

Committee(s): Porth Health and Environmental Services Committee	Dated: 07/10/2025
Subject: Public Convenience Provision	Public report: For Information
This proposal: • delivers Corporate Plan 2024-29 outcomes	Providing excellent services Vibrant thriving destination Flourishing public spaces
Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?	No
If so, how much?	N/A
What is the source of Funding?	N/A
Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?	N/A
Report of: Katie Stewart	
Report author: Joe Kingston	

Summary

This report outlines the current provision of toilets within the City of London and the measures which have been undertaken in the past year to improve wayfinding to facilities, tackle anti-social behaviour, undertake refurbishment of existing facilities and efforts to secure further public toilet provision going forward.

There has been significant progress in all of these areas which builds on the public and private sector provision that allows members of the public to access facilities throughout the City at various times of the night and day.

Due to the current financial position of City Fund, this has all been delivered within existing local risk budgets and previously identified funds (such as the Cyclical Works Programme).

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. This Committee received a report in July 2024 which outlined how the current provision of public conveniences in the City of London is delivered as a partnership between the City of London Corporation and other public and private sector organisations. There is a total of 19 facilities available, spread across the Square Mile helping to address a diverse set of needs and requirements.
2. The two staffed facilities operated by the City Corporation remain at the City's two principal tourist attractions at Paternoster Square (for St Paul's Cathedral) and Tower Hill (for the Tower of London). The remaining 17 are spread across transport hubs, car parks, libraries and retail centres that are accessible to the public.
3. In addition, the City Corporation has a well-established Community Toilets Scheme where typically, smaller businesses offer their facilities to the public, with 69 such businesses currently signed up.
4. The provision of public conveniences is not a statutory function that local authorities are required to provide, and as such has come under severe funding pressures in the past. Indeed, this Committee has specifically pursued a partnership approach with the private sector over the last 10+ years in order to provide a more financially sustainable approach to their provision. This approach has enabled the Corporation to close those facilities with the lowest usage thereby prioritising provision of those in highest demand.
5. The current financial position for City Fund where these costs are funded from is no less challenging with an expectation to fall into a deficit over the medium term. During last year's budget setting process, Finance Committee advised a focus on developing savings plans through a staged approach.
6. At the same time, the full implications of the government's Fair Funding Review 2.0 are yet to be fully established but will see the Corporation lose the business rate growth income generated over previous years which is to be redistributed alongside other grants using a national formula.
7. Bearing in mind the wider financial constraints in which the Corporation is operating, Members agreed at the last report for Officers to proceed with several actions within currently agreed budgets that could maximise the effectiveness of existing toilet provision across the Square Mile. These actions were:
 - a. Review and enhance the publicity and signage for the City Corporation's public toilets at all locations
 - b. Refurbish the toilet facilities within the City Corporation's car parks
 - c. Identify potential locations for additional Urilifts
 - d. Explore opportunities for a limited reopening of the public toilets at Blackfriars (after the completion of the Tideway project)

- e. Review the benefits, promotion and funding of the Community Toilets Scheme
 - f. Press for further private sector provision of public toilets through the planning process
 - g. Continue efforts to reduce the impacts of anti-social behaviour
 - h. Explore additional funding opportunities to reinvest into the provision and maintenance of public toilets
8. An update on these actions is expanded further in this report.

Current Position

Review and Enhance Publicity and Signage

9. Effective wayfinding for public conveniences provided across the City was highlighted in the last report as essential, and since that last report officers have progressed with several ways to improve our on-street signage, digital information and physical handouts.
10. In terms of on-street signage, officers have identified an opportunity to refresh 230 Legible London signs across the City so that they display details of the nearest public convenience. This project is currently being planned in conjunction with colleagues from Transport & Public Realm and funding has just been approved by Streets & Walkways Sub Committee, enabling the changes to be delivered between October 2025 and July 2026.
11. Having up to date information on toilet locations and opening hours available online is essential. The City Corporation provide this information on our website in the form of an online map which can be found [here](#). The map shows all toilets which are open and available to the public as well as all members of the Community Toilet Scheme. Opening hours and accessibility information is also included. This data is available as open-source data and can be and is pulled into various apps and websites which provide details of public toilet provision across London and the UK.
12. Officers have explored the possibility of adding public and community toilets to Google Maps main interface to improve visibility and accessibility for residents and visitors. However, this has proven challenging due to Google's data management structure, which prioritises verified business premises and restricts the direct addition of non-commercial facilities through standard channels. As such, public conveniences do not easily meet the platform's criteria for location listing and visibility. Officers will continue to work closely with colleagues in the GIS team to investigate alternative methods of improving public toilet mapping, including the potential integration of local data layers or extending the use of third-party platforms, and will explore all viable options to ensure accurate and accessible public information.
13. Although digital maps and apps are important, some visitors and members of the public prefer physical maps. Officers have therefore produced paper maps which

are available at the City Information Centre, City Libraries and the Guildhall. These also contain a QR code which links to the online maps.

14. The public have always been able to access the toilets within the Guildhall and at other City Corporation sites, but this has not been obvious from the outside. Signage has now been installed at the Guildhall North and West Wing entrances as well as the London Centre and the Art Gallery. Photographs of the signage can be found in Appendix 2.
15. As part of the renegotiation for the lease of One New Change, officers working to support Destination City objectives have stipulated that improved signage, directing members of the public more easily to the public conveniences is implemented as a condition of their lease extension.

Refurbishment of Car Park Toilet Facilities

16. The City Corporation's car parks are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, as are the toilets located within them. Projects are currently being undertaken by City Surveyors to refresh the facilities at Baynard House and London Wall car parks which are scheduled to be completed by November 2025. Works at Minories Car Park have recently been approved by Planning & Transportation Committee and Resource Allocation Sub Committee with the project due to commence shortly.
17. In addition to the refurbishment work, new signage has been installed at the sites to make it easier for members of the public to find the facilities. Images of these can be found in Appendix 3.
18. Officers have been working with the City Surveyors Dept since the start of 2025 to undertake a total refurbishment of Tower Hill toilets which are linked to the car park at the same location. Tower Hill toilets were last refurbished in 2005 and the works taking place now will ensure they are fit for purpose and ready for the next 20 years.
19. The refurbishment presented the opportunity to improve the facilities provided by adding a Changing Places toilet which are larger than standard accessible toilets with additional facilities such as hoist and shower with space for a carer. This is a welcomed facility which will enable those who have previously found a shortage of appropriate toilet facilities a barrier to visiting the City.
20. Guidance from The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers also fed into the design process to make the facilities more accessible for individuals with visual impairment. This has involved more suitable colour schemes as well as highlighted areas and contrasting coloured seat bowls.
21. Works began last month with the female side being partitioned into male and female areas, allowing for toilets to remain open whilst works are undertaken to the male facilities. Once completed, the male facilities will be partitioned to allow

for works to the ladies. All works are due to be finished by Easter 2026 with a total budget cost for the project being £935,000.

Identify potential locations for additional Urilifts

22. Officers undertook an exercise in early 2025 which identified 30 potential locations for Urilift units; ground radar surveys were subsequently conducted at these sites. However, due to subterranean infrastructure none of the locations had sufficient space to accommodate the size of unit required.

23. In July 2025 the City Corporation received advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) that, following an investigation into a tragic incident in Westminster, they strongly advised the Urilifts that we operate were removed from service until further notice.

24. The decision to remove the Urilifts from service was taken on the day which the notice from the HSE was received. The maintenance contract was also terminated as the units could not be safely serviced.

25. Officers are currently investigating alternatives for the festive period.

Explore a limited reopening of the public toilets at Blackfriars after Tideway

26. Public toilets on the Embankment in the structure beneath Blackfriars Bridge were demolished in 2015 as part of the Tideway project for London's 'super sewer'. However, Thames Water are under an obligation to re-provide those facilities at the completion of the scheme later this year, and to that end officers have been working with Tideway to ensure the facilities are re-provided to a suitable standard with the equipment in line with the other two attended facilities in the City of London.

27. Given the financial constraints outlined in the background section of the report, the affordability of reopening these facilities for continuous public use is not budgeted for and if provided in line with the other staffed facilities would cost approx. £127,000 pa plus overheads. Income derived from usage to offset this cost is difficult to estimate but is unlikely to exceed £20,000 pa, making their full time reopening uneconomic and, given the financial constraints outlined previously, unaffordable.

28. A limited reopening regime for major events such as London Marathon, Lord Mayor's Show and New Year's Eve is an affordable option which officers will look to pursue.

29. There is a small building located in the public space which is likely to provide refreshments, so working collaboratively with that potential retail unit to facilitate the opening and cleaning of the toilets may be an option. However, these discussions will not be possible until the site is let by Thames Water and the retail

provision is in place.

30. In addition, the City Surveyors are exploring a range of commercial options for the undercroft at this location which could require or enable on-site toilet provision. Should a viable commercial scheme proceed, there could be the opportunity to use any net income to offset toilet running costs albeit subject to an affordable business case.

Review the benefits, promotion and funding of the Community Toilets Scheme

31. The City Corporation established a Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) in 2009 to help increase the amount of toilet provision in the City. It began with an initial target of 50 participants but well exceeded that target and currently has 69 member premises, the majority of which are open in the evening. The opening hours of the toilets are based on hours of trading/opening, and members of the public are not charged should they use the facilities. Maps showing the spread of sites and their availability at various times of the day can be found in Appendix 4.
32. Locations are available to find on the City Corporation's website, which is also pulled through to various apps. Premises are identified by a sticker displayed in their window, but following feedback at previous PHES committee meetings, larger A4 sized stickers have been produced for this use. All the premises within the scheme have since been visited and the larger stickers are now in place.
33. The sites are audited at least twice a year so this will ensure they continue to display the correct signage. These audits also allow officers to confirm that staff are aware of the scheme and that the toilets are maintained to an acceptable standard.
34. In return for offering their facilities to passers-by, the businesses can claim up to £600 pa for additional expenses, although not all do. Based on the claims made by existing scheme members, the City Corporation's current budget allocation is sufficient at £40,000 pa.
35. It is acknowledged that it can be challenging to publicise these premises and that monitoring usage by those not already there is difficult, but their availability is still seen as an important part of the wider provision of public toilets, especially at times when the City Corporation's attended toilets are not open. They also act as a reminder to the hospitality and entertainment trade that they can support the public at large in providing such welcome facilities in partnership with the City Corporation.

Press for further private sector provision of public toilets through Planning

36. Officers have been working closely with Planning colleagues to identify appropriate levers in the planning process to increase public toilet provision throughout the City of London.

37. In City Plan 2040, in the Health, Inclusion and Safety chapter policy “HL6 Public Toilets” promotes a widespread distribution of publicly accessible toilets which meet public demand, including for Changing Places toilets, 24-hour provision and support for an increase in membership to the Community Toilet Scheme.
38. As part of this, the City will seek to require major developments to provide publicly accessible toilets going forward, plus in the Culture & Visitors chapter, policy CV3 aims to meet the needs of visitors in new cultural developments by encouraging well-designed public convenience provision, including Changing Places toilets that are accessible to all users. An example of this will be the Museum of London which will have public toilet provision.
39. Appendix 5 contains details of the five recent schemes which have been resolved to grant by Planning Application Sub Committee that contain provision for public and Changing Places toilets. It should be noted that whilst these developments have been given resolution to grant subject to entering into an accompanying Section 106 legal agreement before planning permission is issued, there isn't a guarantee that they will necessarily come forward and the timelines included in the appendix are indicative only.

Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour

40. Officers have regular meetings with the City of London Police (CoLP), Community Safety team and Parkguard, with any areas subject to specific issues of public urination referred to either CoLP or Parkguard for monitoring and/or enforcement. As a result, between September 2023 and August 2025, 17 fixed penalty notices were issued for instances of public urination.
41. In addition, the Cleansing Service is currently working on a high-profile initiative aimed at reducing public urination associated with the nighttime economy in the Square Mile. This campaign (provisionally called “Go before you go”) focuses on intervening at a critical moment by encouraging patrons to use the toilets in pubs and bars before leaving, rather than relying on signage in less effective locations.
42. To ensure the success of this campaign, Officers are liaising with licensed premises, the CoLP, and other stakeholders. The strategy will include distributing posters and cardboard cutouts to local venues, supported by on-street activations such as bollard covers. The campaign's effectiveness will be evaluated through external coverage, social engagement, and inspections of known anti-social behaviour hotspots.
43. As part of a further on-street intervention officers have undertaken a small project at a secluded corner on Fann Street, partly screened by foliage from the nearby wildlife garden, which had become a regular hotspot for public urination. The location was particularly problematic as gaps in an adjoining fence allowed urine to enter the yard of an adjacent residential facility, creating both nuisance and

distress for residents.

44. In response, officers worked with The Shakespeare pub, located just 20 metres away and already a member of the Community Toilet Scheme, to provide a practical alternative for those in need. Customised glow-in-the-dark signage was installed at the hotspot, both warning of fines for public urination and clearly directing people towards the pub's facilities. In addition, a large planter was repositioned in the corner to make the area more visible from the street and reduce the sense of seclusion that had made it attractive for misuse, while keeping the footway clear.
45. Anecdotal feedback suggests that these measures have reduced the problem, though not eliminated it completely. Officers are now exploring the introduction of larger planters to reinforce this success and further deter inappropriate use of the site.

Explore additional funding opportunities

46. In 2024/25 the cost to the Environment Department's local risk budget of providing the City's two attended public toilets was £645,000. This cost included utilities, rates, supplies, consumables and staffing costs. This cost was offset by income generated from entry to the sites totalling £253,000, for a net cost to the Environment Department of £392,000. Overheads and maintenance costs of £164,000 bring the overall cost to the City Corporation to £556,000.
47. Two facilities at Eastcheap and Royal Exchange / Bank Station were closed in 2020 as they were uneconomic to operate. In terms of the future of the facility at Eastcheap, it lies beneath the Eastcheap / Gracechurch St / Cannon St junction and TfL have expressed a strong interest in acquiring them to enable the redesign of that junction. The scheme will aim to considerably improve pedestrian facilities and road safety at that difficult junction and design work is currently being completed by TfL before public consultation in 2026.
48. In terms of the facilities at Royal Exchange (Bank Underground exit), officers and Members (including the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee) explored the possibility of TfL taking on the management of those facilities as part of a wider initiative by the Mayor of London and TfL to increase toilet provision on the Underground network. However, TfL chose instead to focus on provision within the gate line with users of Bank station now able to benefit from toilets being made available at the new exit onto Cannon Street.
49. Current refurbishment works being undertaken at Tower Hill which are being funded by the Cyclical Works Programme are costing £935,000 and indicate the level of refurbishment work that could be required given the length of time that facility has been closed. TfL suggested a similar amount of capital funding would be required to bring Royal Exchange back into operation which is well beyond the City Fund budgets currently available. In addition, the local risk revenue cost of staffing and operating that facility would likely be in the region of £127,000 pa set against a likely income of £14,000 based on pre-pandemic usage levels. The net

operating cost would therefore be an estimated £113,000 pa plus overheads, meaning its return into operation continues to be unaffordable from both a capital and revenue cost perspective.

50. In terms of alternative funding sources, officers have investigated the scope of both Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding and the On Street Parking Reserve (OSPR), but funds have strict criteria and although capital funding for the refurbishment of facilities may qualify for CIL funding, revenue funding for the operating of public conveniences would not. One other opportunity could be through the BID network and officers will seek to raise this through the service review panel process which is being proposed as part of a refreshed governance arrangement between the City and the BIDs going forward.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

Strategic implications

51. Provision of public toilets is understood to be important in delivering on the ambitions of Destination City and the corporate plan outcomes of providing excellent services, a vibrant thriving destination and flourishing public spaces.

Financial implications

52. As noted above, the net operating cost of the City's two staffed public conveniences was £556,000 in 2024/25.
53. This net costs represents a gross running cost of £809,000 less the £253,000 income received from the entrance fee. The current entrance fee of 50p was introduced over ten years ago to help offset the costs to the Corporation of running these facilities and it has not changed since. Other providers such as Network Rail are able to offer their toilets free of charge because they can absorb their resource costs within a wider facility, but the City Corporation is not able to do this, meaning that charging a fee is an essential part of the operating model for these facilities.
54. Despite rising costs, the City's fee has not changed in that time for two main reasons, namely to keep them affordable for users but also to continue to enable single-coin transactions (for instance, moving from 50p to 60p would require at least two coins as opposed to the one coin required for a 50p entry).
55. Payment can be made by both cash and card at both facilities and despite cashless payment being offered for some time, a considerable number of transactions remain with coins.
56. There is no minimum or maximum amount that a local authority can levy as a fee. In terms of benchmarking, Islington and Kensington & Chelsea provide their

facilities free of charge, whilst Westminster charge between 50p and 80p dependent on the facilities. Some privately owned locations in London such as Camden Market and Covent Garden charge £1 to £1.50.

57. Considering the City's wider budget pressures set out in the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP), there will be increasing pressure to reduce the net cost of all services delivered by the Corporation, and as such officers expect to have to continue to keep the net cost of running these facilities under review.

Legal implications

58. Provision of Public Conveniences is not a statutory service which Local Authorities are required to provide.

Equalities implications

59. Any addition or removal of public conveniences could have equalities implications and a test of relevance would be undertaken if this were to happen.

Risk implications – None

Resource implications – None

Climate implications – None

Security implications – None

Conclusion

60. Members are asked to note the report.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Toilet Provision in the City of London

Appendix 2 – Installed signage at City of London Sites

Appendix 3 – Installed signage at City of London Car Parks

Appendix 4 – Community Toilet Scheme Provision

Appendix 5 - Recent schemes with resolution to grant from Planning Application Sub Committee

Background Papers

PHES Committee July 2024 – Public Convenience Provision

Joe Kingston

Assistant Director – Gardens and Cleansing

E: joe.kingston@cityoflondon.gov.uk