

To: INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY BOARD

On: 22 January 2020

Report by: Director of Environment & Infrastructure

Heading: Provision of Top Up Taps and Audit on Condition of Drinking Fountains

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report follows on from the Council meeting of 27 June 2019 where the following motion was approved:
- (a) That the Council will contact Scottish Water to request Top Up taps are installed in Renfrewshire in all towns and villages to help reduce use of single plastic bottles and boost the benefits of drinking water in Renfrewshire; and
 - (b) That the Council recognises that there are a number of obsolete drinking fountains in council parks and public places and agrees to bring back a report to the ILE Board regarding their number and the cost to refurbish.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Infrastructure, Land & Environment Board:

- 2.1 Notes that Scottish Water have made an initial commitment of one Top Up Tap in Renfrewshire within the current financial year.
- 2.2 Notes that Scottish Water has logged Renfrewshire's interest in relation to installing additional Top Up Taps based on their location criteria and connection to the public water supply.
- 2.3 Notes the cost of providing mains water supply to Renfrewshire's historic drinking fountains as set out in Section 4 of this report.

- 2.4 Notes that the majority of Renfrewshire's drinking fountains and wells are not suitable for modern sustainable drinking receptacles and would require significant modification to provide a top up facility.
 - 2.5 Agrees not to restore the drinking water fountains in Section 4 of this report on the basis that to do so is a risk to public health & safety and it is not financially viable.
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3. Background

3.1 Top Up Taps

- 3.1.1 The national drive to encourage people to stay hydrated and healthy by drinking water from the tap in refillable bottles was set out in the Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2018-2019. In response, Scottish Water launched "Your Water, Your Life" – a campaign to show how topping up from the tap can benefit health and wellbeing, saves money and helps reduce waste and impact on the environment.
- 3.1.2 Scottish Water announced in September 2018 that a network of high-tech public water refill points was to be introduced across the country to encourage people to top up from the tap using refillable bottles. One of the aims is to use the new Top up Taps as a catalyst to encourage more people to choose to carry a refillable bottle.
- 3.1.3 The project will see Top up Taps installed in around 30 towns and cities over the next two years. Scottish Water is working with every local authority to identify suitable locations based on a criteria of significant public footfall and connection to the public water supply with an initial commitment of one Top up Tap per local authority area.
- 3.1.4 The Top up Taps are made from marine-grade steel and are connected safely and securely to the mains water supply with public health and legislative requirements fully taken into account and inspections carried out regularly by Scottish Water. Each unit will be plumbed into the public water supply and fitted with technology which will enable them to digitally track water usage at each spot, transmitting the data via cloud technology to the specialists managing Scotland's water networks.
- 3.1.5 In addition, data loggers inside will provide information which can be translated into cost and plastic savings and the volume of water used. Customer research carried out for Scottish Water, highlights that tap is the water of choice for almost two thirds of people in Scotland (65 per cent), and currently over a third (36 per cent) carry reusable bottles always or often when they are out and about.
- 3.2 Scottish Water has logged Renfrewshire's interest in relation to installing Top Up Taps in the area based on their location criteria and connection to the public water supply, with an initial commitment of one Top Up Tap in Renfrewshire before the end of the current financial year. The location has yet to be confirmed.

4 Drinking Fountains and Wells Within Renfrewshire

4.1 There are twelve historic park and public spaces drinking fountains/ drinking wells located throughout Renfrewshire. Nine of which would originally have been mains water fed and three fed by natural underground springs.

4.2 The nine fountains/ drinking wells originally mains water fed are located at:

- Barshaw Park, Paisley
- Dunns Square, High Street, Paisley
- Neilston Road/ Calside, Paisley (Cat C Structure)
- Thomas Shanks Park, Johnstone
- Ludovic Square, Johnstone
- Kilbarchan Public Park, Kilbarchan
- Church Street, Robert Allan Well, Kilbarchan
- High Barterholm, Spout Well, Kilbarchan
- Inchinnan Road, Robertson Park, Renfrew

4.3 The fountains fed by underground springs are no longer deemed fit for human consumption due to various water quality contamination issues and are signed appropriately. The three locations are set out below:

- Gleniffer Braes Country Park, MacDonalds Fountain, Gleniffer Road, Paisley
- Gleniffer Braes Country Park, Tannahill's Well, Waterfall Paisley
- Elderslie Well, Elderslie Main Road

4.4 Estimated refurbishment costs considered size, type and location complexities such as position and access for contractors. It should be noted that each location would require a unique approach to refurbish, reconnect and service each fountain, dependant on proximity to water supply. Furthermore, a large number of the water fountains have been redundant for more than 40 years and due to this the likely connection would be old lead pipes which would require to be replaced.

4.5 Projected costs to bring back all 9 drinking fountains set out in 4.2 would include various additional costs and Scottish Water connections/ reconnections. Therefore, total cost of this project would be in the region of £450,000.

4.6 Historical drinking fountains were designed to allow the public to drink direct from the well as opposed to providing a water supply to fill bottles. The design of the historical water fountains and wells is not conducive to topping up with modern refillable bottles, and also access to these drinking fountains would not be Disability Discrimination Act complainant and therefore not be convertible for modern day usage.

4.7 The ongoing daily cleaning and maintenance of these nine drinking fountains to ensure there was no risk to public health is estimated to be in the region of £15,000 per annum.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The Council's drinking fountains and wells would require significant modification and investment to provide a top up facility for modern sustainable drinking receptacles.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community/Council Planning** – None
4. **Legal** – None
5. **Property/Assets** – None
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website
8. **Health & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** - None
10. **Risk** – None
11. **Privacy Impact** – Not required
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – not applicable.
13. **Climate Risk** – Drinking fountains have a positive impact on climate change as they reduce the purchasing of single use plastic bottled water.

List of Background Papers – None

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