



**SCRUTINY & PETITIONS COMMITTEE
TO BE HELD ON THURSDAY, 7TH
DECEMBER, 2023**

**Please find attached the presentation in respect of Item
5 on the agenda for the above meeting.**

5.	Public Toilet Provision in the Scottish Borders (Pages 3 - 18) Interim progress update presentation by Director Infrastructure & Environment. (Copy to follow.)	20 mins
----	---	---------

This page is intentionally left blank



Public Toilets

Page 3

John Curry Director Infrastructure & Environment

Agenda Item 5

Council Decision 27 public toilets open for use, 14 remain closed and will not reopen.

Key Principles

- 1** The condition of public toilets influences visitor and local perception of a community and there is a need to enhance the condition of the 27 facility operational toilet estate. To achieve this a programme of surveys and capital investment is needed.
- 2** The Council will maintain the current operational estate including the provision of one Council provided facility per each major existing settlement.
- 3** A phased approach to upgrading payment operated locking facilities will be implemented along with a move to accepting contactless payment facilities.
- 4** Provisions will continue to be maintained for those who need access for medical reasons and/ or emergency access via the RADAR mechanism.
- 5** An appropriate cleaning and inspection regime has to be maintained on a daily basis with cleaning of public toilets undertaken once per day.

Page 4

Public Toilet Provision in the Scottish Borders – for the progress updates, to assess progress with the future provision as agreed at Council on 30 March 2023.

For the hearing, to assess:

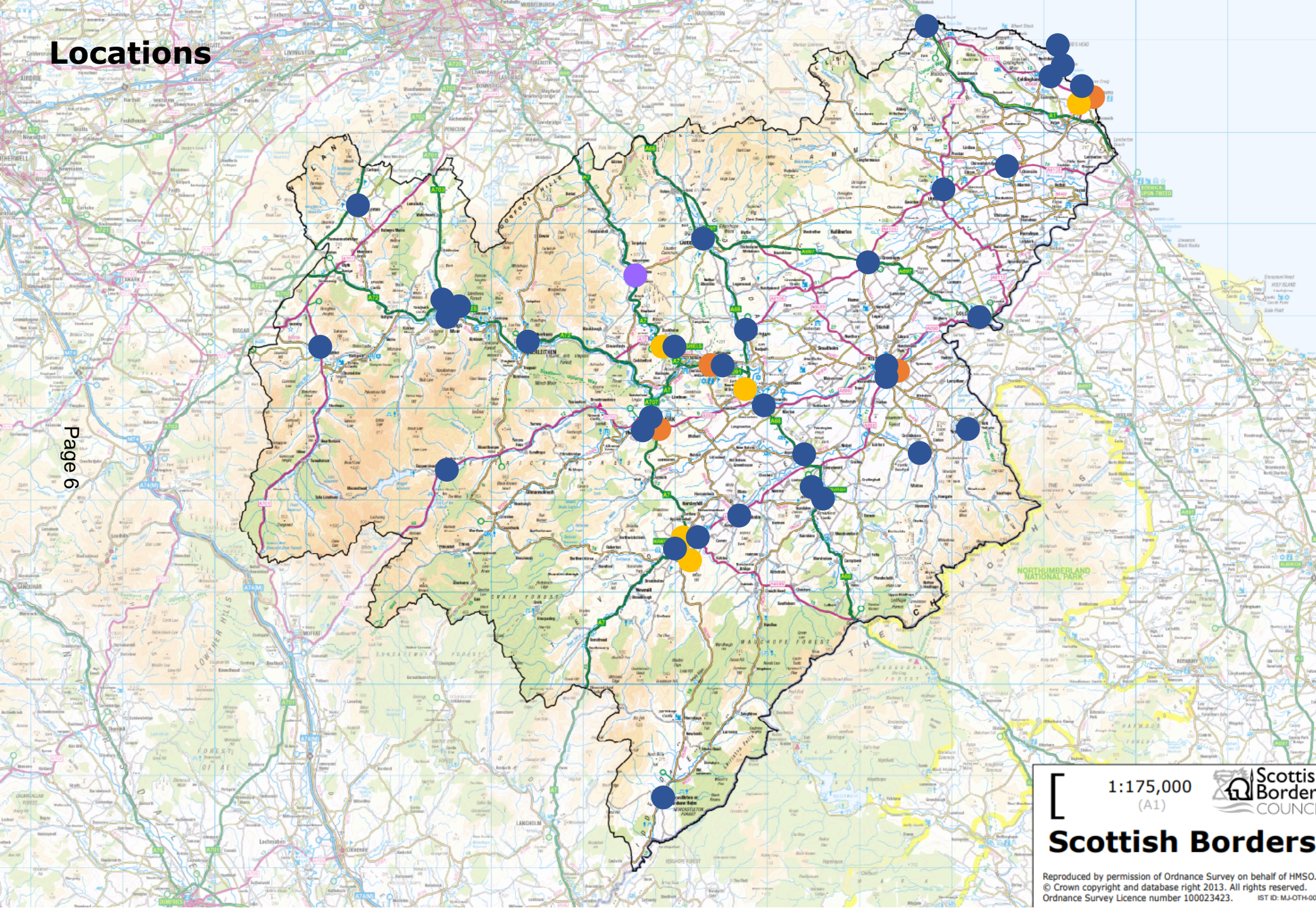
- The results of the surveys of SBC public toilets and the proposed enhancements
- The results of the mapping exercise for toilet facilities open to the public
- The communications/signage in place for public toilet facilities across the region
- Complaints received by the Council on public toilet facilities (or the lack of facilities)

Interim progress updates **7 December 2023** and **23 May 2024**, then information hearing in **Winter 24/25**


Locations

- Open
- Closed
- Disabled only
- Provision needed

Page 6



1:175,000
(A1)



Scottish Borders

Condition and Suitability Definitions

Grade		Condition	Suitability
A	Good	<i>Performing well and operating efficiently</i>	<i>Physical element carries out function totally as new including consideration of the transverse elements.</i>
B	Satisfactory	<i>Performing adequately but showing minor deterioration</i>	<i>Physical element carries out function satisfactorily, may show signs of age and including consideration of some transverse elements.</i>
C Page 7	Poor	<i>Showing major defects and/or not operating adequately</i>	<i>Physical element does not carry out function effectively without continuous repair, shows signs of age and does not consider most of the transverse elements.</i>
D	Bad	<i>Life expired and/or serious risk of imminent failure</i>	<i>Economic life expired and/or risk of failure.</i>

Status & Condition

Town	Location	Status	Condition Grade	Condition Grade (%)
Burnmouth	No facility			
Broughton	King George the 5th Playing Field	Open	B	74%
Chirnside	Crosshill	Open	B	64%
Cockburnspath	Main Street	Open	B	85%
Coldingham	Sands	Open	B	82%
Coldingham	Bridge Street Car Park	Community run		
Coldstream	Courthouse Car Park	Open	B	79%
Denholm	Dene Road	Open	B	68%
Duns	Briery Baulk	Open	C	59%
Earlston	Market Square	Open	B	82%
Eyemouth	Bantry Car Park		B	77%
Eyemouth	Harbour (FMA)	Community exploration; Disabled only		
Galashiels	Transport Interchange	Open	A	100%
Galashiels	Bank Street Gardens	Closed		
Galashiels	High Street Car Park	Disabled only		
Greenlaw	The Square	Open	B	79%
Hawick	Common Haugh Car Park		B	68%
Hawick	Howegate	Disabled only		
Hawick	Volunteer Park	Disabled only		
Hawick	Wilton Lodge Park	Privately run		

Status & Condition

Town	Location	Status	Condition Grade	Condition Grade (%)
Innerleithen	Hall Street	Open	B	74%
Innerleithen	Old Hall Street	Under development for Community run		
Jedburgh	Tourist Information Centre	Open (Comm)	B	79%
Jedburgh	Lothian Park	Community run		
Jedburgh	Harestanes	Privately run		
Kelso	Horsemarket	Open	A	88%
Kelso	Shedden Park	Open	B	81%
Kelso	Croft Park	Potential sale		
Lauder	The Avenue	Open	B	82%
Melrose	Abbey Place	Open	B	71%
Melrose	Greenyards	Ad hoc operation by MRFC		
Morebattle	Main Street	Open	B	82%
Newtown St Boswells	Main Street	Disabled only		
Newcastleton	Langholm Street	Open	B	85%
Peebles	Eastgate Car Park	Open	B	77%
Peebles	Kingsmeadows	Disabled only		
Peebles	Haylodge	Community run (weekends only)		
Peebles	School Brae	Potential sale		
Selkirk	Market Place	Open	B	76%
Selkirk	Scotts Place	Closed		

Status & Condition

Town	Location	Status	Condition Grade	Condition Grade (%)
St Abbs	Harbour	Open	B	75%
St Boswells	Main Street	Open	B	80%
Stow	Edinburgh Road	Condemned, CAT progressing, alt needed.		
Town Yetholm	High Street	Open	B	74%
West Linton	Main Street	Open	A	90%
Yarrow Valley	St Mary's Loch	Finalising negotiations – privately run		

Page

18 Condition Surveys Complete in November 2023.

Scope of proposed enhancements to be developed, balanced with other priorities with the Council's estate, recognising competing pressures within the Capital Investment Plan.

Payment Operating Locking Facilities

Council charges for access to 17 of the 27 facilities

Income this generates is offset by an increasing burden of repairs and operating costs.

	FY22/23	FY23/24 YTD
Income	£18,497	£15,710
Repairs to coin collection unit	£ 263	£ 4,903
Coin collection costs (contracted)	£10,754	£ 5,506
Net income	£ 7,480	£ 5,357

Frequent breakdowns of the coin collection units impact opening times, result in expensive repairs (by Healthmatic) and delays in reopening.

Experiencing incidents of doors being kicked in to bypass the automated locking system.

Incidents where members of the public have been locked into the toilet due to the automated locking mechanism failing – this year in Earlston, Eyemouth, Jedburgh and Innerleithen.

Monitoring breakdowns. YTD 6 callouts for repair - 2 each respectively in Eyemouth, Peebles and Kelso.

To manage the revenue burden, we have trialled removing charging a 6 sites to assess the outcome for communities in terms of vandalism and condition complaints levels (footfall data is not currently available)

The site under trial are

- Melrose
- Coldingham
- Kelso (Shedden Park & Horsemarket)
- Innerleithen
- Duns

Not seen a direct increase in vandalism levels or complaints relating to the removal of charging at these facilities.

Income from coin collection offset against the operating costs, repairs and customer experience is not considered the most efficient or effective delivery model.

2 options:

- **Option 1** – invest in estate wide contactless collection
- **Option 2** – remove charging from most facilities

Mapping

Engaged with a Civtech Pilot partner to explore a digital mapping tool to support strategic assessment of the public toilet network to support wider engagement and communication.

This pilot was announced as not being taken forward by the Civtech consultants on 28 November 2023.

Officers are now developing this in-house, using GIS spatial mapping to identify opportunities, gaps and key priorities such as proximity to local parks and play facilities.

Community Planning Partners, LIVE Borders and further private/third sector partners will be engaged in this process.

While preliminary desktop work has been undertaken, this will commence fully in January 2024.

Promotion of opening hours will be factored into this mapping work.

Community Led Initiatives

Officers are working with community groups interested in community-led operation and are exploring different models of provision appropriate to each situation. We will continue to actively explore options with interested groups.

Location	Summary
Old Hall Street, Innerleithen	The Hub CIC have a lease for the old toilet block at Hall Street, Innerleithen. Proposal currently to renovate, adding showers and bike washing facilities for use by mountain bikers.
Lothian Park/TIC, Jedburgh	Jedburgh Leisure Facilities Trust (JLFT) are currently operating public toilets at Lothian Park and are temporarily trialling operation at the TIC facilities in Jedburgh. Discussions are ongoing about longer term model.
Harbour Road, Eyemouth	Eyemouth Trust have noted interest in operating the facilities at Harbour Road car park; SBC have repaired and renovated ready for community operation. Discussions are ongoing. Meanwhile the disabled facility remains operational.
Stow	The toilet building in Stow is no longer fit for purpose; the community have noted interest in this site for alternative uses. Officers are actively exploring with the community possible comfort scheme options.
Croft Park, Kelso	Kelso rugby club are interested in leasing the toilets. They are proposing to renovate potentially adding a small kitchen area. The toilets will be open during rugby training and matches at Croft Park.

Page 1

Comfort Scheme

Explored Comfort Scheme model.

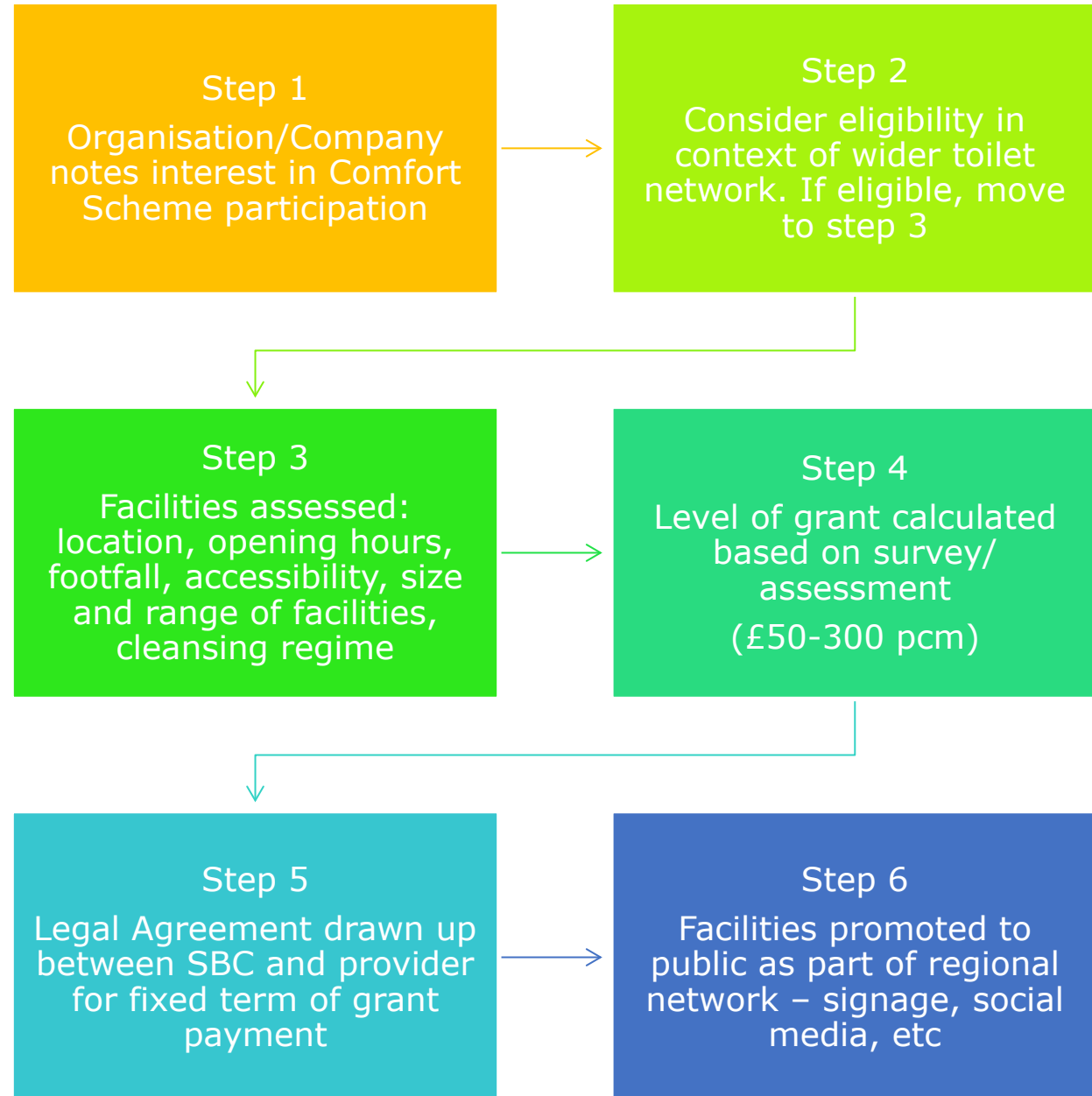
Benchmark is Highland Council who have a comprehensive Comfort Scheme across the region.

This is an option where alternatives to Council provision are being sought; grant funding can support access to facilities through the private/ third sector.

The operating costs for a comfort scheme can, in that scenario, be offset against the revenue saving of any decommissioned Council facilities.

The only current site that this is applicable to is in Stow; where the Council facilities are no longer fit for purpose.

Officers are undertaking preliminary discussions with the community; these are ongoing.



Cleaning Standards

Public Toilets are cleaned a minimum of once a day. In busier town centre facilities, these are visited for inspection/ cleaning/ restocking a second time in the afternoon, subject to staffing.

Refresher training for all staff involved in toilet cleaning is being planned for delivery in January. This is a joint initiative between Facilities Management and Parks & Environment staff, through the Cleaning Academy.

This is being delivered in small focus groups, and through involving frontline staff in delivery we are working to encourage and empower staff autonomy, building on local knowledge and expertise.

Presentation

A signage audit has been undertaken, recognising the legacy of various generations and conditions of Public Toilet signage that exists.

Staff are working to remove any temporary signage, and seek to get a better and more consistent standard of presentation across the network.

Complaints

There have been 3 formal complaints received regarding public toilets in the Borders so far in 2023; relating to condition and amount of provision.

St Mary's Loch

SBC lease in the toilets at St Mary's Loch. Termination of this lease is in progress. The landowner will continue to operate these toilets where this is financially and practically viable.

School Brae, Peebles

Community asset transfer processes commenced with the Peebles Community Trust

Page 16

Five other enquiries received since the report to Council in March 2023 about closing toilets:

- General enquiry for any of the closed toilets
- Three enquiries for Bank Street, Galashiels – two private individuals and community interest in using the building for a Robert Coltart museum
- One enquiry for Howegate, Hawick. Disabled toilet remains open at this location.

This page is intentionally left blank