

School Brae Toilets, Peebles – Asset Transfer Request
Public Online Consultation Comments (Week 1 – 4: 10 March 2025 – 6 April 2025)

Response No.	Comment
1	<p>While I appreciate that SBC are no longer operating the toilets in the town, I am not sure that moving the reuse hub is an appropriate use of the space. Go Tweed Valley BID would be a better fit for this site and could improve tourism in the town by reopening and operating the toilets using a sustainable business model.</p> <p>The current building used by the re-use hub was taken over by the community trust some years ago and has unfortunately deteriorated since then. Inability to access funding or carry out the work required to make the building safe and usable has led to the current building being no longer fit for any purpose but demolition.</p> <p>In my opinion community trusts, while well-meaning are often under resourced and end up causing more damage than good as they are unable to find the funding required to be able to succeed with any plans they have. While this may seem harsh, it is a reality that funding is becoming increasingly difficult and although people are keen to be helpful it is important that any application like this is supported by a clear and sustainable business case.</p> <p>The re-use hub, while useful for some people, can be used as a dumping ground for items that people do not want to dispose of in more appropriate ways. It currently occupies a large area, and it is hard to see how the old toilet block will provide sufficient space for this. In addition, there are now 6 charity shops plus the reuse hub on the High Street in Peebles - these unfortunately take away from the independent retailers and there has been a significant downturn in the look of the high street recently with the addition of a charity shop, vape shop and nail bar.</p> <p>I feel the community trust could be more effective by working collaboratively with organisations such as Go Tweed Valley to improve facilities for tourists and preserve Peebles as a thriving destination with well supported independent businesses.</p>
2	<p>I support the proposal to purchase the former toilet block and somewhat regrettably the proposed use.</p> <p>If any way can be found to reopen the toilets or provide alternative facilities nearby, I would be very much in favour of that.</p>
3	<p>Absolutely disgusting decision. Open them. Use them as a public facility for Peebles as a destination town.</p>
4	<p>Should reopen as toilets and not change use. If SBC refuse to do this then the Community should get offered the chance to take it over, as public toilets.</p>

- 5** I support this CAT but would have preferred the building to be public toilets (they are needed in town) but I know PCT tried running these toilets & couldn't deal with the costs & management of them...I can see it being a part of The Reuse Hub.
- 6** I disagree with any transfer. The need for open toilets in Peebles is obvious. We are predominantly a tourist destination and need these open or tourism will dwindle. We have many wonderful events in Peebles for all to enjoy and it's a nightmare especially with young children when they need the toilet as nothing is open. I can't imagine what it must be like to have any sort of bowel problem in our town centre either. Please retain and open these much-needed facilities.
- 7** I think it is a complete waste of a toilet block. The town is predominantly a tourist town and to permanently close the public toilets is crazy, considering we hold plenty of events nearby and on the street with no public access to toilets anywhere.
- 8** Peebles needs public toilets. Public toilets should not be sold off for profit. Where are people supposed to go to the toilet in town? This proposal should not be allowed to go ahead, and the council should operate the public toilets. We pay council tax for such things. Reopening public toilets will help decrease the growing amount of public urination happening in the town centre.
- 9** If this is to expand current offering which it sounds as if it will with online bookings/collections, what arrangements are in place for deliveries and collections in relation to vehicles accessing the hub. Increased traffic in this area would likely cause problems and issues.
- 10** Are there any plans for public toilets in the shopping area of Peebles? I think it is an essential part of making the town accessible to tourists and locals alike. What about diversity and equality? What about disabled people? How do you think tourists feel when you tell them they have to go into business premises and ask to use the toilets?
- 11** I fully support this proposal. Pct have shown they can run a great reuse project which helps the environment, reduces costs to the council to dispose of waste and helps people on low income have access to essentials (as well as everyone else).
- 12** As a visitor who shops regularly in Peebles these toilets must remain open as toilets. This is common sense they must remain open to the public.
- 13** Whilst acknowledging the work that the Community Trust does, we need public toilets. Peebles High Street relies on tourists and currently they have to access toilets in coffee shops and hotels. Not everyone can afford to pay the price of a coffee just to have a wee.

Then there are the young children, they can't wait until they get home - should their parents look for the nearest tree? Finally consider those who have medical conditions and require almost immediate access to a toilet.

SBC have a responsibility to their residents and should maintain public toilets for the community. For those councillors with an ear to the ground, I'm sure

that you are aware poor toilet provision is a common complaint in the town.

We understand that there are households with a need for reasonably priced items. In the interim, couldn't other council stores be made available? Currently our High Street is becoming a second-hand depot, perhaps that needs to be reviewed as well.

That being said, access to toilets is a basic right and provision of them a council duty.

- 14** I agree 100% with the Peebles Community Trust application to take over the building.
- 15** I support the Asset Transfer Request by Peebles Community Trust.
- 16** The building in School Brae should be retained as public toilets. Peebles attracts a significant number of tourists and there is a continuing requirement for this facility.
- 17** It's a great idea for the PCT to take over this building.
- 18** The form says 'not applicable' for funding. I assume this is meant in terms of purchase given proposed nominal purchase price (£1). It's not clear how the renovation work will be funded.

It notes that it has had negative consequences not to have the toilets open but doesn't appear to provide an alternative nor purpose to provide toilets post-renovation. It would be far preferable to retain the toilets if they can be brought back into use. Public toilets are essential both for the local community and for visiting tourists. It's unclear whether there has been sufficient consideration to returning the toilets to use.

If the toilets cannot be brought back into use, then I would support the transfer. However, the space around the block is limited currently with parking at the front - I would suggest if this were to go ahead that one parking space be removed at the front of the building otherwise there won't be sufficient space for those visiting the new facility.

- 19** I think this suggestion is ludicrous. To have such a dire lack of toilet facilities within walking distance of the town centre in a town like Peebles, which is the market town for the whole area and a significant tourist town, is already scandalous. It is a particular disadvantage for elderly people, parents with young children, people with physical disabilities that making walking/wheeling the distance to any open public facilities almost impossible, people with conditions such as Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis where an urgent need for a toilet can happen at any moment - I could go on. This building is a purpose-built toilet and is the closest such facility to the High Street. Yet, rather than find a workable solution to run it as a public toilet, SBC now proposes to wash its hands of the problem of providing decent facilities by getting rid of the most logical choice of building.

In the process, PCT proposes to take over the building and spend an undisclosed sum of money ripping out the plumbing and infrastructure to use

it as a storage facility. At a recent Community Land Scotland event on community buyouts, I heard sage advice to community development trusts - i.e. think carefully before taking on an old building through CAT or CRtB; don't do take on any old building just because it's available; ask yourself seriously, is it going to be fit for purpose, meet the community's long term needs and/or be financially viable? If not, is it really wise to spend so much money on refurbishment of something that will never be fit for purpose. The PCT has already taken on one white elephant of a building in the old Ex-serviceman's Club. It seems to me that they are now proposing another.

Given the debacle over providing decent public toilets in the town, SBC must be rubbing their hands together in glee at the thought of this building no longer being part of that problem.

20
(email) I have just read in this week's Peeblesshire the proposal to close the public toilets in School Brae, Peebles.

I must be honest and confirm that I am an old man for whom public toilets in the town are essential, and the School Brae ones are very central. What alternatives do I have? Please reinstate them.

21
(email) I want to register my objection to the proposed closing of the toilets on School Brae, Peebles. Public toilets are a sign of a civilised community and are so important for both locals and visitors. So many people cannot venture out due to medical conditions if there are not toilets conveniently available.

22 These toilets are the closest to the high street, with a growing population and thriving tourist sector and economy. Even if SBC cannot afford to open these today, lack of toilets is already problematic, and they will be even more sorely needed as our population rises and visitors increase. The transfer request offers no guarantees as to timeframe or funding. On balance, this transfer request does not benefit our wider community and should not happen. Temporary use of the space, with restoration to functioning toilets at the end and funding to operate as toilets for say a year would be a win/win and a genuine benefit to our community.

22
(email) The toilets on School Brae should remain as toilets and should be re-opened as soon as possible.

While the policy to have only one set of toilets per town is questionable at best (see below), the location of toilets to be kept open in Peebles is less than helpful. The School Brae toilets are close to the High Street and would be used frequently by visitors to the town if they were open. Vandalism was said to be the reason for closure, but they were no more vandalised than any others, including in other towns. The other reason was that people did not always pay the correct amount - that's easy, make them free or forego the income on paper, accepting anything received as a donation.

Peebles - the town - is a destination for many visitors but is not providing facilities. I note that it's a Kelso councillor who is executive for planning and community assets. Where are the toilets in Kelso... In the town centre.

The toilet block is far too small for the re-use hub.

In the event of a change of use, no SBC money should be used for that change of use. After all, if the money is available for one thing it can be available for the other.

- 23** Would prefer this to go to the PCT and be use for the good of the community.
- 24** If this were an asset transfer to re-instate the toilets I could understand, that's a service which is desperately needed at that location. The building is tiny and even after extensive refurbishment it wouldn't be much space for 'storage of items' even if the reuse hub mainly goes online. A better site for the reuse hub would be at the building taken over by the men's shed near Haylodge - that's slightly bigger and has parking nearby. We have enough charity shops (which is what the re-use hub is) in Peebles on the high street, a small one wouldn't do very well. I'd suggest a better use for the benefit of the community would be for PCT to re-open the toilets.
- 25** I fully support the Peebles Community Trust to take over responsibility of the public toilets in School Brae to use as storage for the Reuse Hub. Not only has the hub proven to be very successful at reducing needless waste in landfill but has provided items to the local community at affordable prices. The revenue generated has now enabled 2 paid employees.
- 26** It is a real shame that these public toilets are not being kept useable by SBC, and I would support that in the first instance. However, in the absence of that in the near or distance future it is much better that the building be put to good use by Peebles Community Trust. I would therefore support this initiative.