

Preliminary Assessment of the Car Park Public Toilets

Part 1

Discussion Paper (22 June 2019)

SPC Premises Committee Working Party

1. Proposal for a Public Toilet Upgrading Project

This paper discusses potential projects that need funding in the very near future or need to be included in the 2020/2021 SPC Annual Budget. This discussion paper was completed in time for the 2nd July 2019 meeting in order to assist the Premises Working Party in their preliminary deliberations.



Further detailed investigation is still required but the preliminary conclusion is that certain internal fittings of the car park public toilets in Steyning are not fit for purpose and they are not up to the standard expected by residents, visitors and tourists alike. The preliminary proposals are as follows:

(a) A toilet seat or whole toilet replacement of the appropriate design for heavy duty public use should be installed in the large Unisex toilet. The current installation is insanitary and extremely off-putting for someone to use and no doubt many do not do so even after entering the facility.

(b) A urinal should also be fitted in the large Unisex toilet since that would reduce the soiling of the current and future toilet seat. At present male users may enter the Unisex toilet and not be aware that there is a urinal at the other end of the building. Locating the single urinal in place of the mirror would reduce plumbing requirements. The mirror could be relocated within the room.

(c) There is a toilet at the rear of the building that is usually locked and therefore the utilisation level is very low. At this stage it is a preliminary idea but it may be possible to provide an entry through the cupboard in the urinal where the caretakers equipment is currently kept and subsequently relocate the caretakers cupboard to the large Unisex toilet. This would require creating access from the men's urinal but the advantage is that it

would allow males alerted by the 'Mens' sign to have access to a sit down toilet as well as to the two existing urinals. I have not specifically researched this potential option but will do so before the Premises meeting with anyone who is interested.

(d) A 'Mens' sign on the end wall adjacent to the Steyning Partnership notice board might alert more male users to the existence of the urinal.

(e) Any other proposals welcomed?

2. Men's Urinal - The Men's Urinal has been recently upgraded by the SPC and has a modern appearance that appears to a layman to be very acceptable. Within the urinal is the SPC caretakers cupboard where the necessary cleaning materials are stored.



There are two urinals with one slightly lower than the other for the younger generation. The sink, taps and soap dispenser are attractive whilst the wall painting is a suitable neutral colour. Overall the men's urinal seems to be in an acceptable condition for residents and visitors alike. There might be a case for locating the 'Mens' sign that is currently located on the bus shelter itself and move it to the wall so that it is more visible to potential users. At present visitors might believe that there are only two self-contained toilets available for use.

3. Unisex Main Toilet - The Unisex and disabled main toilet is located at the left-hand side of the bus shelter next to the Ladies toilet. It is a very large room that used to be the men's urinal and its size is unusual and somewhat disconcerting the actual toilet being so far from the door. The installation looks fairly recent and is of stainless steel which gives it an unfriendly feel more familiar to a prison. The toilet unit itself is closer than ideal to the wash basin and that gives a very cramped feel. The reason may well be to enable disabled users easy access to the support rails.



A significant shortcoming is the toilet seat itself which is totally unacceptable. It is very likely that many people refuse to use it. The primary reason for this seat design is likely to be for ease of cleaning and to reduce vandalism. However if people are unwilling to use it then the installation has failed in its objective. Adapted toilet seats are available for use in prisons and for use in public toilets that are made to be vandal proof. Initial enquiries have been made to see if the current stainless steel toilet can have a heavy duty plastic toilet seat and hinged cover fitted to it. However it will probably be necessary to contact the original supplier to confirm if that option is available.



It is totally unacceptable for residents and visitors alike to be faced with the current facility. If an adaption cannot be located then it may, in my personal opinion, require that the present unit be replaced with a toilet that is far more acceptable.

The Unisex main toilet should also include a urinal because the seat will currently be contaminated by male users who are not aware of the mens urinal location. The urinal could be located where the mirror is currently situated giving ready access to the drainage outlet.

The baby changing facilities appear to be acceptable on first appearance.



The locking system on the Unisex toilet does not appear to be entirely satisfactory because the door frame and door do not seem to be entirely compatible. Since the toilet itself is some distance from the door any uncertainty about the lock would be disconcerting to users. There are numerous windows that can be left open to dissipate odours. The caretaker visit frequency record board is very visible and the twice a day entries are reassuring.

4. Ladies Toilet - Photographs and an inspection of the Ladies toilet have yet to be undertaken.

Appendix 1: Crematorium Toilet

The crematorium installation in Worthing provides an example of a well designed public toilet that has a clean and welcoming appearance. The proposal is not to replace all of the stainless steel fittings in Steyning because they may have been fairly recently installed by the SPC at significant cost. However a sensible toilet seat or complete toilet unit similar to that shown is felt to be a minimum requirement.



The other end of the crematorium toilet is equally attractive whilst on the wall not illustrated here there is a baby changing unit.



Appendix 2: Billingshurst Toilets

The Billingshurst public toilets have been recently upgraded and have been awarded a Gold standard certificate by the 'Loo of the Year' organisation. I therefore made an informal visit in order to determine why they had been considered worthy of such an award. The Billingshurst toilets are not too dissimilar externally to the Steyning toilets.



Unisex Toilet



I was not able to gain access to the disabled toilet and perhaps another visit to Billingshurst will be required.

The two Unisex toilets were visited and the main features were a more standard seat made of marble that was fixed in place. The hand washing facilities comprised of an all-in-one soap, water and drying unit whilst the toilet paper unit consisted of what I would consider unsatisfactory design.



I had major concerns about the toilet unit because there was no urinal in the room and male users would therefore make the seat insanitary. The failure to install a hinged seat and cover was in my view a major failing even if a urinal were to be installed in the toilet.

The other feature of the Billingshurst toilets were that they had a 15 minute timer on the door lock. Overall I was not impressed by the Billingshurst toilets for the reasons given but primarily because of the unavoidable soiling of the seat.

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