

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: CROSS SERVICES ISSUES GROUP

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE SERVICE

FROM: ENGINEERING/LEISURE AND AMENITIES

1.0 **Background**

In May 1992, Environmental Health and Control Committee considered a report from the Engineer and Surveyor on a review of the public convenience service as operated by his Department. Within the report, there was an in-depth examination of the provision operation and the management of the facilities. It also set out the perceived aims and objectives for the service over the next decade.

There were at that time 26 blocks operated by the Council within town centres and park areas all managed by the Engineer and Surveyor's Department. Many of these blocks were in a poor state of repair with only basic facilities. These original 26 blocks and their history are listed at Appendix A.

Cleaning of the blocks was originally carried out under contract by Warwick Services but poor quality and inefficiency led to the contract being retendered and won by a private contractor, Taylorplan Services.

A further report was presented to Committee in July 1992 on the implementation programme following the acceptance of the recommendations in the original review. A refurbishment programme was agreed with works to bring the blocks into a basic standard financed from Revenue Budgets, and those to a full criteria of disabled/baby changing facilities through Capital monies over a five-year period.

In addition at that time the Amenities Department had responsibility for public conveniences at its own facilities, including those at Bromehall Lane, Lapworth, Edmondscote Track and the two cemeteries at Kenilworth and Warwick. These were not included in the 1982 review by the Engineer and Surveyor.

2.0 **Division of Responsibility**

Early in 1993, as part of the budget savings exercise, a saving of £40,000 was identified to be made from within the public conveniences cleaning budget. The cost of cleaning all the blocks at that time was in the region of £80,000. In January 1993, a joint report from the Engineer and Surveyor and the Amenities Officer went to the respective committees identifying how the saving could be made.

In essence, the savings made by Engineer and Surveyor were actioned by closing down old and unused blocks and by Amenities in using in-house and facility staff to clean at a cheaper rate. As a consequence, responsibility for those facilities within the Parks and Leisure facilities transferred to the Amenities Department.

A further comprehensive review of the service was carried out in November 1994 in which further closures were identified. A more definitive refurbishment programme was agreed to ensure that the remaining facilities were of a good standard and comparable to private facilities such as those at Royal Priors and Regency Arcade.

3.0 **Current Situation**

Since that time, Crown Way, Brunswick Street and Abbey End facilities have been 'rebuilt', Covent Garden and Market Place refurbished to include baby changing facilities and a new block built in Pageant Gardens, Warwick. New facilities have been included within the Victoria Bowls Pavilion, the tennis/cricket pavilions at Victoria Park, the Eagle recreation pavilion and the Royal Pump Rooms. The block at Jephson Gardens has been rebuilt and those facilities at St. Nicholas Park, Newbold Comyn Sports Ground and Myton Fields have been refurbished to include disabled access and where appropriate baby-changing facilities. Money for all these works and the continuing revenue budgets are covered by Health and Control for those under Engineering and by Leisure for those managed by Leisure & Amenities.

A full list of facilities is at Appendix B, and a breakdown of the costs of both Engineering and Leisure of the provision of this service is at Appendix C. The costs of the service managed by Engineering are allocated to a specific budget head for Public conveniences. Those for Leisure are not so easy to identify because they are included in several budget heads depending on the location of the facility.

4.0 **Cleansing and Maintenance**

The fundamental review of Engineering looked again at the provision, maintenance and cleansing of the 10 facilities under Engineering's management, namely -
Brunswick Street/ Covent Garden MSCP/ Crown Way/ Packington Place/ Regent Grove/
St Peters MSCP/ Pageant Gardens/ Market Place/ Abbey End/ Talisman Square.

The cleansing and maintenance are carried out by Contract. The cleansing by Serviceteam at a cost of £67,200 per annum forms part of a larger contract including car park cleaning and release of vehicles from the car parks, and the general maintenance by D Bennett and Son. Major repairs are carried out in conjunction with Property Section.

The 13 public conveniences under the management of Leisure and Amenities are cleaned by sub-contractors on behalf of Glendale, the Council's grounds maintenance contractor, at a cost of £27,937 pa. The 3 public conveniences attached to the leisure facilities at Abbey Fields, Castle Farm and Newbold Comyn Pavilion are cleaned by staff as part of the Sports and Leisure Contract at a cost of £10,000. Those at the 2 cemeteries are cleaned by Glendale at a cost of £648.80p and at Eagle Recreation Ground at a cost of £1361.41pa.

The Royal Spa Centre and the main leisure centre buildings are cleaned by in-house staff,

with those at the Royal Pump Rooms cleaned by contractors at a cost of £6,000 pa. (This figure covers other cleaning duties as well). Maintenance other than minor repairs is carried out by Contractors organised through the Council's Property Business Unit.

5.0 **Opening Times and Cleansing Frequencies**

Facilities under the management of the Engineering Business Unit are open from 8am until 8pm Monday -Sunday, 365 days per year. Some facilities are open 24hours. They are all cleaned twice daily throughout the year, and three times in certain busy locations during the months April to September.

Those under the management of Leisure are open in the main from 8am to 8pm during the summer months and 8am to 5pm during the winter months. Those attached to individual facilities open and close in line with those facilities.

6.0 **Options**

There are four possible options for the management of the public convenience service within Warwick District Council's area. These are:- (i) Status Quo, (ii) Management of all facilities by Engineering (iii) Management of all the facilities by Leisure and (iv) Management of services in the public realm.

(i) Status Quo

Those facilities under the management of Engineering service the general public ie: local residents, shoppers, visitors, and workers and in the main tend to be sited within the street environment. In addition those facilities at Covent Garden and St. Peter's multi-storey car parks serve visitors to those car parks which also come under the management of Engineering. The opening times and cleansing regimes are therefore geared around the service to the general public. Signs at each location inform the public who is responsible for management of the facilities and offers a contact number for comments and complaints.

Those facilities under the management of Leisure in the main serve visitors to those facilities operated by Leisure on behalf of the Council. As a consequence, the cleansing regimes and opening times are more flexible to meet the needs of user throughput at any time.

Advantages

Both business Units have an in-depth knowledge of their own facilities and likely events which may affect provision of facilities and the need to enhance provision at certain times to meet specific requirements. There is also the ability to respond quickly to individual customers based on their knowledge and experience in running the facilities. Since there are two cleansing contractors employed should there be a problem with one, cover could be provided by the other for specific events.

Disadvantages

Split in management of operation could confuse the public. Suitable signing at each

location should alleviate this.

There may be a saving in cost if one contractor was employed. However this could be outweighed if the contract was then of such a size that one member of staff would need to be allocated to manage it. Currently staffing provision within each business unit is contained alongside other duties.

Control of expenditure split between two Committees

(ii) Management of all Facilities by Engineering.

This situation would take us back to pre 1994 days when the whole service was under the management of the then Engineer and Surveyor and under the jurisdiction of Health and Control Committee.

Advantages

All the cleansing would be carried out by one contractor to a uniform specification.

Provision of funding would be under one Committee.

One Business Unit and designated officer would have overall responsibility

Strategy for the service would be uniform

Disadvantages

The uniformity of the contract could be affected by any flexibility required for the seasonal openings in the parks and for the flexibility of opening times at those facilities adjacent to the leisure centres etc.

This could mean increased costs.

Most of the Leisure facilities are an integral part of a wider facility and are therefore serviced and managed alongside that main facility.

The provision of the service would require a full-time officer to manage not only the cleansing contract but any repair and maintenance requirements not covered by Property BU and to ensure all performance indicators were met.

(iii) Management of all Public Conveniences by Leisure

Many of the comments in (ii) are relevant.

Advantages

As in (ii)

Control of finances would fall to Leisure Committee

Disadvantages

The cleansing contract currently managed by Engineering includes cleansing car parks and operating the out of hours car parks locking service and releasing the public from locked car parks. This element of the contract would need to remain with Engineering since there are operational issues in deciding how to manage these items. It may be rendered unviable without the Public Conveniences element within it.

The public conveniences at the multi-storeys are an integral part of the facility and need to be managed as such

Again a full time officer would be required.

(iv) Management of all the facilities by a 'Public Realm' Business Unit

This was a suggestion put forward as part of the fundamental review on Engineering last year. It was recognised that the diversity of services carried out by several Business units often impacted on each other.

Advantages

All services within the public realm would be treated equitably. Preferences of individual Business units to operate and manage individual services to different specifications would have to be addressed.

The users would have one point of contact for the service.

One Committee would consider the provision of the service.

Complaints on several issues could be considered and responded to by one BU.
economies of scale

Disadvantages

The specialism contained within each business unit may disappear.

The cleaning contract for those facilities within Leisure are an integral part of the Grounds Maintenance contract, which has a possible five years to run.
Those within the Sports & Leisure Contract would be difficult to operate in view of the

tie up between all the operations.

The contract for those run by Engineering also covers car park cleansing.

7.0 **Summary**

Four options have been put forward for Members consideration. There is merit in all the four options and there are disadvantages and these have been identified. Costings show that there are financial implications in all of the options and at this time change for change's sake may not be a viable or sustainable option.

There are no particular benefits from putting the whole service under either the Engineering or Leisure Business Units at this time.

The option for an all embracing 'public realm' business unit is an interesting concept and one which may appeal as a panacea to those complaints from our customers that they do not know who to talk to within the organisation. This may be an issue which has wider-reaching areas other than the public convenience service and should not perhaps be considered in isolation.

In view of the modernisation agenda the way forward may be to stay with the current arrangements for the present time.

Jackie Webb
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Appendix A
Area

	At May 1992 Location	July 1992 Proposed Actions	Refurbishment Programme	1993 Position in	1995/6 Position in	Current Position
Leamington Spa	Adelaide Road	To be demolished	-	Demolished (1994)	Demolished	-
	Beauchamp Road	Retain	94 / 95 (partial rev)	Closed (Demolished 1994)	Demolished	-
	Brunswick Street	Demolished (not agreed by H & C Comm)	-	Closed	To be refurbished (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Covent Garden (MSCP)	Retain	94 / 95 (partial rev)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Crown Way	Retain	94 / 95 (partial rev)	Open (E & S)	To be refurbished (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Cubbington Road	Demolish	-	Demolish	Demolished	-
	Eagle Recreation Road	Demolish	-	Demolish (1993)	Demolished	-
	Jephson Gardens	Retain	95 / 96 (full-Capital L & A expend)	Transfer to Leisure & Amenities	To be refurbished (L & A)	Open (L & A)
	Newbold Comyn Golf Course	Retain	95 / 96 (partial rev)	Transfer to Leisure & Amenities	Open (L & A)	Open (L & A)
	Newbold Comyn Pavillion	Retain	95 / 96 (partial rev)	Transfer to Leisure & Amenities	Open (L & A)	Open (L & A)
	Packington Place	Retain	95 / 96 (partial rev)	Open (E & S)	Open (L & A)	Open (L & A)
	Pump Room Gardens	Demolish	-	Demolish (1994)	Demolished	-
	Regent Grove	Retain	95 / 96 (partial rev)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	St Peters (MSCP)	Retain	-	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Victoria Park	Retain	97 / 98 (full-Capital (R & A Expend)	Transfer to L & A	To be refurbished (L & A) (Bowls Pavillion)	Open (L & A) (Bowls Pavil'n)

At May 1992

Area	Location	June 1992 Proposed Actions	Refurbishment Programme	1993	Position in 1995/6	Position in	Current Position
Warwick	Castle Hill	Demolish	-		Demolish	Demolished	-
	Castle Street	Retain	-		Retain until Market Place refurbished facility (E & S)	Demolish/New Pageant Gardens (E & S)	- Pageant Gdns Open (E & S)
	Friar Street	Retain	94 / 95 (partial rev)		Close	Demolished	-
	Market Place	Retain	93 / 94 (full-capital H & C Expend)		Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Myton Fields	Retain	96 / 97 (full-capital R & A Expend)		Transfer to (L & A)	Open (L & A)	Open (L & A)
	Saltisford	Demolish	-		Demolish (1994)	Demolished	-
	St Nicholas Park	Retain	95 / 96 (full-capital R & A expend)		Transfer to L & A	To be refurbished (L & A)	Open (E & S)
Kenilworth	Abbey End	Retain	93 / 94 (full-capital H & C Expend)		Closed	To be refurbished (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Abbey Fields	Retain	96 / 74 (full-capital H & C Expend)		Transfer to L & A	To be refurbished (L & A)	Open (L & A)
	Talisman Square	Retain	95 / 96 (partial rev)		Open * (E & S)	Open (E & S)	Open (E & S)
	Castle Green	Demolished	-		Demolish	Demolished	-

* One to be closed, one to be refurbished

Total = 26

**10 (E & S)
7 (L & A)**