

## REFURBISHMENT/CONSTRUCTION OF NEW PUBLIC CONVENIENCES IN THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT

### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out the case for investment in the construction/refurbishment of the Hockley public toilet block to facilitate the transfer to Hockley Parish Council and realise a revenue saving to the Council.

### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Council on 13 December 2016, on the subject of the Public Toilet Strategy, resolved that:-
- (3) *Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Environmental Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Portfolio Holder for Enterprise, to negotiate suitable lease arrangements with the relevant Town/Parish Councils.*
  - (4) *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 appended options document for the installation of replacement toilets.*
- 2.2 Consequent negotiations on lease arrangements with Hockley Parish Council are drawing to a conclusion, with both parties having broadly agreed the lease arrangements and Heads of Terms in principle.
- 2.3 At present, Hockley Parish Council has been presented with options for the consideration of the lease and are due to agree their preferred option on 2 July 2018. Although a definitive decision could be sought from Hockley Parish Council before presenting this paper to the Investment Board, this would result in a delay in the overall decision making process, as it could not then be considered by Full Council until October, thus impacting upon the ability to deliver the proposed project within this financial year. Therefore agreement in principle is sought from the Investment Board at this time, with authority to agree the final option to be delegated to the Assistant Director, Environmental Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment.

### 3 HOCKLEY TOILETS – COSTS

#### Annual Revenue Budget (2017/18)

- 3.1 The cost of maintaining and cleaning Hockley toilets is approximately £15,300 a year, a breakdown of which is set out below.

	Cleaning	Maintenance	Utilities	Rate	Total
Budget	£12,500	£1,800	£500	£500	<b>£15,300</b>

### Capital Investment Required

- 3.2 An independent condition survey (March 2017, Southend Borough Council) was commissioned, which recommended that a complete internal and external refurbishment of the toilet facilities be considered within the next two to three years. These refurbishment works would cost an estimated £50,000 and would provide a building life span of about 10 years.
- 3.3 As an alternative, the report also identified a list of 'repair and make good' works that would allow the toilets to be serviceable for a shorter term period. These works would cost an estimated £20,000 and would provide a building life span of about 5 years.

## 4 PROPOSED OPTIONS

- 4.1 In discussion with Hockley Parish Council, three options were identified that were of interest to them. These are: full renovation; partial renovation; or, replacement of the block. Each of these options are set out below.
- Full Renovation – This would mean that the existing toilets are completely refurbished and new automatic locking doors are installed (at a further cost of £8,000) with the facility then transferred to the Parish Council, subject to a 10 year lease.
  - Partial Renovation – In this option, the existing toilets remain essentially as they are currently, with the repair works identified within the 2017 condition survey being undertaken and new automatic locking doors installed (at a further cost of £8,000). The toilets would then be transferred subject to a shorter 5 year lease, to the Parish Council. The shorter lease would reduce the commitment that would need to be made by the Parish Council and is, at this stage, an option that the Parish Council wishes to consider.
  - Replacement – This comprises the demolition of the existing toilets and replacement with a new purpose built single unisex toilet with disabled access facilities. The expected life of such conveniences is 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. This option would be offered subject to a 10 year lease.
- 4.2 Works would be subject to a tender process, in line with the Council's procurement policy, and would be awarded upon Hockley Parish Council

signing an agreement to lease, thus providing security of transfer of the asset upon completion of the agreed works

- 4.3 The lease negotiations with the Parish Council have not concluded as at the publication of this report and, consequently, all three options are being considered. However, it is not recommended that the partial renovation option be pursued as this will only defer additional costs to a future date.
- 4.4 The table below outlines the estimated cost to the Council of undertaking the options outlined above. Unless the block was closed completely, one of these options would have to be undertaken by Rochford District Council to maintain the facilities in a suitable condition, regardless of whether or not they are transferred to the Parish Council.

Option	Cost	Fee	Contingency	Total Cost
Full Refurbishment, including automatic locking doors	£58,000	£6,600	£5,000	<b>£69,600</b>
Repair and make good, including automatic locking doors	£28,000	£2,400	£2,000	<b>£32,400</b>
Replacement with new unit	£80,000	n/a	£8,000	<b>£88,000</b>

## 5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Regardless of whether the lease is transferred to Hockley Parish Council, some capital investment will be required within the next two to three years if the facilities are to remain open and in a suitable state of repair. This investment is not currently assumed in the 2018/19 capital programme and will, therefore, require agreement by Full Council if it is to be actioned in this financial year.
- 5.2 If the facilities are transferred to Hockley Parish Council, this will enable the Council to achieve a revenue saving of approximately £15,000 per annum. The saving to the Council is already assumed in the 2018/19 budget and therefore will be at risk if the facilities are not transferred in this financial year.

## 6 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There is a possibility of service disruption due to installation of new toilet facilities; solutions to minimise the impact will be considered as part of the tender process.
- 6.2 Any lease to the Parish Council could remove the option for redevelopment of the site for the period of that lease. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring the

lease allows for the Council to exercise the option to redevelop, with the understanding that alternative public toilet facilities would be provided for within any new development.

## **7 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The design of the new toilet facilities would reduce the opportunity for vandalism and minimise anti-social behaviour.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 If transfer of the facilities to the Parish Council is not progressed, there would be an approximate £15,000 pressure from non-achievement of assumed savings in the 2018/19 budget, which would need to be mitigated through an alternative means.
- 8.2 Any recommendation to incur capital expenditure in 2018/19 would need to be added to the capital programme, subject to agreement by Full Council. The investment could be funded from reserves (exact financing mechanism to be determined by the Section 151 Officer at year end as per the Financial Regulations) but could reduce the liability for capital maintenance costs in future years.

## **9 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Prior to commencement of any redevelopment scheme both parties would enter into an agreement to lease, setting out the obligations required of the Council and, upon completion of the works, the final lease would be completed. The Parish Council might refuse to enter into the final lease if the redevelopment scheme was not implemented. Should the works be completed and the Parish Council refuse to enter into the final lease within 30 days, they would be liable for the full costs of the works undertaken.

## **10 PARISH IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The Parish Council would be undertaking a 10 or 5 year commitment for the leasing of the toilet blocks.

## **11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and found there to be no impact (either positive or negative) on protected groups as defined under the Equality Act 2010.

## **12 RECOMMENDATION**

- 12.1 It is proposed that the Board **RECOMMENDS** to Full Council:-

That, on completion of the lease negotiations with Hockley Parish Council, authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Environmental Services, in

consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, to undertake installation or the refurbishment/replacement of public conveniences with an allocated capital budget of up to £88,000, as set out in the report.



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**Background Papers:-**

None.

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