



PC Closure Protocol and Procedure

Introduction

The Highland Council operate over 70 public conveniences. These vary in terms of age, building condition and facilities offered. Older properties do not offer disabled facilities, newer ones do. Access to the disabled facilities is generally by way of a RADAR key and operated in line with recommended practice of keeping these units locked to prevent vandalism.

There is a charge of 50p to enter some sites. Some sites have enhanced facilities, such as showers and there is a charge of £2 for five minutes.

There are occasions when a site must be closed or partially closed. Closure could be due to the facility requiring a routine repair, some maintenance work, due to vandalism, or a refurbishment project.

Maintenance

When maintenance work, reactive or planned, is required at a site, it is important that this is conducted as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to users. Our ability to do this is dependent on budget/costs, and availability of labour and materials.

Where possible, only the facilities requiring maintenance will be closed. i.e., the ladies, the gents, or where provided the disabled facilities. Signage will be displayed with the alternative arrangements for users. If a site must close, signage will direct users to the nearest alternative public convenience.

Vandalism

Vandalism is increasing at our sites. It results in unnecessary distress to users when sites are closed, and cost and reputational damage to the Council. It is our experience that CCTV does not act as a deterrent to vandals.

Where a site has been vandalised a record of the vandalism and cost to make good will be kept. Unlike maintenance works, where we will try to keep open part of the

facility, when a site is vandalised, we will consider based on risk, closing the whole facility. The threat of ongoing vandalism is high where a site is being targeted and the most effective way to reduce further damage to the facility is to instruct a full closure to prevent vandals returning and causing further damage.

Where a site receives regular vandalism a three strikes rule will apply. However, if the damage caused is significant the site will be closed and remain closed pending discussion with local Members about how the site can be operated sustainably in the future.

Usually after three incidents of vandalism within a one-month period a one-week closure will be instructed. Once reopened if further vandalism occurs a one-month closure will be instructed. Once reopened if further vandalism occurs the site will remain closed.

During this period, we will liaise with Members and community groups and encourage them to consider a community asset transfer (CAT) or lease, which allows them to manage and run the facilities within the community. We can then offer a Comfort Scheme payment that will contribute towards the running costs of the facilities.

Closure Protocol

If a site or part of the site is deemed to be unfit for use due to a maintenance issue or damage from vandalism, a closure will be instructed.

Closure/Reopening Procedure

To establish a clear line of responsibility and to be transparent for the reasons for the closure the following steps will be followed as necessary, not all steps will apply in all cases:

1. Maintenance issue or vandalism detected (usually by the cleaner)
2. Cleaner advises Supervisor and closure/part closure agreed
3. Site is made safe (water switched off, windows/doors secured)
4. Facility is locked (padlocked in some instances)
5. Signage erected notifying of closure and alternative facilities
6. Building Maintenance or Facilities Officer informed
7. Police informed (if required)
8. Damage investigated (by Building Maintenance or Facilities Officer)
9. Insurance department informed (if required)
10. Community Development Manager and Corporate Communications informed via email; website updated

11. Repairs instructed
12. Repairs completed
13. Site deep cleaned
14. Site reopened
15. Ward Manager and Corporate Communications informed via email; website updated