

To review the amended quote to sub-contract the public conveniences and consider any actions and associated expenditure

Summary:

84/23/24 Services Committee Minutes 12th October 2023:

The Town Clerk provided background information for the suggestion to sub-contract the cleaning of public conveniences.

The Town Clerk reported that working closely with the department has highlighted many inefficiencies, some have been dealt with, however, one that has always been tricky to resolve is the operations of the public toilets.

Difficulties include recruitment and staff currently carrying out the operations at a detriment to other duties and Town Council responsibilities.

Each week the Service Delivery Department loses approximately 15 hours to the grounds / maintenance work due to weekend working to mainly cover the operations of the toilets.

The Town Clerk reminded Members of the various areas of grounds maintenance that the department is responsible for. This includes but is not limited to, two large Cemetery Grounds, Pillmere Estate, town areas, soon to be Victoria Gardens and any future devolution opportunities.

The Town Clerk advised that the loss of hours operating the public toilets could be better utilized during the week covering the areas of responsibility.

Members discussed the cost and operational impact currently being experienced. Members noted that the quotes received will need to be revised due to the decision under minute 82/23/24 to close Longstone Park toilets during the Winter period.

It was proposed by Councillor Gillies, seconded by Councillor Mortimore and **RESOLVED;**

1. To approve in principle to appoint company A to open, clean, and close the Town Council public conveniences 7 days per week totaling 3.5 hours per day in line with the Town Council operational hours, subject to a revised quote being received;
2. To create a new budget code - Public Toilet Commercial Cleaning;
3. To vire £32,000 from 6700 EMF Staff Contingency to Public Toilet Commercial Cleaning to cover associated cost.

It was proposed by Councillor Gillies, seconded by Councillor Mortimore and resolved to **RECOMMEND** to the Personnel Committee to review the staffing implications working with HR Support Consultancy reporting back at a future Services Committee meeting.

60/23/24 Personnel Committee Minutes 26th October 2023:

Members received the public conveniences recommendation from the Services Committee.

The Town Clerk reported that the Service Delivery staff have been included in the potential outsourcing of the public toilet operations and are in support of the Town Council's resolution to date.

The Town Clerk reported that she recognises the importance of the task remaining within relevant staff job descriptions to cover as required or should the outsourcing not be successful.

It was proposed by Councillor Martin seconded by Councillor Miller and **RESOLVED** to delegate to the Town Clerk to undertake the necessary employment law requirements with relevant staff and work with the Service Delivery Manager to ascertain weekend duties ensuring all Town Council services remain covered, reporting back at a future Personnel Committee meeting.

Next Step:

Further to the above Services Committee resolution, attached is a copy of the revised quote.

Please note; whilst the cleaning has reduced during the Winter period due to the closure of Longstone Park toilets, the associated cost has risen by £639.28 for the year 2024-25 due to the increase in the National Minimum Wage.

Company A have advertised the role to see if there is any interest in the potential post.

There is a strong candidate who lives in Saltash with a cleaning background. Ideally Company A would like to recruit a second cleaner as well so that they can split the week. This will also make it easier for cover and prevent cleaner fatigue. However, it is proving difficult to recruit two candidates for this position therefore should Members wish to continue with the sub-contracting of public toilets there could be a possibility during the three month rolling contract that Company A are unable to meet the agreed contract. With that in mind, Company A would credit missed-cleans (point 2 of the T&C's) and the Service Delivery Department would need to cover as required. This would form part of the HR consultation process to protect staff and the Town Council.

I have no major concerns at this stage, relieving some pressure from the SDD is key therefore my professional advice is, it is worth continuing the sub-contracting of the public toilets on a rolling three month contract, to commence at the earliest opportunity subject to recruitment, HR consultations, insurance certificates, risk assessments and method statements.

Budget:

A new budget code was created for 2023-24 - 6531 Public Toilet Commercial Cleaning – available funds £32,000.

There are sufficient funds up to 31st March 2024 to cover the associated fixed monthly charge of £2,275, assuming the contract start date is 1st January 2024 (highly unlikely due to HR consultations yet to take place).

The available budget for 2024-25 is £32,000. To cover the associated cost from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 there would be a budget shortfall of approx £2,971.36.

There is the option at the end of the year to vire the shortfall from 2023-24 budget to 2024-25 budget to cover the associated cost.

Please note; Company A charge based on a payable fixed monthly charge which is calculated as an average of cleans per month over a 3 month period.

Procurement:

Since Covid it has proven difficult for Town and Parish Council's to recruit and sub-contract the operations of the public toilets due to many reasons.

Saltash Town Council has experienced difficulties recruiting due to the public toilet cleaning element of the role. The same applied when seeking quotes.

Due to a combination of barriers should Members wish to proceed with the appointment of Company A, members are asked to suspend Standing Order Section 17/1.1 and Financial Regulations Section 10/10.1.

End of Report
Town Clerk/RFO