

## **Report to Leader**

**Subject:** Permanent Closure of Wood Street Public Conveniences

**Date:** 6 February 2024

**Author:** Building Services & Compliance Officer

### **Wards Affected**

Ernhale

### **Purpose**

To seek approval to close Wood Street Public Toilets due to ongoing anti-social behaviour.

### **Key Decision**

This is not key decision

### **Recommendation(s)**

#### **THAT:**

- 1) The Council permanently close Wood Street Public Conveniences**

## **1 Background**

1.1 The Wood Street Public Conveniences have been an asset of The Council since circa 1980's, providing toilet provision for residents and visitors of Arnold Town Centre.

1.2 Over the past couple of years, the frequency of incidents relating to anti-social behaviour and vandalism has increased.

1.3 It is therefore becoming increasingly challenging to continue to manage the facility safely.

- 1.4 Not only are there budget constraints but considering the nature of the anti-social behaviour incidents it is not deemed safe to keep these facilities open. Over recent months there have been issues with drug use, intimidation and/or significant vandalism to fixtures/fittings, as well as graffiti.
- 1.5 The most recent and serious incident resulted in a recommendation from Nottinghamshire Police to close the public conveniences due to the lewd activities being carried out at the site which appear to be attracting people from outside the borough for no other reason.
- 1.6 In order to protect the public from such anti-social behaviours it is therefore recommended, in conjunction with Nottinghamshire Police's recommendation that the public conveniences at Wood Street are closed permanently.
- 1.7 The Council recently installed a purpose built public toilet provision along with Changing Places facilities in King George V Park which can be used instead of Wood Street and therefore there is still adequate provision with the Town Centre.

## **2 Proposal**

- 2.1 It is proposed that the Council permanently close the Wood Street Public Conveniences as recommended by Nottinghamshire Police.

## **3 Alternative Options**

- 3.1 The Council could take no action and leave Wood Street Public Conveniences open. However as the closure has also been recommended by Nottinghamshire Police it is felt that taking no action would not be appropriate.
- 3.2 The Council could implement an access control system, security personnel or increase the presence of cleaning attendants which may deter the anti-social behaviour however the cost implications to the Council for this provision would be significant and this is therefore also not a viable option.

## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Closure of Wood Street Public Conveniences would eliminate the costs of the frequent repairs and ongoing maintenance of these facilities caused by the continual anti-social behaviour.
- 4.2 The cost associated with cleaning, maintenance & repairs are not currently budgeted for as all associated budgets are utilised by the provision on King George V, so whilst there will be no budgetary savings

associated with this closure there will be savings on actual expenditure thus reducing overspends on these budgets.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 Closure of Wood Street Public Conveniences would amount to the removal of a service to an individual. The Council's Constitution contains a delegation reference number HHW11. 'Authority to withdraw facilities, services and activities from members of the public.' The Authorised Officer for exercising this delegation is Director. It is noted that this report is requesting a decision from the Leader of the Council instead of a Director as it is felt that Leader approval is appropriate in these circumstances.

## **6 Equalities Implications**

- 6.1 Closing the Wood Street public conveniences would remove an available toilet facility for residents and visitors of the Arnold Town Centre however, the newly built facilities at King George V are a much better alternative, especially as they include a Changing Places provision which Wood Street does not have.
- 6.2 The closure may impact on individuals with physical disabilities more than other individuals as the public conveniences at King George V are 0.3 (6 min walk) away from Wood Street public conveniences. It is noted however that retail stores such as ASDA offer public conveniences in close proximity to Wood Street. Whilst it is noted that there may be an impact on individuals with a physical disability it is felt that due to the anti-social behaviour, recommendation by the Police and availability of alternative facilities, a decision to close Wood Street public conveniences is proportionate and justifiable.

## **7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications**

- 7.1 Closing of the Wood Street Public Conveniences would reduce electricity and water consumption which would therefore reduce the Councils overall energy use.

## **8 Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 - EIA

## **9 Background Papers**

- 9.1 None.

## **10 Reasons for Recommendations**

10.1 To prevent further instances of anti social behaviour as recommended by Nottinghamshire Police.

**Statutory Officer approval**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer**

**Approved by:**

**Date:**

**On behalf of the Monitoring Officer**