

## **Appendix 1**

### **Feasibility of provision of public toilets, vicinity of Piazza Terracina, Exeter Canal Basin**

#### **Introduction**

The following options have been considered for the provision of public sanitary facilities in the Piazza Terracina area of the canal basin. This is an indicative feasibility report; should there be a decision for progressing some form of sanitary facility provision, then a more detailed study would be required.

#### **Provision of a new toilet block**

Assuming a suitable site is located, the capital cost of building a toilet block to the Council's design standards would be in the region of £110,000, (subject to ground conditions and proximity of utility services) with ongoing revenue costs for servicing of £8,500 per annum.

Currently a suitable site has not been identified; however, as the Council owns several sites in the canal basin area it should not be necessary to incur expenditure in acquiring a suitable site. Of course, there may be a longer term cost in relation to restricting the future use and value of any land designated as a site for a toilet block.

The design standard would determine a block providing the following facilities:

- Male provision – 2 urinals, 2 WC, 2 Whb, baby changing table;
- Female provision – 2 WC, 2Whb, baby changing table;
- Disabled person – WC & Whb

An alternative unisex design at a capital cost of approximately £75,000 would include:

- 2 unisex WC with Whb, and baby changing facilities in one;
- 1 disabled facility WC and Whb

Unisex toilets tend to suffer less vandalism and misuse, as they are accessed directly from the street without passing through a lobby. There would be a slightly reduced revenue cost in servicing such a facility, at £7500 p.a.

The revenue costs reflect the annual cost of utilities, consumables, cleansing twice daily, minor maintenance and securing. Larger maintenance items would be at an additional cost.

There is the potential to reduce or substitute the annual servicing cost by closure of a public toilet in another part of the city. In reviewing the potential closure of a public toilet, the following criteria would be considered:

- age and standard of building and facilities;
- proximity of alternative public toilet provision in the locality;
- usage and footfall for facility; and
- potential impact of closure.

#### **Community Toilet Schemes**

Where local shops and businesses open up public access to their toilets and are paid by the council. Prominent signs on the street and in the windows of participating businesses encourage people to use the facilities. Local shops and businesses join voluntarily and stand to benefit from extra trade. This approach can be cheaper for

councils than more traditional council-run facilities. Richmond Upon Thames' community toilet scheme now has 70 participating businesses ensuring clean and safe provision, providing a range of facilities from the early morning to late at night.

Such schemes work best where there are large numbers of participating businesses so that there is a 'critical mass' making publicity and signage effective in order that the general public grow accustomed to seek and use such provision. It is likely that a small scale 'localised' scheme would struggle to work in a worthwhile manner.

There are 5 food businesses in the vicinity that currently have toilet facilities for customers, and that potentially could be participants in any community toilet scheme. Based upon the experience of Richmond-upon-Thames, the average cost per premises is £600 per annum; however, these would be higher in the case of a small-scale localised scheme. Potential considerations and constraints would be:

- the capacity of the toilet provision in any premises to meet the potential footfall of users beyond that provided for customers (premises are required to comply with BS6465 that lays down the ratio of facilities per customer capacity);
- the willingness of owners to participate in any scheme;
- the need to reach a critical mass of participatory premises to encourage users in a vicinity;
- the risk of a participatory premises withdrawing or closing;
- the need to provide suitable signage;
- operation and monitoring of the scheme, which will have a resource implication.

Further research and consultation with prospective owners of premises would be required to progress this option. In addition any such scheme would need to be viewed in the wider sense as a city-wide scheme (in order to achieve critical mass) and as an alternative to operating all of the 27 blocks within the city currently.

### **Conclusion**

A small-scale community toilet scheme is unlikely to provide a localised solution as an alternative to building a toilet block.

Exeter enjoys a high level of public toilet provision per head of population with 27 public toilets within the City. In the vicinity, there are already 5 public toilets within 1 kilometre of Piazza Terracina, and 1 within 500 metres, therefore, the proximity of alternative public provision is good and the need for an additional facility is questionable. Apart from the cost considerations which are substantial, there are no other significant design and build constraints to providing sanitary facilities in the locality.