

## **GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE PROVISION**

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### **SUMMARY:**

This report highlights a partnership case study offering public access to toilet facilities.

## **1. LOCAL CONCERNS**

- 1.1 The committee has previously discussed and expressed concern about the lack of public conveniences within the Harbour area.
- 1.2 The current lack of public resources available to prioritise public convenience developments has led the committee to look at how other UK towns have addressed the problem.

## **2. PERTH AND KINROSS COMFORT SCHEME**

- 2.1 This scheme, developed by Perth and Kinross Council in consultation with the Perthshire Tourist Board, is a partnership with local service providers to offer their toilet facilities free of charge to members of the public whether or not they are a customer in addition to existing public toilets.
- 2.2 As at December, 2008, there are 28 Comfort Scheme partners, albeit across a larger geographical location than the town of Whitehaven represents. Each location is listed by its name and address with a photo, and details against four key criteria: opening hours, open period, facilities, disabled access.
- 2.3 The benefits to Comfort Scheme Partners are:
  - More potential customers coming into the business premises;
  - Good publicity as part of the Scheme, including signage; and
  - A payment from the council three times per year.
- 2.4 Commitment of participant Partners:
  - Keep toilets available, clean and signage displayed;
  - 3 year (negotiable) agreement with the option for two months written notice.
- 2.5 This scheme is run by the Council's Environment services

### **3. KEY ISSUES**

- 3.1 What evidence do we have that this is a key problem justifying public investment?
- 3.2 The Perth and Kinross scheme costs the council and demands capacity in terms of advice, scheme management and inspection. The overview of the Perth case study has not been discussed and considered by the Council's Environment Services. Clearly there is no capacity and resource currently for any such scheme investigation by the Council.
- 3.3 Subject to 3.1 and 3.2 there is potentially an opportunity to investigate any partner support for such a scheme with a range of local service providers, including Enterprise Whitehaven and larger stores.
- 3.4 This overview does not provide any financial or operational detail and any further discussion on the appropriateness of such a scheme in Copeland would require a clearer understanding of the difficulties and benefits from the Perthshire scheme, and access to any evaluation and Partner feedback.
- 3.5 Any future adapted scheme for Whitehaven would need a full feasibility study led by environment services and would best be undertaken as part of future public realm and Townscape Heritage Initiative developments including improved signage for the Town.