



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 3 OCTOBER 2024
Subject	PETITION REFERRED TO CABINET IN RELATION TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN THE HIGH STREET / MARKET SQUARE, STOW-ON-THE-WOLD
Wards affected	Stow
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Evemy, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: mike.evemy@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Report author	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk
Summary/Purpose	For Cabinet to consider a petition submitted under the Local Petition Scheme (Part F of the Constitution) which has been referred to Cabinet by full Council.
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Cabinet resolves to either: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Agree to the petition request to keep open the public conveniences in the High Street / Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold and instead close the public conveniences in Mangersbury Road; or2. Agree to note the petition and take no further action.
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delivering Good Services
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	NONE



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council received a petition titled “Cotswold District Council retain the public toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow on the Wold” on 11 September 2024.
- 1.2 The petition was considered by full Council on 25 September 2024 and Council resolved to refer the petition to Cabinet.
- 1.3 Cabinet is requested to decide what (if any) action to take in relation to the petition.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council’s Constitution includes a Local Petition Scheme (Part F) which enables residents of the district to submit petitions to the Council.
- 2.2 Petitions can either be submitted on paper directly to the council offices or via the e-petition service the Council has on the website.
- 2.3 A petition will be considered at Full Council if it reaches a threshold of 850 signatures by residents.

3. PETITION IN RELATION TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN STOW-ON-THE-WOLD

- 3.1 The Council received a hard copy of a petition on 11 September 2024.
- 3.2 The petition calls for ‘Cotswold District Council to retain the public toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold’.
- 3.3 The petition has a verified number of signatures of 1198 and therefore meets the Constitution’s threshold for a Full Council debate.
- 3.4 The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee established the Public Conveniences Review Group in September 2023 to review the future provision of public conveniences and make recommendations to Cabinet. The Review Group reported to Cabinet in February 2024 and, among other things, recommended that:

That the Council commits to retaining at least one district council provided public conveniences facility in each town and village within the district that currently has one.

That the Council opens discussions with the relevant Town Councils about the transfer of responsibility for four sites in towns that have more than one district council provided facility, or where town councils are not willing, the Council seeks to close the facilities and repurpose the buildings to generate a commercial opportunity, as set out in Exempt Annex B. This approach is expected to result in a maximum annual revenue saving of £39,061.

- 3.5 Cabinet agreed the two recommendations above at its meeting on 1 February 2024. Since then the Council has been in discussions with Stow Town Council to establish whether the Town Council would be willing to take on responsibility for the public conveniences facility



on the High Street/Market Square in Stow-on-the-Wold while the Council would retain responsibility for the facility at Mangersbury Road in Stow-on-the-Wold.

- 3.6** The Council has since entered into a new cleaning and maintenance contract which provides for cleaning and maintenance of one public convenience facility in Stow-on-the-Wold (currently the Mangersbury Road facility). The High Street/Market Square toilets are due to close on 1 October 2024 pending the decision of Cabinet on 3 October 2024.
- 3.7** Any reconsideration of the Council's approach is a matter for Cabinet as it is an executive function. Council on 25 September 2024 resolved to:
- Note the petition signed by 1,198 people requesting the Council to retain the public toilets in High Street/Market Square, Stow-on-the-Wold.
 - Agree to refer consideration of the petition to Cabinet, as it is the relevant decision-making body, for discussion and decision at its meeting on 3 October 2024

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1** Cabinet could decide to agree to the request of the petition to keep open the public convenience facility in the Market Square/High Street, and instead close the Mangersbury Road facility (recommendation 1).
- 4.2** Alternatively, Cabinet could decide to note the petition and take no further action (recommendation 2). This would mean continuing with the current approach of closing the Market Square/High Street facility and keeping open the Mangersbury Road facility.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** Cabinet in February 2024 agreed with the recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Public Conveniences Review Group "to retaining at least one district council provided public conveniences facility in each town and village within the district that currently has one." Cabinet recognised that closing some facilities would reduce costs whilst maintaining the service.
- 5.2** The net cost of providing public conveniences at Stow-on-the-Wold is broadly similar for the High Street/Market Square facility and the Mangersbury Road facility. The closure of one of the public convenience facilities at Stow-in-the-Wold would reduce the Council's costs on a similar basis. Officers have confirmed this position with the external contractor who open, close and clean & service the Council's public conveniences.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The provision of public conveniences by the district council is a discretionary service.



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7. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 In the event of the Council not responding to the petition, then this would be in breach of scheme set out within the Constitution.

8. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.1 This report does not have a negative impact on equalities. The local petition scheme process enables residents to engage with the council on concerns within the District.

9. CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no significant impacts arising from this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 None

(END)