

## **Wiltshire Council**

### **Cabinet**

**15 March 2016**

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### **Statement and Question from Cllr Chris Caswill**

#### **Public Conveniences**

##### **Statement**

I welcome these papers and the opportunity for some at least of public toilets being kept open, where town and parish councils have not agreed to take them on. I hope the Cabinet will at least agree to Option1, which allows for selective continuations. Even this falls short of the statement from the Leader during the discussion of the Financial Plan at the last Cabinet meeting, that providing public toilets is a civic virtue, and that no toilets would close under her administration. I see that, regrettably, a rather watered down version of that statement now appears in Minute 53.

I want to take this opportunity also to emphasise the benefits of keeping open the Bath Road toilets, which are in my ward. These toilets occupy a corner of the Bath Road site which the Council has been seeking to develop for at least six years now. This may be the reason why they have suffered a degree of neglect and are certainly not up to the best modern standards. But they are part of the busy car park, and right beside the route in and out taken by most car park users. Equally important, they are also close to bus stops just beside the Town Bridge, where several local buses start and terminate. Some National Express buses also stop there. Apart from the train station's informal offer, (several hundred yards and two streets away up hill, and away from the shops), they are also the only toilets available to the public on the New Road / north side of the Town Bridge - an important part of the town centre that has all too often suffered from neglect in plans for the future. There are on the other hand two toilets on the High Street side, and the Town Council appears now to be offering its toilets as another option in that same area. It is very much to be hoped that the Bath Road site will be redeveloped in the not too distant future, which means that any financial commitment to keep these toilets open should be time limited, which seems to be an advantage rather than the negative argument that some have been making.

Paragraph 24 (1) of the Cabinet paper sets out possible criteria for reviewing toilet provision. If and when these are applied to Bath Road, I hope that account can be taken of the recent history of the site, where I think the Council has some responsibility for the current state of these toilets, and that sufficient weight will be given to their community value, public transport contribution and physical location.

##### **Question to Cllr Philip Whitehead, Cabinet member for Highways and Transport**

What were the responses of the individual Town and Parish Councils to the invitation to take on public toilets? Please provide a breakdown, Council by Council.