



Council name	<b>COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL</b>
Name and date of Committee	<b>COUNCIL – 25 SEPTEMBER 2024</b>
Subject	<b>PETITION RECEIVED IN RELATION TO PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN THE HIGH STREET / MARKET SQUARE, STOW-ON-THE-WOLD</b>
Wards affected	Stow
Accountable member	Councillor Mike Every, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance Email: <a href="mailto:tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk">tony.dale@cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Accountable officer	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Report author	Andrew Brown, Business Manager for Democratic Services Email: <a href="mailto:Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk">Democratic@Cotswold.gov.uk</a>
Summary/Purpose	For Council to consider a petition submitted under the Local Petition Scheme (Part F of the Constitution).
Annexes	None
Recommendation(s)	That Council resolves to either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Make recommendations to Cabinet as the decision-maker for the request to be considered.</li><li>2. Refer the petition to Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.</li><li>3. Note the petition and take no further action.</li></ol>
Corporate priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Deliver the highest standard of service</li></ul>
Key Decision	NO
Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	NONE



## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report presents a petition titled “Cotswold District Council retain the public toilets in the High Street/Market Square, Stow on the Wold” which was received by the Council on 11 September 2024.
- 1.2 The report presents to Council the options for courses of action to take in response to the petition, in line with the Council’s Constitution.

## **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 options set out in the recommendation are in line with the Local Petition Scheme and are consistent with the topic area being discussed.
- 3.5 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.*



- 3.6** 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.
- 3.7** Any reconsideration of the Council's approach would be a matter for Cabinet as it is an Executive function. Council can decide whether or not to make recommendations to Cabinet to inform that decision.
- 3.8** A referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee by Council would involve the Overview and Scrutiny Committee using its functions to investigate the matter concerned and/or make recommendations to Cabinet.
- 3.9** The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of any decision taken by Council. This confirmation will also be published on the Council's website.
- 3.10** A petitioner has the right to request that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee reviews the decision taken by Council if it is felt that the Council has not dealt with the petition properly.

#### **4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1** The options for Council's response are set out in the Local Petition Scheme. However, the options presented are in-line with the decision-making processes and the request set out by the petitioners.

#### **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. 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.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **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.



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**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)