

Preamble to support the Motion to Mendip District Council at 20th February 2017 Full Council on 'Supporting fully accessible Changing Places disabled toilets in Mendip District'

It is recognised that:

- Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of people with a complex or profound disability who need extra facilities to allow them to use a toilet with dignity. This includes people with physical and learning difficulties, spinal injuries, and people living with stroke, who are unable to sit, stand or bear their own weight independently and who need assistance from carers.
- The national Changing Places campaign (see <http://www.changing-places.org/>) promotes the development of toilets built to the Changing Places standard, with a ceiling hoist, changing table and more space for carers to assist. There are 919 Changing Places facilities nationally in town centres, public toilets, civic buildings, health facilities, leisure and shopping centres, bus and railway stations and airports. Many of these are owned and managed by local councils.
- There are currently no Changing Places facilities anywhere in Mendip district, and few elsewhere in the county of Somerset. *N.B. Clarks Village in Street have agreed to provide a Changing Places facility in future (although the commitment to proceed is to be confirmed).*
- People with these needs in Mendip are currently forced to be changed on the toilet floor, which is unhygienic and puts their carers at risk of injury, or they go home, or do not make the trip at all.
- Research by Somerset County Council and Glastonbury & District Mencap has estimated that Changing Places facilities in the district would benefit over 7700 people in Mendip district and would allow them to spend time in Frome, Wells, Shepton Mallet, Street and Glastonbury.
- This would benefit the local economy, and increase tourism into the district by attracting families and groups who book visits to places where a Changing Places facility is present.
- There is current no specific Government funding stream for Changing Places facilities, but possible sources of funding include council funds, commercial and public sector building developments, Big Lottery grants, crowdfunding and business sponsorship, Section 106 Agreements and (in future) the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- The Council is facing reduced Government funding in this and future years' Local Government Finance Settlement, so is less able than before to fund the installation of new CP facilities.
- The Council recently increased the borrowing limit to £40m in order to be able to invest in projects that provide community benefit.
- There is no specific legal or planning policy requirement to install Changing Places facilities, although the Government is considering their inclusion in a review of Building Regulations.
- The Council provides public toilets, owns and manages land and buildings in accessible places, and has a wealth of relevant expertise. The Changing Places Practical Guide identifies case studies where other local authorities have worked in cross-sector partnerships with businesses

and other organisations to provide Changing Places, with costs and responsibilities for installation and management being shared in different ways. The Council can therefore help coordinate and facilitate provision in Mendip by taking a leadership role, working with partner organisations and empowering local communities.

- There is an urgent need to identify the feasible options and the costs (of equipment, construction or refurbishment work, and maintenance) involved in providing Changing Places facilities in town centre locations in each main settlement, and in a range of existing facilities, to decide on the preferred options and establish the costs, so that local communities can raise the funds required.
- Relevant organisations to involve in planning provision of Changing Places include Somerset County Council, town/parish/city councils, charities (including Mencap), community groups, the Somerset Learning Disability Partnership Board, adult social care and disability teams, care homes, day centres, carers' groups (including Carers Voice Somerset), shopping centres, businesses, chambers of commerce, Business Improvement Districts, landowners, developers, Fusion and other leisure providers, health and educational providers, Patient Participation Groups, Health Forums, civic halls, libraries and cultural facilities, and faith organisations (including churches and the Diocese of Bath & Wells).
- The provision of Changing Places facilities would help ensure the Council's compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty and duty not to discriminate under the Equalities Act 2010.

Reference should also be made to the more detailed background reports attached to the motion, prepared by **Mencap Glastonbury & District Branch**, and the report and 'Supporting Voices' testimonies from **Frome Changing Places Group**.

Further information:

Changing Places: <http://www.changing-places.org/> (including a Practical Guide)

Daily Mail article, 16 January 2017: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-4081556/Society-needs-play-catch-Parents-complain-having-change-disabled-children-dirty-toilet-floors-standard-loos-don-t-adequate-facilities.html>

A debate in Parliament, 17 January 2017: <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2017-01-17/debates/OAD7E21D-1527-4826-BF45-7045CE807A3D/ToiletFacilitiesPeopleWithDisabilities>

Frome Standard article, 23 January 2017: <http://www.somersetlive.co.uk/parents-campaigning-for-better-disabled-toilet-facilities-after-having-to-change-children-on-floor/story-30079223-detail/story.html>

Daily Mirror article, 6 February 2017: <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/grim-doesnt-come-close-parents-9766548>)

The Government's response to a petition on Changing Places facilities: https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/177423?reveal_response=yes.

8th February 2017