

Scrutiny and Policy Panel Report



Public Convenience Provision in East Lindsey

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Introduction

As requested, a scrutiny panel was assembled to review the public conveniences provision throughout East Lindsey District Council. This panel met virtually and reviewed data that was provided regarding refurbishment of public conveniences facilities, revenue generation of paid-for facilities, as well as hearing the concerns of those involved with the provision from within the Council.

The panel were united on the fact that we must continue to provide public conveniences throughout the District.

The panel met 9 times between September 2023 and January 2024 and spoke to a number of officers and the Portfolio Holder as part of the scrutiny review.

The panel were asked to look at the following (see **Appendix B** for the full scope):

<p>Key Lines of Enquiry: (Focus of the review)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review current state of the free to use buildings; 2. Review current costs of providing them; 3. Do we want to continue to provide? How many? 4. Possibilities for future use of the buildings.
<p>Indicators of success (desired outcomes, what should change as a result)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To provide a view on a potential way forward on the key issues raised ➤ To have a clear action plan for the future of the free to use public convenience provision in East Lindsey

Methodology / Analysis

Every Council taxpayer, every ratepayer, and every visitor in the District uses toilets. Unlike other provisions that the District Council provides, that may only be utilised by a few, toilet provision is a different thing altogether. This, coupled with the District's reliance upon tourism, which brought in over £824 million in economic impact in 2022 ⁽¹⁾, are the main drivers for this opinion. We understand that the facilities that are already on a paid status will stay on a paid status and have a professional cleaning contract. It is the facilities that are currently being operated on a free to use basis that seem to form most of the concerns, and these are the facilities we focused on as part of our scrutiny. Note that, as discussions are already ongoing regarding conveniences at Woodhall Spa and Coningsby, the Panel did not investigate these as part of their scrutiny.

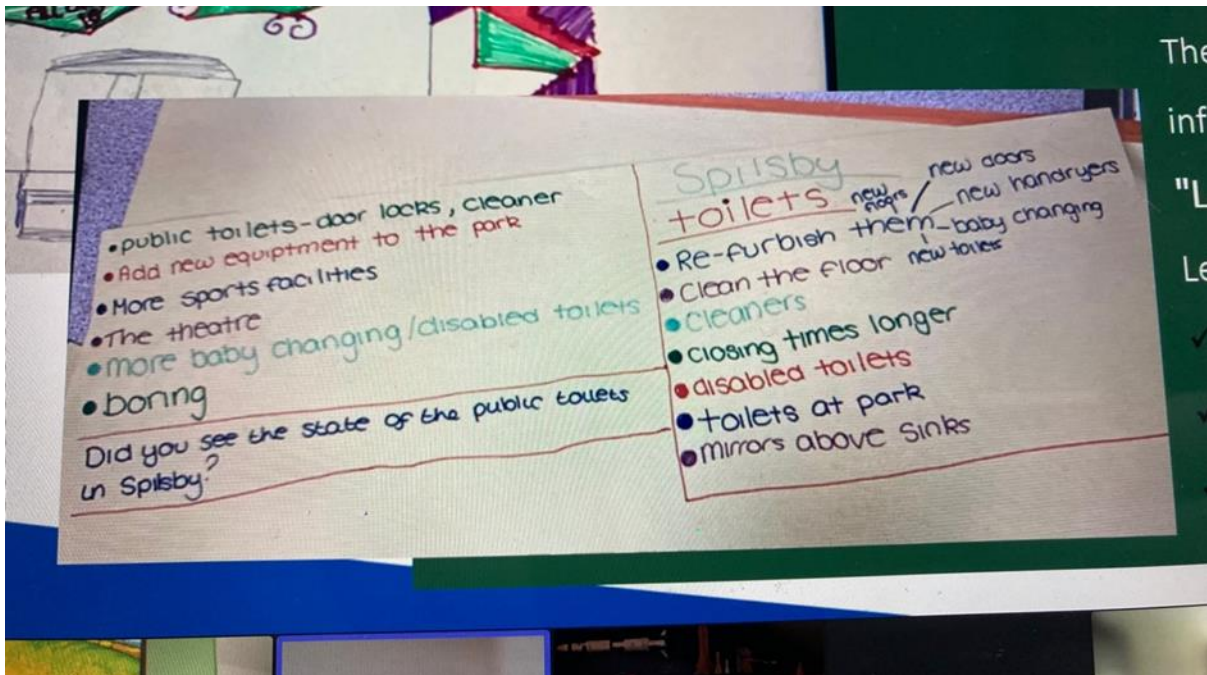
Panel members gained a strong impression from various witnesses of the desire for ELDC to divest itself of as many of these free to use facilities as possible and the panel fully appreciates this desire. However, transferring these assets to the likes of a Town/Parish Council is impossible without the District Council, firstly, bringing the facilities up to a reasonable standard, which a Town/Parish Council can then maintain going forward. If we consider Spilsby, where the historic theatre is undergoing a £5.2 million programme of restoration ⁽²⁾, their public conveniences have not had any overhaul for at least 20 years. They are in a shambolic state and the District Council cannot actually expect the town Council to take on what is currently a huge liability.

Likewise in Horncastle, where ELDC invested over £6M to build the Hub ⁽³⁾, the colourful exterior of the town's conveniences belies their interior condition. Again, the Town Council's appetite to take over these assets may be heightened significantly if they were in a fit state. The District Council seems to have put the bulk of recent public conveniences investment into the coastal destination towns and villages, whilst forgetting about the market towns (excluding Louth). The costs, as the panel understand them, to bring the facilities up to a suitable standard in light of suggested optimisations, where they could be considered as a viable asset to transfer, is in the neighbourhood of £375,000 ⁽⁴⁾. Frankly, the panel feel this is a very small sum when looking at the bigger picture. It is an **invest to save** opportunity for the District Council that seems to be crowded into the "we can't afford this" corner. Can the District afford **not** to have public conveniences when so much effort and expense goes into promoting itself for tourism?

Other considerations that may make the refurbishment costs more palatable to the District Council, and the running costs more palatable to a Town/Parish Council, would be to reduce the number of actual conveniences in so far as the number of pans available. These suggestions will be detailed separately for each location.

There are also many cost savings that can be availed of during a refurbishment that will further the attractiveness of taking on these assets to a local Town or Parish Council: PIR LED lighting, automated taps, and the like will help keep utility costs to a minimum. Suggestions of refurbishment do not preclude an option to consider a new prefabricated building as a solution where appropriate in the future. The use of a locally based cleaner would also offer savings over bringing

staff in from across the district. Additionally, the transfer of these facilities to the Town/Parish Council may instil a local sense of pride and ownership.



Feedback from pupils at King Edward VI Academy in Spilsby, provided as part of a Levelling Up workshop, taken from a presentation by Liz King, S&ELCP Investment & Skills Officer

Results / Findings

Panel suggestions for optimisation

Anderby Creek

- Refurbish the current Gents toilets into a Unisex toilet, retaining baby changing facilities, incorporate a cleaner's cupboard into the refurbishment.
- Refurbish the current Disabled toilet to remain as a Disabled toilet.
- The layout of the access points makes this location ideal to split in half and to repurpose the current Ladies side of the block.
- An existing beach goods and café are located at one end of the car park, hence the suggestion being that the repurpose be non-commercial as to not cannibalise a local business.
- The absence of electricity at this site also makes a repurpose more limited.

Horncastle

- Refurbish ladies half into two unisex toilets, adding natural light via Velux windows.
- Retain the family toilet and disabled toilet with suitable updating of laminate surfaces and ventilation points.
- The Gents half of the building to be repurposed. Given the location, this half of the building would make a terrific small shop or arts space (it has the most natural light at present).

Spilsby

- Given its location in the centre of the town at the bus station, and the additional investment being made into the town, the suggestion is that these toilets be refurbished without reducing the number of pans if possible.
- Part of this refurbishment should bring in cold water to the sinks and widen the cubicles, particularly in the ladies side.
- Steps should be taken to allow natural light and better ventilation on both sides.

Wainfleet

- The toilet block at Wainfleet could be optimised in a similar fashion to Anderby Creek, with the Gents refurbished as a Unisex toilet and the Disabled refurbished as is.
- However, the commercial draw of the former ladies block will be extremely limited unless separate access is created.
- However, it may be interesting to the T/P Council as a storage area.

Wragby

- Reduction of one urinal or conversion to trough urinal in the Gents.
- Deep cleaning of walls, replacement of flooring throughout (inclusive of disabled cubicle).
- Removal of redundant equipment.

Conclusions

This panel have concluded that, despite not being a statutory requirement, the continued provision of public conveniences at these locations are an absolute necessity, albeit one that can be managed by the Town/Parish Councils.

Furthermore, they have realised a programme of refurbishment and optimisation focusing on minimising future maintenance costs is essential, not only for the long term sustainability and viability of the conveniences, but for local Town and Parish Councils to be willing to accept an asset transfer. The panel did consider the addition of pay gates, but apart from possibly Wragby, concluded the facilities did not have the required footfall to make it a workable solution.

Finally, the panel agreed that they would like this to not be the end of public convenience provision within the District. The need for toilet provision will always be required. To ensure this issue is resolved rather than being revisited continually, the panel would like to see that before the next review/renewal of contracts for facilities that remain under ELDC control, the Council should consider commissioning a piece of work to consider the future of toilet provision across the district as a whole, whether via a scrutiny panel, officer options analysis, external consultant, or a combination.

Recommendations

The Panel recommends the following:

1. Parish and Town Councils should be offered the existing free to use public conveniences in their area via an asset transfer. As part of the discussions with these councils, we recommend 2 options be offered.

OPTION 1 - That the existing free to use conveniences be offered to the Town/Parish Council as an asset transfer following a programme of ELDC funded refurbishment, considering site-specific optimisations made after consultation with the receiving Council.

Should option 1 be chosen, the panel **recommend**:

- a. a 3-year tapered grant be made available to the Town/Parish Council based on the last full year's running cost, pro rata taking into account optimisations.
- b. the need to agree to a minimum 10 year commitment to keep the conveniences in operation.

OPTION 2 - That in the case of a Town/Parish Council who wish to undertake their own programme of refurbishment of existing free to use conveniences that ELDC offer a SPONSE pay out based on the site-specific optimisations alongside the asset transfer.

If option 2 is accepted, the panel **recommend**:

- a. that the SPONSE pay-out is a full and final offer of financial support.
 - b. the need to agree to a minimum 10-year commitment to offering conveniences, following their refurbishment.
 - c. a timescale be agreed with the Town/Parish Council for their refurbishment to be carried out.
2. In a case where the Town or Parish Council choose not to accept either Option 1 or 2, the panel **recommend** ELDC consider refurbishment, closing down, and/or repurposing the conveniences using the suggestions in their results / findings section of the report.
 3. Before the next review/renewal of contracts for facilities that remain under ELDC control, the Council should undertake a piece of work to consider the future of toilet provision across the district as a whole, whether via a scrutiny panel, officer options analysis, external consultant, or a combination of these.

(1)

Tourism in East Lindsey

Tourism brings record £824million economic benefit to East Lindsey

A new report by Global Tourism Solutions has highlighted the record-breaking benefits of tourism in East Lindsey, with over £824million of economic impact in 2022 alone.

The findings showed the £824.2million of investment from tourists to be the highest since the data was first recorded in 2011, up from £633.58million in 2021 and beating the previous record of £733.46million in 2019.

The report also broke down the impact seen by the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which saw £219million of economic impact, and the District's coastlines, with £626.5million of investment, a 31.1% increase from the previous year and also both new records for the areas.

In terms of visitors, the report found that 4.48million people visited East Lindsey in 2022, up 19%, with 1.92million staying in the District and over two and a half million visiting for the day.

Shopping and enjoying the local hospitality were the two most popular activities, with almost £173million spent in the District's shops and over £163million in its cafes, restaurants, and bars.

8,918 tourism-related jobs were maintained and supported in East Lindsey throughout 2022, the third highest figure since 2011 and showing nearly a full recovery to the pre-pandemic levels of employment in the sector.

Councillor Adam Grist, portfolio holder for Market Towns and the Rural Economy at East Lindsey District Council, said: "Tourism has always been such a fundamental part of our local economy in East Lindsey, so it's fantastic to see that the economic impact of tourism to our District is rising and that the number of visitors growing all the time.

"With the launch of the Lincolnshire Wolds Outdoor Festival we're doing all we can to help put the spotlight on this stunning, unique area that is right on our doorsteps. Hopefully we can keep heading in the right direction and continue to give more people the opportunity to discover our beautiful landscapes and fantastic local businesses, attractions and food and drink suppliers."

Councillor Steve Kirk, portfolio holder for The Coastal Economy at East Lindsey District Council, said: "I'm absolutely delighted that our wonderful coastline is getting the recognition it deserves and to see that our residents and businesses are experiencing record-breaking benefits from the tourism industry.

"This is such an exciting time for the East Lindsey coast, with our Skegness and Mablethorpe Towns Funds and Cultural Revival project bringing well over £50million of national investment and new state-of-the-art facilities to the area. With these ambitious plans and the support of the local community I hope we can continue to grow and be a real primary destination for people across the UK and beyond."

Source: <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/24488/Tourism-brings-record-824million-economic-benefit-to-East-Lindsey>

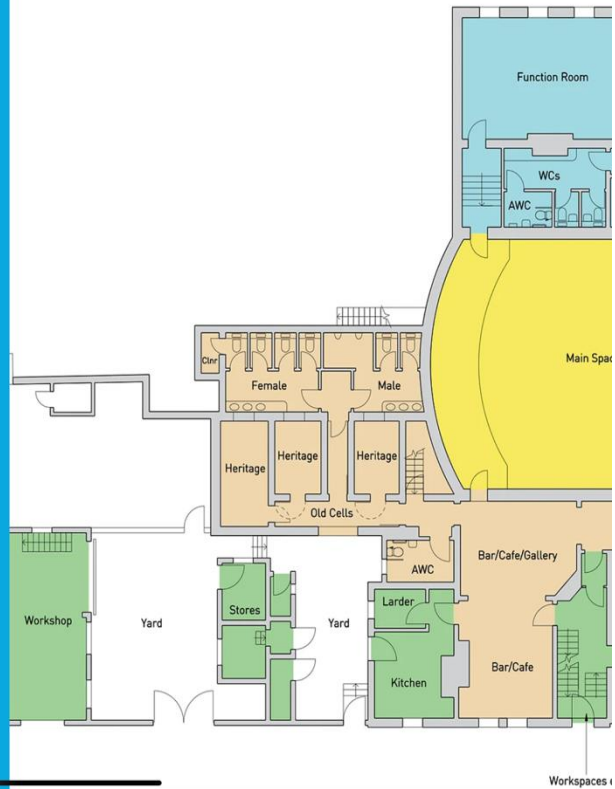
(2)

Spilsby Session House restoration

WHAT THE RESTORATION PROJECT WILL ACHIEVE

- Full roof repair/replacement
- Preservation of columned front portico
- Forecourt landscaping with outdoor public space
- Accessible ramped access to entrances
- Main space (auditorium) fit-out, creating a more flexible venue for live events, cinema and community hire
- Prison cells refurbishment, providing permanent heritage exhibition/activity space
- New toilet facilities in old exercise yard behind cells
- New cafe/bar/gallery foyer area on west side, with access to rear garden
- West side 1st floor offices/workspaces
- East side multi-use function room/backstage
- East side 1st floor offices/workspace
- East side additional toilets
- Rear outbuilding (the "barn") workshop and 1st floor office/workspace
- All new utilities, heating etc. throughout

The estimated cost of the project is £5.2m. The Levelling Up Fund will provide £4.9m towards this; therefore, additional funding will be sought through grant applications and future fundraising.



Source: <https://www.thesessionhouse.org.uk/the-project>

(3)

ELDC move to Horncastle

East Lindsey District Council to make Horncastle its headquarters as it opens shared facility with Boston College

East Lindsey District Council is moving to a new, energy efficient and more central headquarters from Monday 23 January 2023.

After 44 years, Tedder Hall in Manby will close and the council will officially mark a new era in its history when it moves to the Hub in Horncastle.

The Council has been working with Boston College to help provide a campus in Horncastle to fill a learning and skills gap. The Hub is a shared facility with the college who have been providing a range of 18+ courses for people in Horncastle and the surrounding area from the campus since November.

The project was supported by The Greater Lincolnshire LEP who contributed £1.2m for the College campus.

The Council funded the remaining £6.23m of the project cost in recognition that it would be a cost neutral project over a maximum of 15 years when factoring in the sale of Skegness Town Hall, Tedder Hall and the reduced running costs of the new building. Given the significant increase in utility prices, this payback period has now significantly reduced to around eight years.

The Hub supports the Council's commitment to reducing CO2 and minimising its impact on climate change.

The sale of Skegness Town Hall was completed last summer, with the sale of Manby Park which includes Tedder Hall, completed in December.

Cllr Craig Leyland, Leader of East Lindsey District Council, said: "Monday marks a new chapter in East Lindsey District Council's history. The project has helped Boston College fulfil an ambition to provide a Campus in Horncastle. More people are able to access a range of courses without the need to travel far.

"The Hub has been built to ensure it is as energy efficient as possible, in line with our other ambitions around sustainability and the response to climate change.

"Both Tedder Hall and Skegness Town Hall served us well for many, many years but both buildings had high running and repair costs which were expected to keep on increasing over time. The Hub also provides staff who work across the South & East Lincolnshire Councils Partnership a more central base to touchdown in as well as other touchdown points located in Skegness, Louth and Mablethorpe.

Source: <https://www.e-lindsey.gov.uk/article/23018/East-Lindsey-District-Council-to-make-Horncastle-its-headquarters-as-it-opens-shared-facility-with-Boston-College> (excerpt)

(4)**Refurbishment Estimates (adjusted for optimisations)**

Anderby Creek	- £38095
Horncastle	- £84226
Spilsby	- £122589
Wragby	- £75231
Wainfleet	- £47031

Based on SPONSE (£/m²) information pictured below, adjusted for optimisation, and adding a nominal amount £2500 for decommissioning where appropriate.

Refurbishment costs of the free to use public toilet facilities in ELDC area. Based on £2,570 per m²

Facility	Sq. m.	Refurb cost
Anderby Creek	27.7	£71,189
Coningsby	45.6	£117,192
Horncastle	47.7	£122,589
Spilsby	47.7	£122,589
Wainfleet	36.6	£94,062
Woodhall Spa	43	£110,510
Wragby	56.6	£145,462

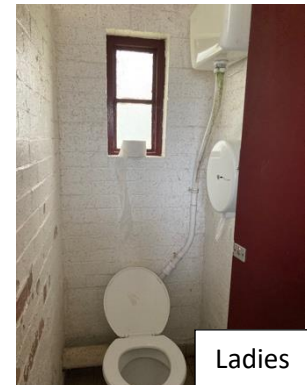
Total**£783,593**

(5) PHOTOGRAPHS & FINDINGS FROM SITE VISITS

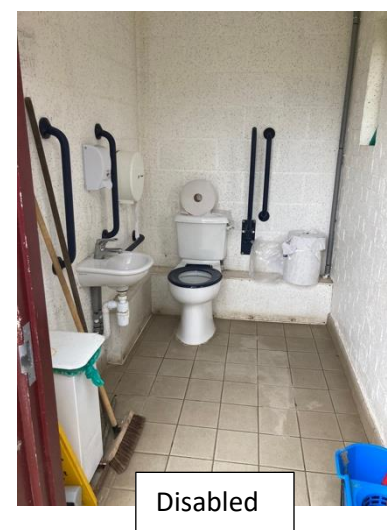
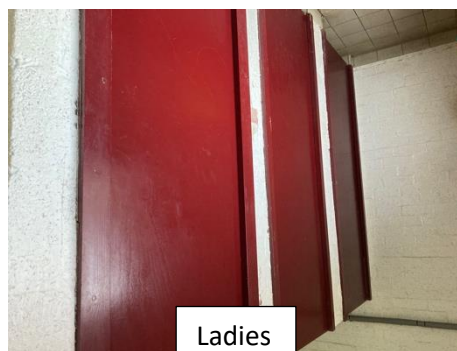
Anderby Creek

Visited 20th December 2023

Located within the ELDC car park at the sea front. Exterior of the building in need of cosmetic refreshment, particularly the painted surfaces, interiors are painted brick that are also in need of refreshment.



- Gents with one cubicle, two urinals at different heights, one sink, and one baby changing station.
- Ladies with three cubicles (one being locked from the outside for unknown reasons), one sink, and one baby changing station.
- Disabled toilet as expected with grab rails; appears to be used as the cleaner's store too.
- No hand driers or towel dispensers were present in any of the toilets.





View of access to Gents and Disabled toilets



View of block, Ladies on the left.



Car Park where block is located, Northwest view



Rear of the block, with beach steps



South view, including existing beach goods shop and café

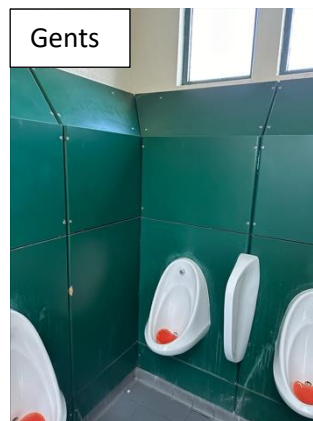
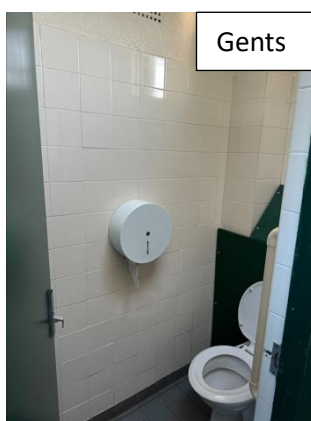
Horncastle site specifics

Visited 4 January 2024

Located down a narrow street, across from the main car park in the town and some 250 feet from the market square, these conveniences are within a brightly decorated building between a bookstore and veterinary surgery. The wooden window frames and ventilation hatches are in need of cleaning and repainting. Interestingly, these are the only conveniences evaluated which have a dedicated baby-changing/family room with its own toilet.



- Gents toilet with one cubicle, three urinals, and one sink.
- Ladies with six cubicles and two sinks. Vending machine in place for hygiene concerns.
- Family toilet with baby change facility, separate to the gendered toilets.
- All conveniences with fully tiled walls and dark green laminated surfaces.
- The disabled toilet was not assessed.

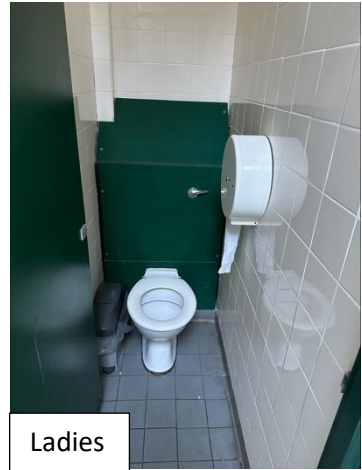




Ladies



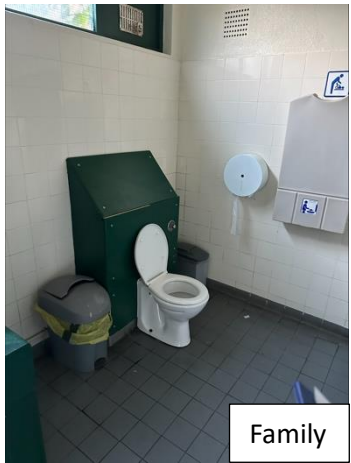
Ladies



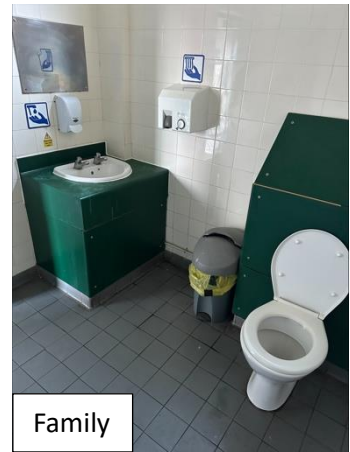
Ladies



Ladies



Family



Family

Spilsby site specifics

Visited 01 Jan 2024

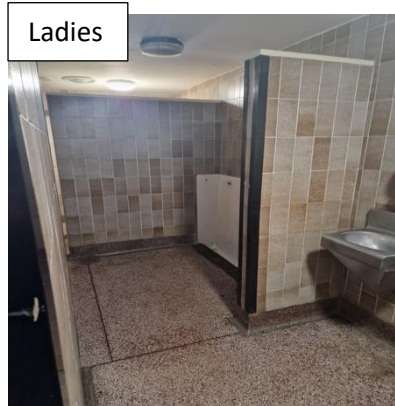
Gents with one cubicle, one ceramic trough-style urinal, and two stainless steel sinks. Ladies with three cubicles, one stainless steel sink, and one baby changing station. The disabled toilet was not assessed as it was locked, and a Radar key was not available. Hand driers are located in both gents and ladies toilets, and it was noted that cold water was not available, only hot, and no rubbish bins were present (sanitary bins were present in the ladies). The toilets are in need of a complete refurbishment: the dirt and grime are present in all spaces, there is no natural light, and the smell is terrible (even on a winter's day).



Gents



Ladies



Ladies

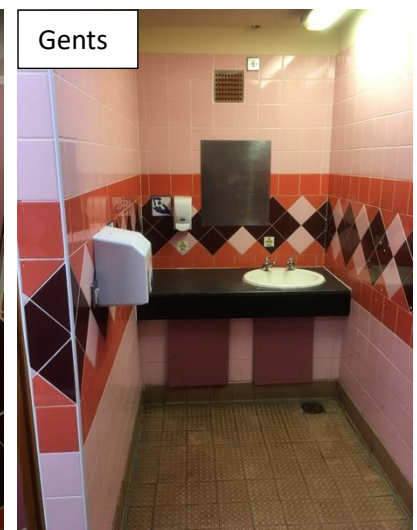
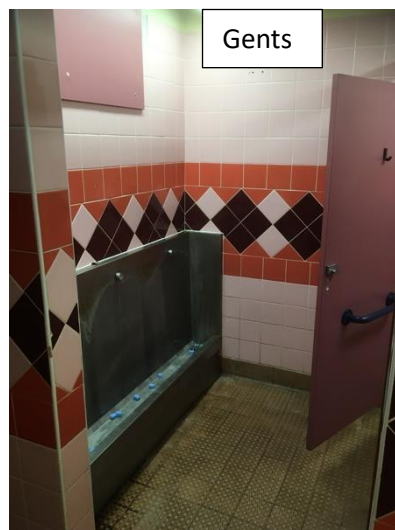
Wainfleet site specifics

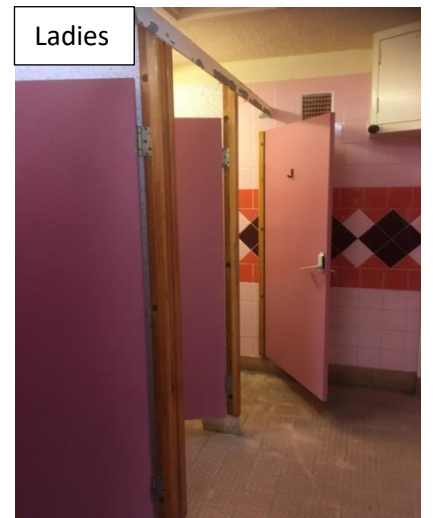
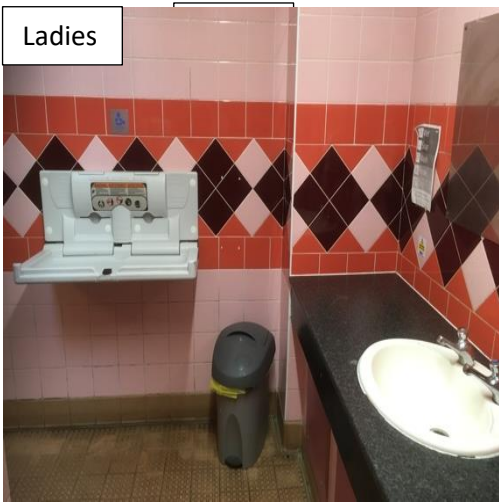
Visited 20th December 2023

Located down an alleyway, the signage leading to the toilets needs cleaning as it is covered with mildew. The block is tucked in between private businesses and all three conveniences are accessed via one opening in the block, which is gated off when the conveniences are closed, with a secondary door to separate the genders.



- Gents with one cubicle, one steel trough-style urinal, and one sink.
- Ladies with three cubicles, one sink, and one baby changing station.
- The disabled toilet was not assessed.
- There is a drinking water fountain outside of the disabled toilet.
- Hand driers are located in both gents and ladies toilets.
- The décor of the toilets, although dated in colours, appears in good condition, and is tiled throughout. The flooring, however, is quite worn and dirty and would benefit from replacement. The few painted surfaces also are in need of repainting.





Wragby – site specifics

Visited 29 December 2023

This convenience, located at the gateway to East Lindsey from Lincoln, serves many a resident and visitor alike. It's location, in the main car park for the village, is very convenient. It is surrounded by a number of small shops and take away food outlets. A pub and café, located over the road, are open limited hours.



- Gents with one cubicle, three ceramic urinals at two heights, and one sink.
- Ladies with two cubicles, one sink, and one baby changing station.
- The disabled toilet was not assessed on this occasion but will be commented on based on a previous visit.
- Hand driers are located in both gents and ladies toilets.
- The walls are fully tiled and there is modern grey-brown cubicle doors and laminate surfaces.

Ladies



Gents

