the facilities well ventilated, for example by fixing doors open where appropriate. Special care should be taken for cleaning of portable toilets and larger toilet blocks. Putting up a visible cleaning schedule can keep it up to date and visible. Providing more waste facilities and more frequent rubbish collection.]*

## Links to background information

- [Cabinet Report – Reinstating Streetscene seasonal resource and budget](#)
- [Summer 2021 Toilet Opening Options](#)
- [Risk Assessment Covid – Public Toilets 2021](#)

## Link to [Council Plan](#):

Priorities (check which apply)

- Outstanding Place and Environment
- Outstanding Homes and Communities
- Outstanding Economic Growth, Productivity, and Prosperity
- Outstanding Council and Council Services

---

## Report in full

Proposal -1<sup>st</sup> April – 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021 – **An additional budget of £19,854 is required** to extend the enhanced cleaning of all toilet sites (listed below) with opening times from 8am until 8pm in line with 2020 summer opening hours.

An additional 4 FTE is needed to be able to service these toilets, cleaning 4 times per day until closure at 8pm, 7 days per week. The cost required for this would be £34,428 however, there is an anticipated underspend of circa £14,574 from the original £76,962 budget which can be carried over leaving the £19,854 required.

Over the last 9 months we have received many compliments on the cleanliness of our toilets across the district by providing safe and hygienic facilities during the pandemic. The enhanced cleaning has correlated with a reduction in complaints and reactive maintenance and repair, meaning less officer and staff downtime and an improved resident and visitor experience. There may be less acceptance if and when we resort back to cleaning the toilets once or twice a day at the end of the pandemic, leading to a rise in complaints and issues.

## List of Toilets Currently Open

### East

1. Connaught Gardens – Sidmouth
2. Market Place - Sidmouth
3. Triangle – Sidmouth
4. Arches - Sidmouth (Sidmouth Town Council facility and funded)
5. West Street Car Park – Axminster
6. Jubilee Gardens – Beer
7. King Street – Honiton
8. West Walk – Seaton
9. Harbour Road - Seaton
10. Dolphin Street car park - Colyton – (Disabled toilet)
11. Seaton Wetlands – Seaton (cleaned jointly with Countryside Services)

## West

12. Foxholes Car Park, Exmouth
13. Magnolia Centre, Exmouth
14. Manor Gardens, Exmouth
15. Phear Park, Exmouth
16. Queens Drive/Old Lifeboat, Exmouth
17. Steamer Steps - Budleigh Salterton (1<sup>st</sup> April)
18. East End (Lime Kiln) -Budleigh Salterton
19. Bus / Train Station - Exmouth (Exmouth Town Council funded)

## Contingency Proposal

Allocate a further contingency budget of £51,308 to provide 6 months of enhanced cleaning of the public toilets from the 21 June 2021 to the 31 December 2021 if there is a continuation of government covid-19 restrictions or guidance. This would provide toilet opening with enhanced cleaning, 8am-8pm from 21 June – 30 September and then 8am-7pm from 1 October to 31 December 2021. The lower winter footfall, coupled with the earlier closing time would mean 3 cleans a day per block would be sufficient to maintain a high level of hygiene.

## Public toilet review and opening of additional sites

As it stands currently we can't open additional public toilet sites without further funding (which we haven't requested). Whilst the toilet sites we have open are not the full number of sites we had before the pandemic, they are providing access for most to public toilets without large queues or unreasonably long journeys between open sites.

The longer term review of public toilet provision, along with costing for investment in our toilet stock, refurbishment and covid/hygiene specific building adaption is being progressed and will come to Cabinet in the next few months.

---

## **Financial implications:**

The Council in setting the 2021/22 budget created an unallocated budget of £1.316m funded from one off grants provided by Government to support additional expenditure as result of Covid and other service pressures where exact costs were unknown but clear risks were identified. In approving this recommendation Council will be allocating part of this budget to this specific purpose which is in lie with its intended use. Of the total budget sum of £1.316m to date areas identified for allocation are: Discretionary Hardship Fund £100k, Mental Health Resource £50k, Queens Drive Open Space £19k and now this request of £71k. The most significant likely risk requiring budget allocation from this sum will be additional subsidy for LED for which details are still to be confirmed.

## **Legal implications:**

Provision of toilets is a discretionary service and so it is acceptable for choices to be made about which ones to provide or not to open them all. However, where they are provided they must be at an acceptable and safe standard so as to comply with our responsibilities in terms of our duty of care to users.