
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE - 30 NOVEMBER 2016

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT

REPORT FROM ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: PUBLIC TOILET STRATEGY

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

1.1 That the Executive Recommends to Full Council:-

- (1) That all public toilets, with the exception of those at Hockley Woods, are disposed of either by closure and sale, or through transfer of the asset upon a long-term lease to the relevant Town/Parish Council. The disposal of these assets to be completed by April 2018.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Environmental Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, to oversee the closure and sale of public toilets, as above (1), subject to appropriate public consultation.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Environment Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, to negotiate suitable lease arrangements with the relevant Town/Parish Councils.
- (4) That should the negotiations in (3) above have been successful, the Investment Board be asked to present a business case in line with the budgetary principles set out in the appended options document for the installation of replacement public toilets.

2 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT REFERENCE NO: 13/16

3 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Presently, Hockley Parish Council and Great Woking Parish Council have both indicated that they do not wish to consider the transfer of public conveniences to their respective ownerships. Both sets of public conveniences are low use and therefore it is recommended that they are considered for closure. This would yield an estimated saving of £25,000 per annum.
- 3.2 The remaining Parish/Town Councils (Rayleigh, Rochford and Hullbridge) have expressed an interest in taking on ownership of the public toilets within their areas; either as a long-term lease, or as a full transfer of ownership. It is proposed that each site be offered to the respective Parish/Town Council on

at least a 10 year lease. This leasing arrangement would yield an approximate saving of £50,000 per annum.

3.3 The Public Health Act 1936 gives Local Authorities the discretion to provide public toilets, but it imposes no statutory duty to do so.

3.4 The Business Plan 2016-2020 states that a key priority is to become financially self-sufficient; the report proposals are in agreement with, and will contribute to, such a priority.

4 SALIENT INFORMATION

4.1 There are six public toilet facilities owned by Rochford District Council. These are located at:-

- Back Lane, Rochford
- Southend Road, Hockley
- High Street, Great Wakering
- Ferry Road, Hullbridge
- Crown Hill, Rayleigh
- Hockley Woods, Hockley

The Hockley Woods public conveniences are intrinsic to the woodland operation serving a specific amenity function and therefore have not been considered as part of the scope of this report.

4.2 Informal discussion with Members has identified a 75% reduction in funding for public conveniences as a concept to assist with delivering a balanced budget for the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy in 2017/18. The saving would represent a £25,000 reduction in 2017/18 and a further reduction of £50,000 in 2018/19.

4.3 The Council has given previous consideration, in 2011 and 2014, to seeking a reduction in expenditure on public conveniences. In summary, there appears to have been some previous reluctance for Parish/Town Councils to make a contribution towards the maintenance of Rochford District Council's public conveniences. Equally, there has been no appetite by Members to carry forward the closure of the public conveniences.

4.4 The appended options document scopes the different options available for service delivery of public conveniences; and then recommends the preferred option outlining a business case for further consideration.

4.5 Four broad options of service delivery were considered within the report, and the findings are summarised below:-

- Close Toilets - all or some of the public conveniences are closed, without establishing any further provision. The asset is sold where possible for development. The closing of all toilets will effectively

achieve the saving targets with a high degree of certainty, but will clearly have the highest impact upon the community. This can be mitigated by targeting to close the lower use toilets, so as to minimise the impact.

- Establish community toilets – all or some of the public conveniences are closed with provision delivered via private facilities secured through use of a financial incentive. The level of saving is uncertain due to having to establish a level of financial incentive required to secure private toilets for public use. The level of sustainability and suitability of premises could prove problematic to secure over a long tenure.
- Reduce running costs – the cleaning contract is separated from the main SUEZ street scene contract and re-tendered, or brought ‘in-house’. The financial savings would be minimal, as would be the impact upon the community. This would not offer any significant contribution towards the savings targets.
- Transfer ownership – The transfer of ownership/responsibility of public conveniences to the relevant Parish/Town Council would achieve the saving targets required. However, this is based upon the willingness of the respective Parish/Town Council to agree to the transfer. This option would minimise any negative impact upon the community.

4.6 The options document concludes that an investment of £291,000 would generate a saving of £546,500 over a period of 10 years if all parts of the proposal are accepted. This would be achieved through the construction of replacement public conveniences at Hullbridge, Rayleigh, and Rochford, which would then be leased at a “peppercorn” rent to the respective Parish/Town Council for a period of at least 10 years; and through the closure of toilets at Great Wakering and Hockley.

4.7 At present there is an assumption that the initial expressions of interest, from the aforementioned Councils, are translated into concrete proposals whereby the assets are transferred for at least a period of 10 years.

4.8 Should the initial expressions of interest prove not to be formalised by April 2018 then it is proposed that the toilets would be considered for closure to provide the financial savings required. In the case of Great Wakering Parish Council and Hockley Parish Council, where indications are that there is no interest in the transfer of the public convenience asset to the respective Council, then it is proposed that these will also be considered for closure.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 As part of the scoping exercise, four broad options were identified for consideration: Close Toilets; Establish Community Toilets; Reduce Running Costs; Transfer Ownership. These options have already been summarised above, under paragraph 4.5. Further detail can be found in the appendix.

- 5.2 A further alternative is to continue the existing service provision, and hence not deliver any of the financial savings.

6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a clear reputational risk in the closing of public conveniences; this can be off-set by pursuing the strategy of transferring the assets to a third party wherever possible. Prioritising low use public conveniences for initial closure will also reduce any potential impact.

7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The development of new modern public conveniences will reduce the potential for anti-social behaviour. Where closures are identified, the toilets will remain open until any sale of asset has been completed so as to reduce the risk of vandalism often associated with a vacant building.

8 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Originally at the beginning of the twentieth century, the provision of public toilets was seen as part of the strategy to improve public health. Many of the sanitation issues and challenges at that time are not as relevant today, and thus any environmental issues would have a minimum impact.

9 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The proposed investment level of £291,000 looks to generate a significant return to Rochford District Council in line with its aim of becoming financially self sufficient by 2020. The return on investment is in the region of 50% and the saving over a ten year period would be £546,500 (or £365,440 NPV) if all parts of the proposal are accepted. This equates to £75,000 saving per annum to help close the funding gap.

10 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Public Health Act 1936 gives Local Authorities the discretion to provide public toilets, but it imposes no statutory duty to do so.
- 10.2 Should Members decide to sell or lease the toilets, legal agreements will need to be entered into and appropriate terms and conditions will need to be agreed prior to any transfer.

11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for the closure of toilets and concludes that it is likely to have a medium impact upon the community. There is likely to be a disproportionate impact on the more vulnerable groups should public toilets close.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

LT Lead Officer Signature: _____



Assistant Director, Environmental Services

Background Papers:-

None.

For further information please contact Marcus Hotten (Assistant Director, Environmental Services) on:-

Phone: 01702 318117

Email: marcus.hotten@rochford.gov.uk

If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

**ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Options for the Delivery of Public
Conveniences in the Rochford District
15TH November 2016
Assistant Director – Environment
M. Hotten**

**Options for the Delivery of Public Conveniences in the
Rochford District**

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Options for the Delivery of Public Conveniences in the Rochford District

1. Introduction

Informal Discussion with Members have identified a 75% reduction in funding for Public Conveniences was discussed as a concept. This is to assist with contributing to a balanced financial budget for future planning of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The saving would represent a £25,000 reduction in 2017/18; and a further reduction of £50,000 in 2018/19.

The below report sets out a possible approach to achieving that saving.

2. Aims:

The report aims to:

- Scope the different options available regarding service delivery for public conveniences;
- To recommend a preferred option and outline a business case for further consideration.

3. Background

The first public toilets were introduced in 1852. The Public Health Act 1936 gives local authorities the discretion to provide public toilets but it imposes no statutory duty to do so and this lack of compulsion, together with a perception of nuisance associated with them, has resulted in a general decline in the provision of public toilets across the UK in recent years.

There had been previous discussions with Members, in 2011 and 2014, to seek a reduction in expenditure upon public conveniences. The outcome of which have been summarised below.

A report to Executive in November 2011 recommended that the Public Toilets be considered for closure, with an offer made to Parish and Town councils to take on approximately 50 to 75% of the cost. This offer was declined by each of the Parish and Town councils. The recommendation to close all Public Conveniences was not carried.

A further report to the Executive in June 2014 outlined a strategy for the provision of public toilets, and resolved that:

- 1) *Reduced operating hours be introduced for the toilets in Back Lane, Rochford as detailed in the report. Public consultation to be undertaken on*

whether these facilities are required in the longer term and/or whether they should be relocated.

(2) That an 'exit' survey be undertaken to ascertain the usage by the public of the facilities in Hockley and Great Wakering. A public consultation exercise to be undertaken to inform a final decision on the future of the toilets.

(3) That market testing be undertaken of the facilities in Hullbridge and Rayleigh, together with the adjacent land, to ascertain whether there is any business potential in developing the sites for alternative uses on the basis of an obligation to keep the facilities available to the public.

(4) That a further report be submitted to the Executive once the various options have been explored so that the results can be considered as part of the budget process. (HES)

As part of the process of developing the 2014 report, meetings were again held with each of the Parish/Town Councils to discuss the feasibility of contributing to the cost of the maintenance of the toilets. The Portfolio Holder for the Environment was in attendance at the meetings with Hullbridge, Hockley, and Great Wakering Councils. All the Parishes and the Town Council notified the Council of their reluctance to become involved and take on the responsibility for any of the public conveniences.

In summary, there would appear to be previously reluctance for Parish/Town Councils to make a contribution towards the maintenance of Rochford Council's public conveniences. Equally, there has been no appetite, by Members, to carry forward the closure of the public conveniences.

4. Rochford District Council's Public Conveniences

There are six public toilet facilities owned by Rochford District Council, cleaned and maintained by SUEZ environmental as part of the Council's Street Cleansing contract. These six toilet facilities are located at:-

- Back Lane, Rochford
- Southend Road, Hockley
- High Street, Great Wakering
- Ferry Road, Hullbridge
- Crown Hill, Rayleigh
- Hockley Woods, Hockley

Each are discussed in greater detail, below:

Back Lane, Rochford

This site is located adjacent to the main car park in Back Lane Rochford. The toilets are located in a detached brick constructed building. Following refurbishment at the

turn of the century, the facilities are beginning to look worn. Given the toilet's location to the rear of the town centre, there have been problems at night with youths congregating outside which can be intimidating to the general public. The siting, location and design of the block have also resulted in undesirable behaviour occurring within both the female and male areas of the toilets from time to time. The Police are aware of these problems.

Internally the facility is not as clean as is desired, giving a very uninviting facility to use. Sexual graffiti is evident on the stainless steel cubicle walls.

Southend Road, Hockley

This site is located adjacent to the main car park in Southend Road, Hockley directly opposite the Parish Council Offices. This is a small facility located, in a detached brick constructed building, close to doctors, day centre and library. The area is well lit, and located on a main road. There is no history of youths congregating outside at night

Low footfall has led to signs of vandalism. Upon a recent visit, the facility was found to be dirty and needs refurbishing (Stained WC pans and peeling paintwork). There was an open window through which trailing ivy has grown.

High Street, Great Wakering

This site is located adjacent to the main road in Great Wakering next to the old fire station. The toilets are located in a detached brick constructed building. The toilets have relatively recently been refurbished. The area is well lit and located on a main road. It does not attract youths at night.

The structure of the building is in generally good order and during a recent visit the interior was in a reasonably clean state. However, there was evidence of alcoholic drinking occurring in the facility. Also the hand wash units were very unresponsive, often requiring several attempts to work.

Ferry Road, Hullbridge

The toilets are located in a detached brick constructed building. The toilet is in a reasonable condition but has in the past suffered fire damage. The area is well lit, but can attract youths at night. This is a scarcely used facility in a mainly residential area, close to the river and local pub and is mainly used by tradesmen, reps and van drivers.

Internally the building is not as well cleaned as is desirable. Cobwebs and dirty, dusty paintwork should not be apparent in a facility that is properly cleaned this often happens in "out of town" facilities with less visibility to council officers. Certain fixtures need to be looked at –the wood board façade on the doors is peeling at the

bottom due to dampness, internal signs have been ripped off giving a poor first impression.

Crown Hill, Rayleigh

This site is located on Crown Hill in Rayleigh adjacent to the main shopping area. The toilets are located in a detached brick constructed building which requires maintenance to the roof and the rainwater services. Following refurbishment a decade ago, the facilities are beginning to show signs of their usage. The area is well lit and located on a main road so it does not attract youths at night. This is a well used facility in a town centre location, close to many shops.

The fabric of the building is showing signs of wear including damp patches on the ceiling, probably caused by water ingress through the roof. Floor tiles were also loose upon inspection causing the facility to be closed. There were no toilet rolls in the accessible cubicle and also the stainless steel hand wash unit had considerable surface rust. The nearby leak (from an as yet un-identified source) is emitting an unpleasant smell and should be fixed as soon as possible.

Hockley Woods, Hockley

The toilets in Hockley Woods are provided for the visitors and staff. The toilets are modern and of the single cubicle type with direct access to the car park. The premises are not liable for Business Rates. Given their location and usage within the context of Hockley Woods, no external valuation has been sought at this stage, as they are seen as intrinsic to the woodland operation. They have not been considered as part of the scope of the report, serving a specific amenity function for Hockley Woods.

5. Considering the Options for Delivery

For the purposes of this exercise, four broad options have been identified for consideration:

- Close Toilets - all or some of the public conveniences are closed without establishing any further provision with land sold where possible for development;
- Establish Community Toilets - all or some of the public conveniences are closed with provision delivered via private facilities secured through use of a financial incentive;
- Reduce Running Costs – the cleaning contract is separated from the main SUEZ street scene contract and re-tendered or brought in-house;

- Transfer Ownership – The transfer of ownership/responsibility of public conveniences to the relevant parish/town council.
-

6. Factors Influencing Choice of Options

6.1. Toilet Usage

Officers were deployed to observe the number of visits undertaken by the public to the public conveniences. These observations were made in hour to two hours periods, at differing periods of the day, replicated for each site to ensure a like for like comparison.

The average number of visits per hour could then be used to calculate an estimate of total visits per year; this presumes that use is consistent throughout the year which is unlikely, with the summer months usually representing the greatest use. However, for the sake of comparison it can be viewed that the estimate provides an alternative metric for comparison, than the Visits per Hour.

Table 1 – Estimated Usage of Rochford District Council Public Conveniences

| Toilet Usage | Visits per year (estimate)* | Year and month of survey | Total Visits recorded | Number of survey Hours | Visits per Hour |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Back Lane, Rochford | C.22,295 | August 2016 | 49 | 8 | 6.125 |
| Southend Road, Hockley | c.13,104 | September 2014 | 18 | 5 | 3.6 |
| High Street, Great Wakering | c.4,841 | September 2014 | 8 | 6 | 1.33 |
| Ferry Lane, Hullbridge | c.15,470 | August 2016 | 34 | 8 | 4.25 |
| Crown Hill, Rayleigh | c.116,480 | July 16 | 192 | 6 | 32.0 |

*visits per year= (visits per hour x 3,640 hours (based on toilets open for 10 hours a day 364 day year).

It should be noted that surveys for Hockley and Wakering were undertaken in 2014 rather than 2016. There have been no apparent socio-economic changes within the district over the last two years to suggest that the usage would have significantly changed, therefore it is viewed that the survey results are still current.

The figures highlight the significantly greater use that the toilets at Rayleigh experience in comparison to the other public conveniences in the district. The low number of visits to Great Wakering toilets is also notable. Given the margin of error that can be expected, with the limited survey time undertaken for each set of public conveniences, the usage of toilets at Rochford, Hullbridge and Hockley should be viewed as broadly similar.

A general assumption can be applied, that an individual toilet can on average accommodate 10 to 12 visits per hour. Applying this assumption to the average use of Rochford District public conveniences would conclude that with the exception of Rayleigh, a single toilet at each site would adequately cope with public demand, and that such sites can be described as having a low public demand.

6.2. Cost of Public Conveniences

The total annual revenue cost of maintaining and cleaning the Council's public conveniences is set out below.

Table 2 –Annual Revenue Cost of Rochford District Council's Public Conveniences (2016/2017)

| Item | Annual Cost |
|----------------|----------------|
| Utilities | £7,600 |
| Business Rates | £5,800 |
| Maintenance | £10,700 |
| Cleaning | £75,000 |
| Total | £99,100 |

This has been further broken down into the individual sites for comparison of cost.

Table 3 - Annual Revenue Cost of Rochford District Council's Public Convenience (2016/2017) for individual sites

| | Cleaning | Building Maintenance | Utilities | Business Rates | Total |
|-----------------------------|----------|----------------------|-----------|----------------|-------------------|
| Back Lane, Rochford | 12,500 | 1,800.00 | £1,350.00 | 2,064.00 | £17,714.00 |
| Southend Road, Hockley | 12,500 | 1,800.00 | £500.00 | 480.00 | £15,280.00 |
| High Street, Great Wakering | 12,500 | 1,800.00 | £600.00 | 984.00 | £15,884.00 |
| Ferry Road, Hullbridge | 12,500 | 1,800.00 | £750.00 | 792.00 | £15,842.00 |
| Rayleigh, Crown Hill | 12,500 | 1,800.00 | £2,400.00 | 1,416.00 | £18,116.00 |
| Hockley Woods | 12,500 | 1,700.00 | £2,000.00 | n/a | £16,200.00 |
| | | | | Total | 99,036 |

The costs for individual sites can be seen to be broadly similar; this is due to approximately three-quarters of the cost being attributed to the cleaning contract, which has been apportioned in equal amounts across the six public conveniences blocks that are visited.

6.3. The Current Cleaning Contract

For the main public toilets the contractor has the responsibility for the opening and closing of the toilets, the general cleaning and all minor maintenance obligations.

The cost for the cleaning of the toilets is part of the Street Cleansing contract awarded to SUEZ Environmental, for a seven period, that is due to expire in April 2022.

The contract is effectively one person, a van, plus equipment. The contract states that all toilets should be serviced by 8am. The toilets should be closed 30 minutes before dusk (April until September) and 6pm between October and the end of March. The toilets must be open by 8am. The toilets are visited during the day but the frequency of visits and level of attention depends on their condition and usage.

Previous discussions with the contractor have indicated that no saving could be offered for reducing the number of public conveniences sites visited, due to the level of resourcing that would be needed remaining the same, i.e. one member of staff. However, the bill of quantities associated with the current contract identifies that toilet cleaning as a separate item. This should allow for the removal of that cost if the Council requests for the service to cease.

Consideration should be given to the implications of TUPE, with any transfer of the contract in a form similar to its current undertaking, potentially resulting in the existing incumbent staff, and hence level of resourcing cost, being transferred.

If it is considered desirable that the implications of TUPE be avoided, then the contract can be broken into smaller elements, whereby different parties are responsible for different sets of public conveniences.

6.4. Long-Term Maintenance

Of the five public convenience buildings, only the High Street, Great Wakering toilets has received any significant capital expenditure in the past 10 years. It is anticipated that the remaining four buildings will require refurbishment, and potentially in the case of Crown Hill, Rayleigh and Back Lane, Rochford, re-roofing may also have to be considered.

At present an estimate of £100,000 has been budgeted to provide for the necessary refurbishment over the next five to ten years.

6.5. Parish/Town Councils

Previous discussions with Parish and town Councils suggested that it was unlikely that they would consider contributing to the running costs of Rochford Councils public conveniences. Further meetings have been undertaken with all five of the relevant parish/town councils to discuss if views have changed, or if a further alternative approach to reducing costs can be found.

There was a notable consistency in the tone of discussion, in that the parish/town councils wished to work in partnership with Council. An expression of interest was

tendered by all councils, with the exception of Great Wakering Parish, and Hockley Parish, who presently have yet to finalise a decision. In particular, the proposal that existing toilet blocks are replaced with modern facilities and that Parish/Town Councils maintain these on a 10-year full repair and maintenance lease, was greeted favourably.

6.6. Re-development of Sites

Two of the sites have been identified in long-term potential redevelopment programmes. These are: Southend Road, Hockley and Back Lane, Rochford Toilets – in partnership with Essex Housing.

The remaining three sites were considered as part of the recent Asset Register Review (2016), undertaken by the Council. It was concluded that all three were viewed as being long-term redevelopment projects that represented a low value return, either due their size and location (Hullbridge and Great Wakering), or the complexity of easements and covenants (Rayleigh) that are associated with the site.

Therefore the re-development value of these sites has not been incorporated into this report, but would be subject of a further report if there is deemed to be a strong appetite for their development.

The need for flexibility in any approach in terms of future commitments for these sites, particularly Southend Road, Hockley and Back Lane, Rochford, should be given significant consideration in any proposals that are taken forward.

6.7. Community Toilets

The potential for community toilets at each site has been briefly scoped, and broadly reflects the number of restaurants or pubs that are within the vicinity of each location. The concept broadly consists of a financial incentive to shops, restaurants and pubs, whereby their toilets are provided for the wider community, rather than limited to customers.

For Great Wakering little opportunity for a community toilet could be identified.

In Hockley there appears to be limited scope for a community toilet scheme with a public house having been identified previously as willing to accept the arrangement. There is no disabled access or baby changing facilities, and access by children is questionable as the premises are licensed. Other venues such as Costa may offer an alternative, but would be limited by the opening hours available

In Hullbridge the only potential options for a community toilet identified is the nearby Public House, or the Community Centre, although the facilities there would require a capital investment.

At Rochford there is a selection of Public Houses and restaurants within Rochford that may be suitable, albeit with limited opening hours throughout the day time.

In Rayleigh, publicly funded toilets are accessible at the Mill and the Town Council Pavilion between King Georges Playing Field and Websters Way car park. There are a number of coffee shops and the opportunities for community toilets are good.

6.8. Installation of New Toilets

Discussions have been held with Danfo, a leading provider of modern toilet facilities, to identify possible suitable alternative facilities and an estimate cost. Examples of toilet blocks installed by Danfo can be seen in Appendix 2. The below estimates provide an indicative cost of removing all existing toilets and replacing with new facilities.

Table 4 – Estimate Cost for Replacement Public Conveniences

| Facility | Accessible WC Cubicles | Standard Cubicles | Cost | Demolition | Contingency | Total Cost |
|------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|---------|------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Hullbridge, Ferry Lane | 1 | 0 | £60,000 | £6,000 | £6,000 | £72,000 |
| Southend Rd, Hockley | 1 | 0 | £60,000 | £6,000 | £6,000 | £72,000 |
| Wakering, High Street | 1 | 0 | £60,000 | £6,000 | £6,000 | £72,000 |
| Rayleigh, Crown Hill | 1 | 2 | £90,000 | £17,000 | £9,000 | £116,000 |
| Back Lane, Rochford | 1 | 1 | £80,000 | £15,000 | £8,000 | £103,000 |
| | | | | | | |
| | | | | | Total | £435,000 |

The new construction would offer a reduced number of cubicles in comparison to existing toilet provision, but would reflect the current usage of each set of public conveniences as identified by the survey work.

The expected life of such these conveniences would be in excess of 20 years, with examples of similar construction found in the Southend-On-Sea Borough in good condition after a 10 year period.

These modern constructions are designed to reduce vandalism and misuse. There are no lobbies where customers can congregate, the fittings and buildings are robust, functional and welcoming, and the external and internal surfaces are readily cleansable and graffiti resistant.

7. Summary

The below table sets out the considerations made for each of options, this is summarised below in the four broad option headings:

- Close Toilets – Closing all toilets will effectively achieve the saving targets with a high degree of certainty, but will clearly have the highest impact upon the community. This can be mitigated by targeting to close the lower use toilets only to minimise the impact.
- Establish Community Toilets – The level of saving is uncertain due to having to establish a level of financial incentive required to secure private toilets for public use. The level of sustainability and suitability of premises could prove problematic to secure over a long tenure.
- Reduce Running Costs – Financial savings would be minimal, as would be the impact upon the community. This would offer significant contribution towards the savings targets
- Transfer Ownership – The transfer of ownership/responsibility of public conveniences to the relevant parish/town council would achieve the saving targets required. However, this is based upon the willingness of the respective parish/town council to agree to the transfer. This option would minimise any negative impact upon the community.

Rochford District **Appendix**
Options for the Delivery of Public Conveniences in the Rochford District
15th November 2016

Table 5 -

| Options | Outline Proposal | Potential Savings | Benefits | Risks |
|--------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Close toilets | | | | |
| Close All Toilets | All Toilets Closed without any further provision, land sold where possible for development | £75,000 p.a. (Sale of assets will provide a capital receipt of circa £100,000.) | Certainty over savings that can be achieved. No requirement for longer term capital investment in toilet refurbishment. | £5,800 of the budget is Business Rates, this saving may not be realised. If land is not disposed of, then there is high risk of vandalism. Demolition of buildings has not been fully costed, an estimated cost of £50,000. High reputational risk, potential negative impact on street scene, disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups. |
| Close low use toilets | Low use toilets (Wakering, Hockley & Hullbridge) are closed with remaining toilets kept open. Possible to pilot closure although no saving would be realised. | £ 25,000 – 40,000 p.a. (Possible value for disposal of assets although likely to be low value.) | Certainty over savings that can be achieved. Reduces requirement for longer term capital investment in toilet refurbishment. | New local cleaning contracts to be negotiated for remaining toilet site. Reputational risk for closing specific blocks, blocks will require sale/demolition, need to arrange sale of blocks before closure to ensure smoother transition. |
| Community Toilets | | | | |
| Community Toilets | All Toilet blocks closed with provision via private facilities given a financial incentive. | £35,000 pa. | Some provision for use by the public is continued, may be an increase in trade for private providers. | Lack of up take of scheme results in no toilet provision; suitability of toilets may be found wanting for DDA purposes and children; opening times of providers may limit access; Continuity and quality hard to manage with range of potential providers, will be able to secure short-term licence arrangements, may be intensive in staff resource to manage and promote. If land is not disposed of, then there is high risk of vandalism. Demolition of buildings has not been fully costed, this will cost an estimated £50,000. |

Rochford District **Appendix**
Options for the Delivery of Public Conveniences in the Rochford District
15th November 2016

| Reduce Costs | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Toilet Cleaning in-house | Cleaning and maintenance of toilet are brought into LATCO. | £25,000 is possible, if combined with office cleaning contract. | Continuation of existing service and assets | Failure to deliver service may occur; business continuity is vulnerable due to small size of contract. Long term capital re-investment in toilet refurbishment will be required. |
| Re-tender Contract | Contract is separated from main SUEZ street scene contract and re-tendered | £5,000 to £10,000 is possible | Continuation of existing service and assets | Failure to deliver service may occur; business continuity is vulnerable due to small size of contract. May require transfer of existing staff and resources with very little financial saving achieved. Long term capital re-investment in toilet refurbishment will be required. |
| Transfer Toilets | | | | |
| Part contribution | Offer a contribution towards the running cost of toilets, maintenance costs are picked up by the Council. | £35,000 pa, ensures continuation of existing service in partnership with local community | Continuation of existing service and assets. No requirement for longer term capital investment in toilet refurbishment. | Past and existing consultations with parish/town councils reveal a reluctance to take on toilet blocks of poor condition and still ultimately in Rochford Council control. Long term capital re-investment in toilet refurbishment will be required |
| Complete transfer | Full transfer of ownership to parish council | £75,000 pa, ensures continuation of existing service in partnership with local community | Continuation of existing service and assets. | Past and existing consultations with parish/town councils reveal a reluctance to take on toilet blocks of poor condition, and hence the negative image associated with them. |
| New toilets – complete transfer | Full transfer of ownership to Parish Council with new easier to maintain toilets | £75,000 pa, possible relocation may realise capital receipt to off-set | Offer of new facilities may justify the rise in parish/town precepts. Ability to charge for use to off-set cost is also a possibility and reduce anti-social behaviour. New toilet facilities would provide an enhanced visitor experience and visual amenity. | Past and existing consultations with parish/town councils reveal a reluctance to take on toilet blocks of poor condition. Would require a substantial investment of circa £400,000 to replace all toilet blocks. |

8. Conclusion

It is proposed that if the financial savings targets are to be met, that either toilet closure, or full transfer of assets are given further consideration.

Presently, Hockley Parish Council and Great Wakering Parish Council have both indicated that they do not wish to consider the transfer of public conveniences to their respective ownerships. Both sets of public conveniences are low use, therefore it is recommended that they are closed. This would yield an estimated saving of £25,000 per annum.

The remaining parish/town Councils have expressed an interest in taking on ownership, either as a long-term lease, or as a full transfer of ownership. It is proposed that each site is offered to the respective parish/town council upon a 10 year lease or a greater length of time.

The costs and saving benefits are set out in the table below.

Table 6 –

| | Hullbridge | Rochford | Rayleigh | Sub Total (with Investment) | Wakering | Hockley | Sub Total (Closure) | Hockley Woods | Total |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Annual Saving £ | 15,842 | 17,714 | 18,116 | 51,672 | 15,884 | 15,280 | 31,164 | (7,836) | 75,000 |
| Capital Investment £ | (72,000) | (103,000) | (116,000) | (291,000) | - | - | - | - | (291,000) |
| Capital investment Avoided £ | 12,500 | 25,000 | 25,000 | 62,500 | 12,500 | 12,500 | 25,000 | - | 87,500 |
| Years to pay back | 4.5 | 5.8 | 6.4 | 5.6 | - | - | - | - | 5.6 |
| Gross Savings over 10 yrs £ | 170,920 | 202,140 | 206,160 | 579,220 | 171,340 | 165,300 | 336,640 | (78,360) | 837,500 |
| Net Savings over 10yrs £ | 98,920 | 99,140 | 90,160 | 288,220 | 171,340 | 165,300 | 336,640 | (78,360) | 546,500 |
| NPV (3%) £ | 66,658 | 52,042 | 42,561 | 161,261 | 139,025 | 133,739 | 272,764 | (68,585) | 365,440 |

In summary an investment of £291,000 will generate approximately a saving of £579,220,000 over the period of 10 years (£516,720 Revenue + £62,500 avoided Capital expenditure), and can be viewed as a favourable return, generating a yield of approximately 50% over the life time of the project, with a payback period of 5 years and 6 months. This proposal combined with the closure of Wakering and Hockley toilets would generate a further £336,640 of savings over a 10 year period, partially offset by a small increase in the running costs of the Hockely Woods toilets, would mean a net saving to Rochford District Council of £75,000 per annum, or £546,500 over a 10 year period.

At present there is an assumption that the initial expressions of interest are translated into concrete proposals whereby the assets are transferred for at least a period of 10 years. Should the initial expressions of interest prove not to be formalised, then it is proposed that the toilets would close to provide the financial savings required.

In the case of Great Wakering Parish Council and Hockley Parish Council, where indications are that there is no interest in the transfer of the public convenience asset to the respective Council, then it is proposed that these will now close.

9. Recommendations:

1. That all Public Toilets, with the exception of those at Hockley Woods, either by closure and sale, or through transfer of the asset upon a long-term lease to the relevant town/parish council. The disposal of these assets to be completed by April 2018.
2. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, to oversee the closure and sale of Public Toilets, as above (1), subject to appropriate public consultation
3. That authority be delegated to the Assistant Director of Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, to negotiate suitable lease arrangements with the relevant town/parish councils.
4. That should the negotiations in (2) above have been successful, the Investment Board be asked to present a business case in line with the budgetary principles set out in the appended options document for the installation of replacement Public Toilets.

Appendix 1 – Images of Rochford Council Public Conveniences

High Street, Great Wakering



Crown Hill, Rayleigh



Ferry Lane, Hullbridge



Southend Road, Hockley



Back Lane, Hullbridge



APPENDIX 2 – Examples of new toilet block designs

Quaileholme Road, Wyre



London Fields park, Hackney

