

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel

11 September 2024

TITLE:	Public Amenities
PORTFOLIO HOLDER:	Councillor Charlotte Atkins - Portfolio Holder for Services
CONTACT OFFICER:	Steve Proffitt, Matt Trewartha – Assets Commissioning Officer, Interim Head of Assets
WARDS INVOLVED:	Multiple

1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the management of the public conveniences across Staffordshire Moorlands.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 To continue to support Officers in the further investment in the public conveniences through improvements to routine management and refurbishment projects.

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 Public conveniences are a highly important service, delivered by the Council for the benefit of local people and tourists visiting the area. They are a factor in the experience people have whilst using the towns and villages in our area and, as such, reflect on the operational effectiveness of the Council.

4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities

- 4.1 Aim 1 – Help to create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work.

Aim 3 – Help to create a strong economy by supporting further regeneration of towns and villages.

5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 The alternative option is to not support officers in their plans to improve the public conveniences, but this is not recommended.

Martin Owen
Executive Director (Resources)

Contact details

Steve Proffitt, Matt Trewartha
Capital Project Officer, Interim Head of
Assets
steven.proffitt@highpeak.gov.uk,
matthew.trewartha@highpeak.gov.uk

6. Detail

6.1 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (the Council) operates public conveniences at 13 locations in the district.

6.2 These include:

1. Biddulph Grange
2. Biddulph Bus Hub
3. Blythe Bridge
4. Cheadle – Tape Street
5. Hulme End
6. Leek – Cemetery
7. Leek – Silk Street
8. Leek – Smithfield
9. Longnor
10. Milldale
11. Rudyard
12. Tean
13. Wetton

6.3 Of those listed, the two in Biddulph are due to be transferred to the Town Council as part of long leases.

6.4 The Assets Team has, for some time, been aware of the poor condition of the WCs, in particular the cleanliness. We have been working with Alliance Norse (AN) to tackle this issue.

6.5 The new Operations Director at AN has taken on this matter and has taken a tour of the Leek and Cheadle WCs to see for himself the issues we are having.

6.6 There have been recruiting difficulties and limitations on what the attendants are allowed to do and use (health and safety) in their work.

6.7 In order to bring the toilets back to a more serviceable standard, several strands of work have been implemented.

6.8 Firstly, AN will be using attendants more effectively and ensuring that they have recruited a sufficient number to provide the level of required service.

6.9 Secondly, a deep clean has been instructed with external contractors to bring the facilities back to a condition where the attendants are then able to maintain them on a daily basis.

6.10 The WCs have become so dirty in many cases, that the attendants do not have sufficient resources to recover them.

6.11 In addition to this, the Assets Team is beginning an annual, rolling programme of refurbishments across the district, starting in 2025.

6.12 These refurbishments will be listed on the new capital budgets, which the team

will begin to prepare in September.

- 6.13 The Assets Team would welcome Members' comments on priorities for refurbishments.
- 6.14 The current proposals are:
- Longnor, Hulme End and Blythe Bridge – 2025
 - Mill Dale, Wetton and Silk Street – 2026
 - Tape Street, Tean and Leek Cemetery – 2027
 - Rudyard and Leek Smithfield – 2028
- 6.15 Tean toilets on New Road are owned by a third-party and were leased to the Council previously. The owner sold the adjacent site for redevelopment as a Co-Operative.
- 6.16 The Council does not have a secure lease on these WCs and the Assets Team is in negotiation to purchase this site.
- 6.17 Over the past year, there have been increased occurrences of vandalism to the public conveniences, both across SMDC and HPBC, which has resulted in the long-term closure of two sites in the Peaks.
- 6.19 In response to this, at the Sylvan Car Park site in Buxton, a trial of charging for usage of the WCs (30p) is being implemented using contactless payment. As the facility is due to be renovated later this year, and as a site which suffers repeated vandalism, it is the opportune time to make this change.
- 6.20 The expectation is that the charge will deter would-be vandals and provide a level of income that allows for a greater cleaning regime. It is understood that most members of the public do not mind paying for better facilities, if they are clean and well maintained.
- 6.21 The Assets Team is happy to discuss options for a similar trial in the district if Members felt this would be of interest.