

Automated Public Conveniences – A summary

Introduction

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea delivers a variety of toilet provision across the borough. Although these services are non-statutory, the Council understands the importance of providing toilet facilities. However, the Council also has an obligation to spend public money wisely and ensure value for money.

Current provision

The Council currently provides 28 toilet facilities for public use. A more detailed description of the facilities can be found in the [Borough Toilet Map](#). Table 1 provides a brief overview of the toilet facilities in the Borough.

Table 1

Quantity	Type / Location
2	Council owned and maintained toilets located in the main Council buildings (Town Hall and Pembroke Road)
3	Council owned and maintained; staffed toilet blocks linked to Market Streets in the North of the borough
8	Automated Public Conveniences (APC) located across the borough, provided and maintained by a private contractor
8	Council owned and maintained toilet blocks in Parks
6	Council owned and maintained toilets located in Libraries
1	Fully accessible toilet for use by Radar Key holders only, at the side of Gloucester Road Underground Station. Provided and maintained by a private contractor

The review

The original review of toilet facilities was conducted before the Covid-19 pandemic. A subsequent review has been conducted post pandemic. The Council's Executive Management Team have taken the decision to close three APCs based on the review. The three units in question are listed in Table 2 below with average costs per usage over the last three years.

Table 2

APC Location	2019 avg. cost per usage	2020* avg. cost per usage	2021 avg. cost per usage
Gloucester Road	£16.42	£22.25	£5.07
Sloane Square	£3.24	£6.82	£4.36
South Kensington	£13.69	£10.39	£13.85
Three-year total	£11.12	£13.15	£7.76

*Figures impacted by Covid-19 closures

The usage figures are relatively low, and result is a huge spend by the Council to cover each usage. It is not good value for money for these costs to continue. Unfortunately, when soft market testing was conducted before the pandemic, the current supplier was the only contractor capable of providing the units.

However, even this supplier is starting to scale back the variety of units available for APC use. The three units we currently have at Kensington Church Street, Kensington High Street and Notting Hill Gate, are units incorporated within bus shelters. These three units are of an antiquated design and their life expectancy expires in 2023. The supplier no longer provides replacement units of this type to be incorporated within bus shelters, so once they expire, the units at these locations will not be replaced.

Recommendation

After careful consideration, the Council is recommending the closure of these three facilities. The other facilities within the Markets area will remain and the Council has numerous additional toilet facilities across the borough, as detailed in Appendix Two.

An equalities impact assessment has been conducted and found that while there could be some impact to certain user groups, the availability of alternative facilities, mitigates any adverse effects. The equalities impact assessment can be found on the overview page of the consultation.