

Service Delivery EAB

Public Conveniences Review

Thursday 4th November

Stuart Riddle – Project Lead

1. Outline

The review seeks to explore options 3 and 4 from the approved mandate. This includes the potential removal of grant funding paid to 2 Parish Councils, and a limited number of Guildford Borough Council owned toilets closing or being passed to other organisations. We aim to achieve a revenue savings target of £65k per annum and reduce future capital investments on refurbishments.

The Budget Survey 2021, undertaken by SMSR Research, asked residents to consider Council services in terms of importance, priority, and spending. The survey found that public facilities ranked 9th for all 3 categories, out of the 12 noted services we provide.

The Council has no legal duty to provide public conveniences.

2. Costings

Salaries and on costs	£92k
Overtime	£22k
Operating costs (utilities/consumable)	£35k
Transport	£18k
Maintenance	£19k
Grants	£14k
Overheads	£47k
Business Rates	£8k
Depreciation	£54k
Income	(£16k)
Total Budget	£293k

The £65k savings target will largely come from making one of the toilet cleaner roles redundant. Although one of the toilet cleaner roles will no longer exist, we hope to redeploy the individual into a new role, avoiding redundancy costs.

In order to suitably reduce the current toilet cleaning workload, it is viewed that 4 or 5 facilities will need to be closed, or be passed to another organisation. We can then achieve smaller workload savings by moving the cleaning of all the town centre car park toilets to the Town Centre Team. However, this may just move a budget cost to a different team.

Assuming the highest cost 4 facilities, of those 8 listed below for consideration, we would achieve expenditure savings of £51k.

3. Grant Funding – Ash & Shere

We currently issue grants totalling £14k to Ash and Shere Parish Council's for their toilets. It is acknowledged that removing this funding would result in pressures on their own finances. However, Parish Councils can raise increased funds via their precept, comparatively to other tiers of local Government, due to no referendum principles for all Parish and Town Councils.

The saving target of £65k cannot be met without removing the £14k grant funding paid to these two Parish Councils.

4. Sites to Consider – alphabetical

Site	Reasons	Issues
Allen House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be reused as storage. • Frequent ASB. Cleaners find needles and blood. • Low use compared to other toilets (12th out of 15). • Shopper car park so majority of users will be going to hospitality or shops that have plenty of private provision. • One of the few we have to pay Business Rates for - £1.75k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative usage is limited, no commercial opportunity. • Closure could move ASB to the grounds or elsewhere in the car park.
Bedford Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neighbours the linked Friary Centre and its toilets. • Frequent ASB. Cleaners find needles. • Shopper car park so majority of users will be going to hospitality or shops that have plenty of private provision. • Medium use compared to other toilets (9th out of 15). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The only 24-hour toilet in the Borough. • Alternative usage is limited, no commercial opportunity but can be used for storage by Parking.
Farnham Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second lowest footfall of all out toilets (14th out of 15). • 'Tired and dated' with no baby changing facilities. • Long stay car park but used primarily for commuters. Commuters will either be working nearby in Guildford or going to the train station. • The largest spend on utilities - £2.6k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative usage is limited, no commercial opportunity but can be used for storage.
Onslow Recreation Ground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low footfall (13th out of 15) and least popular Parks toilet. • Poorer condition compared to other Council offerings. • One of the few facilities without disabled or child changing provisions. • Potential for tennis club to take over the toilet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Users of the park and play area may have no other alternative.

Ripley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If Ripley remains open then 5 toilets will be needed, otherwise only 4 may be needed. • Stops small grant funding for the Parish Council to open and close toilets. • Lowest footfall of all our toilets (15th out of 15). • 4th highest budget cost of all toilets - £6.3k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important asset for Ripley Parish during events but this makes it likely they could take it over. • Small building with no real alternative use being viable.
Tunsgate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficult to clean without a strict rota due to Tunsgate barrier and High Street closing to vehicles. • Due to location there are many other locations via private provision. • High possibility Experience Guildford could take it over. • One of the few we have to pay Business Rates for - £1.7k • 3rd highest budget cost of those on this list - £5.9k 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by High Street market traders. • Highest footfall (1st out of 15) due to location. • Limited commercial opportunity due to its small size. • Closest public alternative is Ward Street. Not feasible to close both.
Ward Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong chance of commercial use generating an income. • Surrey CC are looking to include toilets in nearby library. • Of the few that require Business Rates payable it is the most expensive - £3.2k. • The highest depreciation rate at £15k. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recently installed a water fountain. • Used by North Street market traders. • High footfall (3rd out of 15). • Closest public alternative is Tunsgate. Not feasible to close both. • Recent refurbishment and one of the highest quality toilets we provide.
Woodbridge Road	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heavily used by customers of the café. • Potential for cricket club or café to take over toilets. • 4th highest budget spend of those on this list - £5.5k • Large use by commuters walking to Guildford train station, which provides public toilets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High footfall (5th out of 15). • Heavily used by customers of the café. • Recently installed a water fountain.

5. Officer Recommendation

To achieve the needed expenditure savings I recommend that, as part of the consultation, we set out a preference for –

- 1) Allen House, Bedford Road, Ripley and Woodbridge Road to be closed, or passed to another organisation. These 4 locations will allow us to reduce the total workload suitably to make one of the toilet cleaner roles redundant.
- 2) The removal of grant funding from Ash and Shere Parish Councils.

6. Sites not Suggested

Site	Reasons
Burchatt's Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close to Stoke Park's sports facilities. • Close to the larger parking area in Stoke Park. • Home Farm has already been approved for closure. • We believe this is used by a lot of taxi drivers. • Provision supports Green Flag award.
GLive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standalone purpose-built modern toilets with no alternative usage opportunities. • One of the highest quality conveniences we provide. • Shopper car park but further away.
Guildford College & Stoke Park Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2nd highest use toilets in the Borough. More impressive as the facility is not in a town centre high street location. • Next to the playground, mini golf, tennis courts and paddling pool. • No nearby alternative for young children and disabled residents. • Provision supports Green Flag award.
Pop-up Urinal (North Street)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision supports night-time economy and Purple Flag award. • Reduced public urination at night – reduces ASB and cleaning pressure on other Street Scene operations. • One of the most unique provisions in Surrey. The installation made national news.
Shalford Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used as a long stay car park for commuters in the week. The station has no toilet facilities. • Large facility adjacent to changing rooms for sports in the park. • Remote location so commercial opportunities not easily viable. • No nearby alternatives.
Stoughton Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive an income to clean these toilets. Removing this location would have to be approved by third parties and would remove the scale of our operations.
Sutherland Memorial Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used by residents using the playground and playing fields. • Nearby large parking facilities. • No nearby alternative and no real alternative use.
The Mount Cemetery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive an income to clean these toilets. Removing this location would have to be approved by third parties and would remove the scale of our operations.

7. Risks

There will likely be extensive negative feedback from all external stakeholders. There is also some potential for any agreed closures to affect our future bidding to retain our Green Flag and Purple Flag awards.

Any closures could have a negative impact on the number visitors to the Borough in a post COVID world. This made equalities impact very important but does not rule out closures needed for our savings target. As always, we need to ensure the correct balance between the benefit of cost savings and the negative impact on, or perception with, residents.

8. Equality Impact Assessments

We have undertaken equality impact assessments for the 8 public conveniences on the “sites to consider” list found on point 4. As these toilets are the ones we will be going to consultation with, alongside the officer’s recommendation as the preference, we need to ensure any action Guildford Borough Council takes does not discriminate against any resident or visitor that may fall into a protected group as defined in The Equality Act 2010.

The 8 assessments all concluded that the facilities have existed for many years, and although closures would directly affect all regular or potential users of the public toilet, its potential additional negative effect on those in protected groups is indirect. Leaving facilities open purely for one or more protected group is not financially viable given the Council’s financial position.

9. External Stakeholders

At an early-stage some main stakeholders were made aware of this project and the potential implications of the review. However, it was made clear that no decision has yet been made.

Ash, Ripley and Shere Parish Councils have been contacted and made aware of this review, and the potential for facility closures and removal of grant funding. Ash has not yet responded but comments made by Ripley and Shere are attached.

Guildford Action Group noted that public toilets provide an essential service to all, with attention to those with medical conditions, the elderly and those with babies and young children. They suggested increasing car park charges, seeking funding from Parish Councils, sponsorship and charging at the high-quality toilets to raise funds needed to maintain current provision.

Experience Guildford are against the closure of town centre toilets. They note the Ward Street and Tunsgate facilities being used by market traders. Additionally, residents and visitors often choose a destination, or length of stay, based on the convenience and location of public toilets.

10. Next Steps and Milestones

- 1) Executive – Tuesday 4th January
- 2) Public Consultation – 6 weeks starting mid-January 2022
- 3) CMT – TBC in early March 2022
- 4) Following CMT in March 2022 - Place closure notice on chosen toilets, serve notice to utility providers, commence redeployment of affected staff
- 5) Project Close - Friday 1st April (last working day of financial year)

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Results of the Budget Survey 2021, prepared by SMSR Research.

Service	Importance	Priority	Spending	OVR
Services to the elderly and vulnerable	1	1	1	1
Environmental services	2	3	2	2
Public health and safety	3	2	3	3
Economic development, business, jobs, and unemployment	4	4	5	4
Housing services	5	5	4	5
Services for young people	6	6	6	6
Parks and open spaces	7	7	7	7
Leisure centres and physical activities	8	8	8	8
Public facilities	9	9	9	9
Transport and parking	10	10	10	10
Arts and heritage	11	11	11	11
Tourism services	12	12	12	12

Appendix 2 – list of public toilets taken from www.guildford.gov.uk/publictoilets

Site	Baby changing facilities	Disabled toilet
Ward Street	Yes	Yes
Tunsgate	Yes	Yes
Farnham Road (car park)	No	Yes
Bedford Road (car park)	Yes	Yes
The Friary Shopping Centre*	Yes	Yes
Allen House (York Road car park)	Yes	Yes
Woodbridge Road	No	Yes
Shalford Park	Yes	Yes
Onslow Recreation Ground	No	No
Guildford College and Stoke Park Playground	Yes	Yes
Burchatts Farm	No	Yes
Sutherland Memorial Park	No	Yes
Ripley	No	Yes
Stoughton Cemetery	No	No
The Mount Cemetery	No	No
Pop-up urinal (North Street)	No	No
GLive	No	Yes
Shere*		
Ash*		

*Toilets are not looked after by Guildford Borough Council.

Appendix 3 – Ripley Parish Council's response

From: rpc <clerk@ripleyparishcouncil.gov.uk>
Sent: 22 September 2021 13:12
To: Toilet Review <ToiletReview@guildford.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Public Toilets Provision Review

Hi Stuart,

Thank you for offering the council the opportunity to make representations to the Public Toilets Provision Review. The council considered your correspondence at its recent meeting, and makes the following observation:

Ripley has a 68-acre Village Green which is hugely popular with visitors and provides a number of different uses including recreation, sports, play equipment for young people of different ages, and events such as the award winning Ripley farmers' Market. Footfall on The Green is always large, but during the pandemic we have seen a huge increase in visitor numbers as people sought to access open space for exercise and to meet outdoors. The loos on Ripley Green are an essential facility for visitors and the parish council would have grave concerns over environmental health should the conveniences be closed.

The council would appreciate the loos having a refurbishment in order to fix some of the issues (with hand washing equipment, for example).

Thanks again, and I'll be happy to clarify, if needed, the council's position as the Review continues.

Jim Morris
BSc (Hons), PSLCC

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SHERE PARISH COUNCIL - Appendix 4

Suzanne Hoyland
Parish Clerk/RFO
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www.shereparishcouncil.gov.uk

Tanyard Hall
30 Station Road
Gomshall
Guildford
Surrey
GU5 9LF

20th September 2021

Stuart Riddle
Project Lead
Public Toilets Provision Review
Operational and Technical Services
Guildford Borough council

Dear Stuart,

Thank you for consulting Shere Parish Council regarding the review into the grant for the public conveniences in Shere.

Background

The building where the toilets are housed is the Old Fire Station. This is a Grade II listed building in the centre of Shere and was initially leased to the Parish Council in 1977 from Shere Manor Estate and converted to public conveniences. The listed building is important to the character of the village and the AONB. Any repairs or improvements are subject to Listed Building Consent.



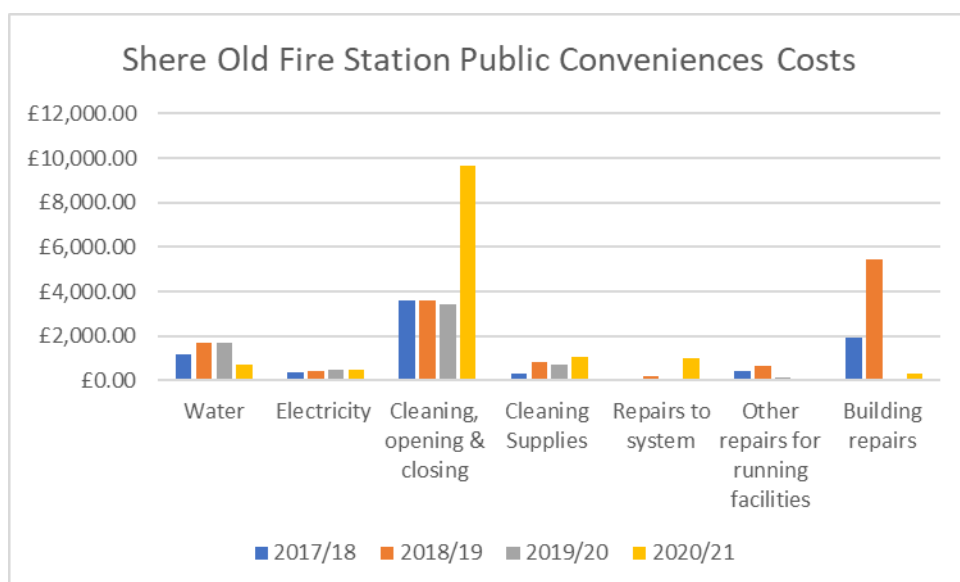
Through the access door to the ladies there is a disabled cubicle on the left and another door to the ladies which has one cubicle. From the ladies there is an access door to the storage room. Each has a sink and a hand dryer. In the gentlemen's conveniences there two urinals, one cubicle, sink and hand dryer. Both also have baby changing facilities.

Over the years the toilets have been redecorated, store room rebuilt and maintained to usable standard but they have not been refurbished in any meaningful way for decades. All facilities need upgrading and bringing up to standard, as soon as possible.

Upkeep

It was argued many years ago that the toilets are for visitors and not for the residents of Shere Parish (four villages and half of Abinger Hammer) or from the surrounding villages. As the Parish is relatively small, no resident is more than approximately five miles from their house and as such rarely uses the conveniences. The precept received from Guildford Borough Council comes from the council tax and is to use for the benefit of the residents and community but at the moment in excess of 10% of the precept (last year 10.16%) is spent on the facilities for visitors this, amounted to £13,195.33 in 2020/21.

Please see breakdown of costs below. You will notice that our cleaning costs have increased significantly.



The current year 2021/22 is predicted to be similar – please see below

Year	Water	Electricity	Cleaning, opening & closing	Cleaning Supplies	Repairs to system	Other repairs for running facilities	Building repairs	Total	Precept	Running facilities % of precept
2021 - to Sept 2021	£486.53	£214.30	£3,750.00	£461.98	£670.99	£320.00	£490.00	£6,393.80	£140,240.00	Predicted to being similar to last year approx. 10%

Visitor numbers have increase exponentially over the last few years. Where it was once just busy weekends, now all car parks and on street parking is fully utilised throughout the week. New businesses such as Hilly’s tearoom, Dabbling Duck and Shere Delights Ice Cream Parlour, have also encouraged more visitors to the village and as a result, Shere is now seen as a tourism destination.

The village is advertised by Visit Guildford as ‘The picturesque route now follows the A25 eastwards passing through firstly **Shere**; widely considered to be one of the most quintessentially English villages in Surrey. It has a central cluster of old houses, a few shops, a tea house, art gallery, two pubs, a Norman church and a museum, with a steam running through the middle. There are also some fantastic examples of Lutyens architecture here, too - quite romantic really. Apparently, he was in love with a local girl and kept coming back to build something else to impress her! It is clear to see why Shere has been used as a location for many films.’

2012 Olympics have encouraged more cyclists to the area and Shere has one of the few public toilets throughout the Surrey Hills. It’s a regular stopping off point for cyclists to use the facilities; both on road and off-road cyclists. Events also take place throughout the year, further encouraging visitors and participants.

Coronavirus Covid-19

During lockdown visitors from outside of the Parish frequented Shere on a regular and increased basis. With no restaurants, cinemas or holidays to entertain, Shere was inundated with visitors. For a while the toilets were shut during the first lockdown. However, it was necessary to reopen for health and safety, as human waste was found around the building and near resident’s houses. One householder was asked by a visitor to use their toilet, as they were visiting from many miles away.

Due to the coronavirus, new cleaners were engaged and it was necessary for the cleaning regime to be doubled, during the height of the virus. With additional use, there have been many more problems with the drainage which

has had to be cleared five times this year already. Previous to the last year, instances where there had been a problem with the drains, was extremely rare.

Furthermore, throughout the pandemic visitors have been calling to ask if the toilets were open, to plan their trip.

Summary

There is no doubt that the toilets in Shere are vital but not for residents, they are vital for visitors. The Parish Council is finding that it is increasingly necessary to pay for works, which should be the responsibility of Guildford Borough Council or Surrey County Council – for example the new recycling bins in Shere and pavement widening in Middle Street, both of which are arguably due to the impact of visitors. It is not possible for the Parish Council to continue to support and serve our residents and community, when so much income is spent on those visiting the village. It has reached critical point with the car park, toilets, environment and traffic.

For many years Alderman Keith Childs (former GBC Councillor and Mayor) argued on the Parish Council's behalf that the toilets are the responsibility of Guildford Borough Council and this is still the case and even more so today.

The Parish Council hopes that you will continue to support running the public conveniences in Shere, for visitors to use.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Suzanne Hoyland
Parish Clerk & RFO

Equality Impact Assessment – Bedford Road toilet

The purpose of an assessment is to understand the impact of the Council's activities* on people from protected groups and to assess whether unlawful discrimination may occur. It also helps to identify key equality issues and highlight opportunities to promote equality across the Council and the community. The assessment should be carried out during the initial stages of the planning process so that any findings can be incorporated into the final proposals and, where appropriate, have a bearing on the outcome.

(*Activity can mean strategy, practice, function, policy, procedure, decision, project or service)

Name of person completing the assessment	Stuart Riddle	Date of assessment	26/11/21
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Name of the proposed activity being assessed	Potential closure of Bedford Road public conveniences	Is this a new or existing activity?	Existing
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Who will implement the activity and who will be responsible for it?	Implementation – Stuart Riddle Responsible – Chris Wheeler
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1. Determining the relevance to equality

What are the aims, objectives, and purpose of the activity?	To review Guildford Borough Council's public conveniences and determine which locations are feasible to close while considering limiting the negative impact on residents and visitors to Guildford Borough.
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Is this a major activity that significantly affects how services or functions are delivered?	Yes, a 25% reduction in Guildford Borough Council's directly provided toilets.	Who will benefit from this activity and how?	Guildford Borough Council via a £65k per year costs saving
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Does it relate to a function that has been identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	Yes, Bedford Road toilets include a disabled toilet and baby changing facilities.	Who are the stakeholders? Does the activity affect employees, service users or the wider community?	Residents and visitors that use Bedford road to access Guildford's workplaces, shops, and hospitality
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Based on the above information, is the activity relevant to equality?

<p>Yes – continue to section 2</p> <p>No – please record your reasons why the activity is not relevant to equality</p>	Yes
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2. Is the proposed activity accessible for all the protected groups listed below? (Consider in what ways the activity might create difficulties or barriers to parts of the workforce, community, or protected groups. How might one or more groups be excluded because of the activity?)			
Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability		No	No access for all individuals as proposed activity is closure.
Race		No	
Gender		No	
Sexual orientation		No	
Age		No	
Religion or belief		No	
Transgender or transsexual		No	
Marriage and civil partnership		No	
Pregnancy or maternity		No	

3. Is it likely the proposed activity will have a negative impact on one or more protected groups?			
Protected groups	Yes	No	Evidence
Disability	Yes		Closure of disabled toilets and closest toilets if Bedford Road car park used. The closest facility is not Council provided and is in the Friary Shopping Centre. Although, this facility also has disabled toilets it is not 24 hours like Bedford Road.
Race		No	Closure will affect all races equally – the next nearest facility has the same provisions as Bedford Road.
Gender	Yes		Bedford Road is 24 hours and the nearby, identical provision, in the Friary Shopping Centre closes at 6pm leaving the only late-night alternative as pop-up urinals, where usage is preferred by males, in North Street. However, the average use of the female toilets at Bedford Road toilets is zero between 6pm and 7am (2018 public toilet user count).
Sexual orientation		No	Closure will affect all sexual orientations equally - the next nearest facility has the same provisions as Bedford Road.
Age	Yes		Older residents and visitors have an increased chance of urinary incontinence.
Religion or belief		No	Closure will affect all religions and beliefs equally - the next nearest facility has the same provisions as Bedford Road. There are other public conveniences closer to Guildford's places of worship.

Transgender or transsexual		No	Closure will affect all sexual orientations equally - the next nearest facility has the same provisions as Bedford Road.
Marriage and civil partnership		No	Closure will affect all individuals, no matter marital or partnership status equally – the next nearest facility has the same provisions as Bedford Road.
Pregnancy or maternity	Yes		Closure of baby changing facilities and closest toilets if Bedford Road car park used. Pregnant women have an increased chance of urinary incontinence. The closest facility is not Council provided and is in the Friary Shopping Centre. Although, this facility also has baby changing facilities it is not 24 hours like Bedford Road.

4. What action can be taken to address any negative impact? What measures could be included to promote a positive impact? (*Consider whether it is possible to amend or change the activity due to the likely adverse impact whilst still delivering the objective. Is it possible to consider a different activity which still achieves the aims but avoids an adverse impact? Is an action plan required to reduce any actual or potential adverse impact?*)

The negative impact affects all individuals. The closure of Bedford Road toilets would have a greater negative impact on some protected groups, as outlined in part 3, but it is considered this impact is indirect.

There is no way to achieve a positive impact while looking to fulfil the approved mandate.

5. What are the main sources of evidence that have been used to identify the likely impacts on the different protected groups? (*Use relevant quantitative and qualitative information that is available from sources such as previous EIA's, engagement with staff and service users, equality monitoring, complaints, comments, customer equality profiles, feedback, issues raised at previous consultations and known inequalities*).

In January 2021 there was a Budget Survey published, undertaken by SMSR research, and it asked residents to consider Council services in terms of importance, priority, and spending. The survey found that public facilities ranked 9th for all 3 categories, out of the 12 noted services Guildford Borough Council provides. The survey has a mix of responses from all age groups, BAME, transgender and around 10% of all responders identified as having a disability. However, the report does not separate out responses from those in protected groups and the results leading to the ranking are averages.

Usage numbers of male and female toilets are contained in a report by Healthmatic. The report, completed in 2018, was a user survey of all Guildford Borough Council provided facilities and could show the number of users per hour.

6. Has any consultation been carried out (e.g., with employees, service users or the wider community)? Please provide details

Not yet – a public consultation on the closure of public conveniences is due in January 2022.

7. Is further consultation required as a result of any negative impact identified? If so, what groups do you intend to engage with and how?

All groups will be encouraged to respond to the public convenience consultation starting in January 2022. Charities, Government support services, specialists and resident groups will be encouraged to engage. This will include groups like Guildford Access Group, Surrey Coalition, Age UK, Outline Surrey, and the local NHS trust.

8. Conclusion of Equality Impact Assessment - please summarise your findings

The potential closure of Bedford Road toilets is part of an approved mandate to generate cost savings of £65k per annum. This facility has existed for many years and although its closure would directly affect all regular or potential users of this public toilet, its potential additional negative effect on those in protected groups is indirect. Leaving facilities open purely for one or more protected group is not financially viable given the Council's financial position.

Name of person completing assessment: Stuart Riddle

Date: 26th October 2021

Job title: Project Lead - Public Conveniences Review

Senior manager name: Chris Wheeler

Date: