

Activity Planning -2012-2022 Ten Year Plan Strong Communities - Public Conveniences

The main matter that the Council is being asked to consider is....

- Whether or not to maintain existing levels of service, with a cost reduction focus.

1. Council direction

The direction provided to staff by the Council in December 2010 was to retain existing levels of service forecasted (sinking lid policy).

2. What the activity does

The Council owns and maintains public conveniences (public toilets) at 87 locations around the Peninsula.

3. What the legislations says

The statutory rationale for the Council's involvement in this activity is guided by the statutory requirements including the Health Act 1956, and primarily to facilitate achievement of public health standards set under NZS 4241 1999 Public Toilets.

4. Proposed activity objective

The proposed activity objective for the public conveniences activity is:

To provide safe and convenient public toilet facilities in areas of frequent community activity.

NB: this is the same as the objective the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan.

5. How this activity currently would contribute to the Council Outcomes

The activity will contribute to the achievement of the Council Outcomes as follows:

Council Outcome	The Public Conveniences activity...
A prosperous district	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides benefits to visitors to the district, supporting to our local tourism industry.
A liveable district	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensures high standards of public health.• Delivers services in an affordable manner.• Supports recreation and leisure opportunities.
A clean and green district	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps keep our environment safe and clean.

The Coromandel Peninsula Blueprint places expectations on the Public Conveniences Activity to provide services in a range of areas that support the protection of the natural environment and enhance biodiversity.

6. Things to be aware of

- The cost of constructing, maintaining and depreciating public conveniences to legal standards, and to levels which meet public and ratepayer expectations, is extremely high. Typical build costs are now as high as \$4000 per square metre for these facilities, depending on the location and service provided. Council

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currently spends approximately \$900,000 pa to maintain and depreciate existing facilities, averaging approximately \$11,000 per year per toilet. Assessing and rationalising the service, and considering options of "user pays" in certain areas, may stabilise this cost in future years, which may be important if this cost proves to be unacceptable to the ratepayer for this service.

7. A word from our community....

- The 2010 community prioritisation survey shows that "public toilet facilities" was ranked 20th out of the 27 activities surveyed, and is a lower priority, as determined by the community, when compared to the other activities of the Council.
- Results from the Parkcheck Satisfaction Survey over the last 4 years indicate that the importance of toilets is only slightly higher than the satisfaction rating. This indicates that there is a slight under-delivery of the service, but not significant enough to raise the service level standard. This is especially pertinent when compared to the low priority public toilets affords over the total activities Council is responsible for.
- Staff are of the opinion that the community plans tend to indicate a wish to provide more toilets in some locations. However, there is no supporting needs analysis included in the corresponding community plans. The "need" therefore may not correspond to the "want". Further needs analysis therefore may be necessary when Council is considering new toilets. The Public Conveniences activity also appears to afford low priority, compared to other activities. Finally, ongoing high costs of services level provision must also be a factor in continuing to provide new public toilets. The toilet maintenance regime is adequate for the current service level standards, and this is supported by Parkcheck satisfaction survey.

8. Strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats

- The toilets provided are becoming standardised, with common fixtures, fittings, colours, designs, and functions. This means that maintenance is streamlined and more cost effective.
- There is an opportunity to plan toilets better taking an overview approach, particularly with regard to new toilets and replacement of existing ones as required. There will be a more efficient cost effective service, with toilets being fit for purpose.
- Toilets seem oversupplied in certain areas. Toilets should not be provided as a "primary" attraction for visiting the site. They should be provided to compliment other activity.
- There is a risk that some toilets may in the future cause environmental damage, as for many there are no "as built" drawings to let the asset manager know what is on site. When failure occurs, there can be associated environmental effects. Vandalism (including graffiti) is an ongoing issue for public conveniences, and is hard to curtail.

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9. Proposed Levels of Service options

Staff propose the following options regarding Public Conveniences.

Option 1: Maintain existing levels of service

The proposed levels of service are:

- My toilets are maintained to standards which are fit for purpose.
- I am happy with the public toilets provided

The Council should be aware that...

- Although the levels of service are worded differently the level of service in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan, the service being proposed is the same.
- The overall cost of provision is likely to continue at existing levels.
- The current levels of service includes a long-term rationalisation strategy for public conveniences.

Option 2: Status quo levels of service but cost reduction

The proposed levels of service are:

- My toilets are maintained to standards which are fit for purpose.
- I am happy with the public toilets provided

Remove bins and close toilets at off-peak times on low-use reserves, and at other locations where toilets may be closed together.

Asset rationalisation options bought back through service delivery committee?

The Council should be aware that...

- This option involves reducing maintenance costs by reducing opening hours.
- Maintenance contract to be reviewed in 2014.

10. How is this activity managed?

Public conveniences are managed and controlled at the District level with input via the local community boards. Maintenance services are provided by way of contract with specific maintenance requirements set in accordance with the level of service statement for the particular community board area.

There is only one public convenience managed but not owned by Council and that is located at Cochrane Street, Thames. Council also pays for cleaning services at the Thames Information Centre, although TCDC does not directly manage these toilets.

11. What do we currently spend on this activity?

As a proportion of Council's annual budget for the 2011/2012 year, the Public Conveniences activity represents approximately 1.08% of total spend.

2011/2012 Draft Annual Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$0.92m
Capital Expenditure	\$0.17m
Total budgeted spend for Public Conveniences for 2011/2012	\$1.09m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 2011/2012	\$100.97m
Total percentage of budget spent on Public Conveniences	1.08%

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2009-2019 Ten Year Plan	
Operating Expenditure (excluding internal interest cost)	\$11.38m
Capital Expenditure	\$2.32
Total budgeted spend for Public Conveniences for 10 years	\$13.70m
Total Budgeted spend for Council for 10 years	\$1,295.64m
Total percentage of budget spent on Public Conveniences	1.06%

12. How this activity is funded, and why.

The Public Conveniences activity is currently funded as follows:

Funding rationale summary as outlined in the 2009-2019 Ten Year Plan

Public conveniences are seen to benefit the whole District because of the high visitor and tourist activity. While it is true that local communities benefit because local people do use the conveniences, those same people also move across the District and make use of conveniences in localities other than their own.

The funding mechanisms used for operating expenditure are:

General Rates	UAGC	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies
	80-100%			

The funding mechanisms used for capital expenditure are:

Develop. &/or Financial Contribution	Borrowing	Asset Sales	UAGC	Depreciation	General Rates	Targeted Rates	Fees & Charges	Grants & Subsidies	Lump Sum Contribution
✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					

Staff recommend no changes to the current funding policy for the Public Conveniences activity.

13. Staff recommendation

- With regards to the Public Conveniences activity levels of service staff recommend retaining existing levels of service but with further investigation of cost reduction option through partial or full closure of some toilets, with a view to implementing as part of the 2012-2022 Ten Year Plan.
- Staff recommend no changes to the current funding policy for the Public Conveniences activity.