

Proposal regarding toilets.

I realise that I have not been involved for a while but I wonder if I may make a key point about the original strategy and why I would encourage you to reconsider a different option

The whole reason for the strategy was so that the council did not repeat Waveney's mistakes. The toilets which we inherited from Waveney/East Suffolk were a complete mishmash. There had been no overall consideration to them. More just what funds were available at the time. No-one really cared for them or the service provision. Even before they gave them to the town council, there had been plans to get rid of the provision.

What we inherited were toilets with so much variety not just between each other but even within each toilet. Different lighting with different bulbs (even blue light), different toilet roll holders and different style of toilet rolls, different wallgates/basins, different soap dispensers and a mixture of stainless steel and porcelain ware.

The idea with the strategy was to come up with a standard which could retrofit every toilet so that if you went into one you would find the same level of care wherever in the town it was. It also meant that it would make purchasing easier not just with the refit but all the repeat stock for the toilets. The council would be able to bulk buy to get cheaper provisions and would not have to hold such a variety of stock. Nor would you need to write the type of lightbulb on the light fitting.

The strategy was a large amount of work and research which was meant to provide the council with a straightforward plan of refurbishment over a period of time rather than copy a Waveney piecemeal approach. In many ways those of us involved did not want to echo their mistakes.

The whole idea of the strategy was to approach it as a single refurbishment plan over a period of years which it would take us within the budgets that we had.

That is why I would like to propose a different approach. I would like to formally propose it even though I might not be there with you at the meeting because of work.

I realise that after six years with no progress, there was impetus to do something. When I left the council, I left having seen the strategy passed and work supposed to be taking place in the autumn to do Sparrow's Nest and Fen Park. I had raised replacing the roof at Fen Park a number of times but with everything that the council had been dealing with, it was a minor thing. Unfortunately I gather the structure is so compromised that it isn't sensible to save it. I would therefore say that the decision to replace it is wise and should progress, however I'm not sure what the outside of the new unit would look like so I would make a suggestion. Approach a street artist who has teaching skills and the necessary paperwork and see if they would work with one of the high schools at the south end of town (or the art students at the college) and do highly colourful street art on them. A theme could be set and maybe this could

come from the two primary schools adjacent to Fen Park. It would be really good to see them integrated into the surroundings.

With regard to the other toilets, this would be my suggestion. I gather that there were different views on moving forward with both local builders and more flatpack ideas considered. What I will suggest may slow down the refurbishment plan by a few months now but would lead to an easier toilet refurbishment project in the longer term. I would suggest that a better approach would be to look at the budget and the number of toilets and put together a plan and a spec and then go out to tender for the whole refurbishment project. This would be done over a number of years and might attract more local builders as it would be a guaranteed income over a number of years and beneficially, be done at the times of year which are quieter for the building trade. This would provide a security of work which may appeal to a small local builder.

It would be more work upfront as the value of the contract would mean going out to tender using the formal procedures but there would, hopefully, not be the need to repeat the process for every set of toilets.

There would also be a positive as well. Resan, the company we were originally looking to work with, were offering to do a price for all the toilets if we did a project over a number of years. The quality of their product meets the council's needs as it is designed for the hardest of wear and is anti-ligature. It has the strength and better durability of stainless steel with the look of porcelain and doesn't get as cold as either stainless steel or porcelain. Everything is designed to be vandal proof because of the some of the places it is used, indeed it would get heavier daily use and abuse in some of those places than it should get locally.

Every single item in that document was heavily researched, from both Mark's and my knowledge and experience and with input from other councillors (only one of which is still on the council, Graham). I spoke to several councils around the country as well and we took all of the research and information and compiled it into the toilet strategy.

I would formally propose that the council continues with the replacement of the Fen Park toilet with a purpose built fully functioning pod type toilet but would move to developing a tender for refurbishment of all the council's toilets over a specific number of years (depending on budget and toilet size) to a single specification which could be to the toilet strategy, a variation on that strategy or a new strategy.

As a slightly funny conclusion, the report was so detailed that we actually worked out the best toilet roll holder by the future economics of the cost of toilet rolls and the result may surprise you (unless you've read the strategy). Toilet rolls designed for commercial use aren't cheaper. Normal household toilet rolls are cheaper in the long run as they are produced with the greatest economy of scale. Households get through a lot more toilet roll than most public toilets would (possibly with the exception of some of the largest rail stations in London).