

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 14th OCTOBER 2020

UPDATE FROM MCC REGARDING THE PUBLIC TOILETS IN ABERGAVENNY

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide comments to MCC on the recommendations regarding the future of public toilets in Abergavenny to enable MCC officers to advise the Cabinet Member accordingly.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2018, Abergavenny Town Council agreed the following recommendation from Projects Committee:
- Projects Committee recommended that Council agree in principle that one toilet block is closed and that this White Horse Lane toilets and that the Town Clerk is tasked with preparing a further report setting out how this action can be taken forward.
- 2.2 In April 2019, Abergavenny Town Council agreed that the:
- Town Council pursues the transfer of Bus Station, Castle Street & Brewery Yard toilets when acceptable transfer terms have been negotiated (vote carried, with 3 against) and that the Town Council continues negotiations with MCC with 2019/20 being a transition year and in the meantime continues to contribute to keep the four blocks open and for opening arrangements of Bailey Park toilets to continue
- 2.3 On the 5th February 2020, Roger Hoggins from MCC attended a Service Delivery Sub-Committee. During the discussions the following points were covered:
- Closure of WHL will be an individual MCC Cabinet Member decision
 - In 2020/21, Abergavenny Town Council has reduced the budget for toilet cleaning in anticipation of the closure of WHL, this will be shared with MCC
 - Any further discussion on asset transfer of the remaining public toilets will be subject to a revised transfer agreement. Abergavenny Town Council cannot agree to the current terms.
 - MCC has a schedule of planned maintenance for the toilet blocks, this can be shared with Councillors
 - ATC requested that MCC liaise with ATC re the closure
 - Possibility that planned maintenance could include more significant changes if ATC wanted to fund this investment.
- 2.4 Discussions have taken place between the Town Clerk and Roger Hoggins regarding the revised terms of the asset transfer. This has, after a considerable time, resulted in the attached report prepared by MCC.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 MCC has requested comments from Abergavenny Town Council on the attached report which would cover the closure of White Horse Lane, changes to the asset transfer arrangements and a commitment by MCC to undertake planned maintenance before any asset transfer. This will enable the MCC Cabinet Member to be fully briefed.
- 3.2 White Horse Lane toilets were closed in March 2020 at the start of the pandemic and have not reopened. At least one Town Councillor has received phone calls from residents with medical conditions regarding the continued closure of White Horse Lane toilets and the difficulty reaching Brewery Yard or Castle St toilets.
- 3.3 With regards to the MCC report, comments from the Town Council regarding recompense for investment has been taken on board and a sliding scale of compensation is being proposed. It also proposes further discussions on asset transfer and is seeking views from the Town Council on the closure of White Horse Lane toilets. The Town Council has previously agreed with the closure of White Horse Lane toilets based on the condition of the toilets, significant cost of renovation or rebuilding and ongoing anti-social behaviour.
- 3.4 The difficulties for some residents from the north of the town in getting to Brewery Yard or Castle St toilets is noted. The Town Council could approach businesses that have toilets such as Auberge, Nicholls, Wetherspoons to explore a Community Toilet Scheme at one of these premises. The Town Council would pay an annual sum (previously £1000) to the business for making their toilets available to the public. If such an arrangement could be entered into this could be communicated widely and specifically to residents that have concerns regarding the closure of White Horse Lane toilets.
- 3.5 It is suggested that the Town Council supports the proposals set out in the MCC report and that the Town Clerk liaises with MCC officers regarding new asset transfer terms and brings a further report back to Members for consideration on whether to pursue the asset transfer.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To agree
- to support the broad proposals in the MCC report
 - to request a further report once new asset transfer terms are available
 - to discuss a Community Toilet Scheme with appropriate businesses in Frogmore Street.