1 Purpose of Report/Recommendations

1.1 To update members in relation to the ongoing review of public conveniences across the Council area and to seek nominations for an officer/member working group.

2 Background

2.1 Council currently provides, owns or maintains a number of public conveniences across the council area as indicated in Appendix 1. Members will be aware of a previous report to Committee in February 2016 which referred to reviews of public convenience provision across the council area that were undertaken by the British Toilet Association (BTA). The BTA Toilet Provision Surveys undertaken in 2015 reviewed the current council owned toilet provision across the district and also the total overall provision available to tourists and visitors to the district (private and council facilities).

2.2 Following the recommendation to committee, officers have considered the contents of the BTA reports and have continued to progress with the review of public conveniences.

2.3 It is now considered appropriate to set up an officer/member working group to further progress the review process. It is anticipated that the working group will consider, inter alia the following: terms of reference for the working group, carry out a review of current provision, consider the quality of current provision, determine the need for future provision, consider usage patterns, to consider the most appropriate types of public convenience (automatic/semi-automatic/open access etc) required, to review current provision against current disabled facilities requirements and access arrangements, to review geographic distribution across the council area, to review charging policies, to consider any antisocial behaviour, vandalism and substance misuse related to public conveniences, to consider alternative provision models into the future including the Community Toilet Scheme and Changing Places initiative.

2.4 Given the diversity of public conveniences provision across the district and emerging initiatives such as the Community Toilet Scheme and Changing Places initiative (http://www.changing-places.org/) it is considered necessary to establish an officer/member working group to consider all relevant matters. It is envisaged that the working group will be required for a limited period and will report back to Committee with recommendations and action plan.
3 Key Issues

3.1 Councils are not statutorily obliged to provide public toilets although the vast majority of Councils across the UK still have some provision. Public toilets can be considered a vital service, both for residents and visitors to the city and district. They are especially important for certain groups, such as the elderly or those with certain health conditions, as well as for tourists. Public toilets can support businesses in boosting customer footfall, by giving people more confidence to move around the city and district, and helping to keep the Council area clean.

3.2 Current council owned and managed public conveniences consist of a range of ages, quality, capacity and are not consistently located across the council area. There are more public conveniences located in the former Strabane District Council area than in the former Derry City Council area.

3.3 An action plan is required that considers future need for public conveniences, the delivery model(s) best suited to future demand and all related matters require further consideration through the proposed working group. To enable the review to proceed terms of reference will be agreed. Recommendations can then be brought before committee for consideration.

4 Financial, Equality, Legal, HR, Improvement and other Implications

4.1 Current council owned facilities are included as part of the rates estimates process. The outcome of the review of public conveniences and the proposed action plan will require to be considered by the capital projects working group and formally agreed with council. Until the review is complete it is not possible to accurately predict cost for implementation of the recommendations of the review process.

4.2 If council agrees to proceed with the Community Toilet Scheme there will be financial costs associated with the implementation and management of the scheme and annual review of participants in the scheme.

4.3 If council decides to provide a Changing Place facility there will be capital costs involved and other related costs such as promotion of the facility in addition to the annual running costs.

4.4 If council decides that some existing public conveniences are surplus to requirements there will be associated costs including potential human resource costs relating to the staff involved in the day to day cleaning and related duties.

5 Recommendations

5.1 Council agrees to set up an officer/member working group to consider all related matters relevant to the review of public conveniences across the district area.

Background Papers

Appendix 1: List of Public Conveniences