

REPORT TO: SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Report: 21st September 2026

Officer/Member Preparing Report: Cllr Pete Nowlan

Subject: Review of Public Conveniences in Saltash

1. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the Public Conveniences Working Group and to make recommendations regarding the future provision, management and improvement of public conveniences in Saltash.

The recommendations seek to:

- maintain appropriate public toilet provision across the town;
- respond to concerns regarding vandalism and anti-social behaviour;
- reduce ongoing maintenance and repair costs;
- improve the quality and resilience of the remaining facilities;
- explore alternative forms of provision, including a Community Toilet Scheme; and
- consider opportunities for automated access and resident contribution schemes.

2. Officer's Recommendations

The Working Group recommends that the Services Committee considers the following:

Longstone

Recommendation: Retain and improve.

- Retain the Longstone public conveniences.
- Maintain the current opening hours, aligned as far as practicable with the Services Team's working arrangements.
- Investigate the removal of the two walls immediately in front of the entrance, subject to appropriate consultation and costings.
- Obtain costs for replacing the existing furniture and fittings with more robust, vandal-resistant alternatives.
- Investigate the cost and feasibility of installing **RADAR key and/or pay-as-you-go (PAYG) automated access.**

- Explore external funding opportunities to support the proposed improvements.
- Investigate the feasibility of introducing a **resident toilet access card/scheme**, potentially based on arrangements used by other town councils.

Alexandra Square

Recommendation: Close the existing facility and develop alternative provision.

- Close the Alexandra Square public conveniences.
- Explore the establishment of a **Community Toilet Scheme**, initially with The Railway Pub and potentially the Brunel, subject to agreement and appropriate arrangements.
- Recognise alternative toilet provision within the locality, including the Guildhall, which provides disabled access, and Saltash Railway Station.
- Consider whether the Community Toilet Scheme could subsequently be extended to other appropriate businesses and locations across Saltash.

Belle Vue

Recommendation: Retain and improve.

- Retain the Belle Vue public conveniences due to their central town location and accessibility, including disabled access.
- Obtain costs for replacing existing furniture and fittings with more robust, vandal-resistant alternatives.
- Consider whether any further security or design improvements could reduce the risk of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

Waterside

Recommendation: Retain the public conveniences in the short term, pending the outcome of the ‘Waterside Sheds and Public Conveniences’ feasibility project.

- Investigate whether the existing brick entrance walls could be removed as a relatively low-cost improvement, subject to technical and planning considerations.

- Obtain indicative costs for upgrading furniture and fittings if the facility is likely to remain in its current location for a significant period.
- Establish the likely timescale for any proposed relocation of the public conveniences as part of the Waterside Devolution project before committing to significant expenditure.

3. Background

At the Services Committee meeting held on **30 April 2026**, Minute **10/26/27**, Members received a report from the Town Clerk concerning the management of the Council's public conveniences considering increasing incidents of anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Following consideration of the report, a Working Group was established comprising:

- Cllr Pete Nowlan – Chair
- Cllr Johns
- Cllr Bullock
- Cllr Ashburn

The Working Group considered the Council's current provision across the four public convenience sites in Saltash and examined opportunities to rationalise provision while maintaining appropriate facilities for residents, visitors and those using the town.

The Council currently operates public conveniences at:

1. Longstone
2. Alexandra Square
3. Belle Vue
4. Waterside

The ongoing cost of maintaining and repairing these facilities is understood to exceed **£60,000 per annum**.

The Working Group therefore considered whether the current level of provision represents the most effective use of Council resources, particularly given the cost of maintaining four separate sites and the increasing incidence of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

4. Provision and Standards

The Working Group considered available guidance relating to public toilet provision, including British Standards and information published by organisations within the public toilet sector.

Rather than relying solely on population-based provision, the Working Group considered a range of factors, including:

- the population of Saltash;
- town-centre footfall;
- accessibility;
- proximity of alternative toilet facilities;
- recreational and visitor locations;
- opening hours;
- the needs of residents and visitors;
- the cost of maintaining individual facilities; and
- the potential for alternative community-based provision.

Saltash currently has a relatively high level of public toilet provision for a town of its size. While the town continues to grow, the Working Group considers that there is an opportunity to rationalise provision while investing in and improving the facilities that are retained.

The intention is therefore **not simply to reduce the number of toilets**, but to ensure that the remaining provision is fit for purpose, accessible, resilient and financially sustainable.

5. Review of Individual Locations

5.1 Longstone

Longstone has been identified as the Council's most frequently vandalised public convenience and should therefore be considered a priority for improvement.

The introduction of reduced opening hours has helped to reduce incidents of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. However, this approach also creates an additional operational requirement for the Services Team, as staff are required to open and close the facility.

The Working Group therefore considers that automated access should be investigated as a potential long-term solution.

A **RADAR key/PAYG system** could potentially provide controlled access while reducing the requirement for staff to attend the facility solely for opening and closing.

There may also be an opportunity to introduce a **resident toilet access card**, potentially based on a similar model operated elsewhere. Such a scheme could provide residents with controlled access for a modest annual charge, while contributing towards the ongoing maintenance of the facility.

Further investigation is required into:

- installation costs;
- ongoing maintenance and transaction costs;
- payment arrangements;
- access control;
- eligibility for any resident scheme;
- vandal-resistant furniture and fittings; and
- potential grant or external funding opportunities.

The existing layout also contains areas around the entrance where individuals can potentially remain out of public view. The Working Group therefore recommends investigating whether removal of the two walls in front of the entrance could improve visibility and reduce opportunities for anti-social behaviour.

Alternative toilet provision is also available at locations such as **Saltash Leisure Centre and Saltash Library**, although opening hours and accessibility would need to be considered when assessing overall provision.

5.2 Belle Vue

The Belle Vue public conveniences are centrally located and provide an important facility for residents and visitors.

The facility also provides disabled access, and, for these reasons, the Working Group does not recommend closure.

However, the existing furniture and fittings are vulnerable to damage and recent incidents have reinforced the need for improvements.

The Working Group therefore recommends obtaining costs for the installation of more robust, vandal-resistant furniture and fittings.

Further consideration could also be given to security, visibility and other environmental improvements that may help reduce future incidents.

5.3 Alexandra Square

The Working Group considers Alexandra Square to be the location where closure could be achieved with the least impact on overall provision.

Alternative facilities are available within the surrounding area, including the Guildhall and Saltash Railway Station, although these are subject to their respective opening hours.

Importantly, The Railway Pub has indicated a willingness to participate in a **Community Toilet Scheme**, potentially providing an alternative facility outside the normal operating hours of other nearby locations.

The Working Group recommends that the Council works with The Railway Pub to establish the practical and financial arrangements for such a scheme.

The Brunel could also be approached to determine whether it would be willing to participate.

If successful, the scheme could provide a model for establishing additional community toilet provision elsewhere in Saltash, potentially reducing the need for the Council to operate individual public conveniences in every location.

5.4 Waterside

The future of the Waterside public conveniences needs to be considered alongside the proposed **Waterside Devolution** arrangements.

There is a possibility that the facility may be relocated as part of future changes to the area. If this is the case, significant investment in the existing building may not represent good value for money.

In the short term, however, relatively low-cost improvements could be considered, including investigating the removal of the existing brick entrance walls.

Subject to the expected timescale for any relocation, the Council could also consider upgrading the furniture and fittings.

The Working Group recommends that the Council first establishes a clearer timescale for the Waterside Devolution proposals before committing to significant expenditure at the current site.

6. Future Provision

The Working Group also recognises that Saltash continues to experience housing growth.

As new developments are brought forward, consideration should be given to whether future developments create additional demand for public toilet facilities, particularly in areas away from the existing town centre.

The Council should therefore consider engaging with developers and relevant planning processes where appropriate to ensure that the future needs of residents and visitors are considered.

7. Public Consultation

The Working Group recognised that proposals to change public toilet provision can be sensitive and may generate concern if the reasons for the changes are not clearly communicated.

A short public consultation survey was therefore undertaken to:

- explain the Working Group's proposals;
- seek the views of residents;
- identify concerns regarding proposed changes;
- understand how existing facilities are used; and
- help inform the Committee's final decision.

The consultation results are included at **Appendix A**.

8. Financial Implications

The Council currently spends more than **£60,000 per annum** on the maintenance and repair of its four public convenience sites.

The proposed approach would seek to reduce ongoing expenditure through rationalisation of provision while directing available resources towards improving the facilities that are retained.

Further costings are required for:

- Longstone automated RADAR/PAYG access;
- potential resident toilet access card scheme;
- vandal-resistant furniture and fittings;
- removal of entrance walls at Longstone and Waterside;
- any works required at Belle Vue;
- Community Toilet Scheme arrangements; and
- any other recommended improvements.

No significant capital expenditure should be committed until detailed costs and, where appropriate, funding opportunities have been identified.

9. Conclusion

The Working Group considers that Saltash has an opportunity to review its current public convenience provision and develop a more sustainable approach.

The proposals would retain facilities at **Longstone, Belle Vue and Waterside**, while seeking to close **Alexandra Square** and replace that provision through alternative facilities, including a potential Community Toilet Scheme.

The overall objective is to move towards a smaller number of **better maintained, more robust and more sustainable facilities**, while continuing to provide appropriate access for residents and visitors.

The Working Group recommends that the Services Committee considers the proposals and authorises officers to obtain the necessary costings, investigate funding opportunities and progress discussions regarding alternative provision before any final implementation decisions are made.

In addition, gain permission to complete a SLCC survey being run by DE Montfort University, Open University and Royal College of Art to inform future best guidance for councils in the future.

Report prepared by:

Cllr Pete Nowlan

Saltash Town Council

Date: 21st September 2026

Appendix A – Public Consultation Survey Results

Survey Participation

The consultation received just under 250 responses from Saltash residents.

Age profile:

- 23% under 55
- 77% over 55

This reflects strong engagement from older residents, who are statistically the highest-need users of public toilet facilities.

Most Important & Most Used Toilets

Residents ranked the importance of each site as follows:

1. Waterside
2. Belle Vue
3. Longstone Park
4. Alexandra Square

The most frequently used toilets were Waterside and Belle Vue, confirming their central role in supporting Fore Street, the waterfront, and park-based activity.

Support for Investment

A significant majority (86%) support Saltash Town Council investing in public toilet provision.

This demonstrates clear public backing for maintaining and improving facilities.

Closure of Alexandra Square

A narrow majority (54%) support closure only if alternative provision is available.

This indicates conditional support rather than a mandate for closure, with concerns focused on accessibility, opening hours, and reliability of alternatives such as the Guildhall.

Support for Charging

The majority (62%) support a small charge for toilet use.

Key preferences include:

- Card/contactless payment, not cash
- Charges used specifically to fund maintenance, cleaning, and vandalism prevention
- Protected free access for vulnerable groups (disabled users, RADAR-key holders, OAPs, medical-need users)

Charging remains divisive, but modernised systems receive notable support.

Summary of Public Comments

Public toilets are widely viewed as a fundamental public service essential for:

- Health and medical needs
- Dignity and independence
- Accessibility for older and disabled residents
- Family use, especially young children
- The economic wellbeing of Fore Street and the waterfront

Most respondents strongly oppose closures and emphasise the need for toilets to remain open, safe, clean, and reliably accessible.

Charging is acceptable to many if:

- Modern card-based systems are used
- Vulnerable groups retain free access
- Revenue directly supports maintenance and security

Vandalism is a significant challenge, with strong public backing for:

- CCTV
- Anti-vandal materials
- Improved lighting and monitoring

Interpretation

Survey results should be considered alongside:

- Financial implications (running costs, vandalism repairs, capital investment)
- Operational implications (opening hours, staffing, reliability)
- Accessibility implications (distance between sites, disabled access, transport links)

The consultation demonstrates clear public expectation that Saltash maintains a robust, accessible public toilet network as part of its core community infrastructure.