
CONDITION OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a detailed condition report of the current condition of the five public conveniences within the Rochford District that have not recently been refurbished.
- 1.2 The report seeks Members views on whether to maintain open all of the existing public conveniences, and seeks to identify a planned programme of refurbishment.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A detailed survey on the condition of public conveniences throughout the District was carried out in July and August 2002 by in-house staff.
- 2.2 The toilets surveyed in this report are as follows in no priority order:
- Pooles Lane, Hullbridge
 - The Spa, Southend Road Hockley
 - Old Ship Lane, Rochford
 - High Street, Great Wakering
 - Main Road, Hockley Woods Hockley
- 2.4 The background information on each of the toilets is included in Appendix A at the end of this report.
- 2.5 At present only Rochford has more than one public convenience to serve the local area. In considering the strategy for public convenience provision, Members are asked to consider whether or not this is the best use of this asset. If it is, then provision for its upgrade needs to be prioritised. If not, other uses or disposal need to be investigated and Members views on this are requested.

3 OVERVIEW OF GENERAL CONDITION

- 3.1 It has been 16 to 20 years since any refurbishment works have been carried out on these five public conveniences. Hockley Woods has had no upgrading works done since it was built in 1964, apart from routine maintenance and the provision of a disabled toilet facility.

3.2 The main features that affect the overall appearance of the toilets are:-

- Walls - The wall tiling is crazed, the grout discoloured by age and abuse. Patch repairs have been carried out but, as the original imperial sized tiles are no longer available, the new tiles cannot match the original either in size or colour. In some areas, the original tiles are loose thus making it very difficult to make small repairs.
- Floors - Although the floor tiles are generally sound, the floor tiles and grouting have years of ingrained dirt which makes cleaning difficult, even with a strong acid cleaner. Repairs carried out, particularly at Great Wakering, do not match the original tiles, as these can no longer be obtained. The floor at Hockley Woods is concrete and even when clean does not give the appearance of being cleaned properly.
- Sanitary Ware - The sanitary ware has been replaced, on an ad-hoc basis, over the years but new fittings do not always match the original and generally may not fit as well into the original drainage connections.
- Glazing - The glazing used in the toilets is a reinforced resin fibre material, 'Meshlite'. It is not aesthetically pleasing and, although it is tougher than glass, it can still be damaged.
- Urinals - The 'Stall' type urinals are old and damaged and would be difficult to effect a good repair. The joints between sections and any damaged areas cannot be properly cleaned and therefore hold dirt and odour.
- Vandalism & Abuse - Many of these toilets have been affected by vandalism on a number of occasions over the years, sometimes leading to temporary closures while repairs are effected. Doors and frames have been repaired leading to a patched appearance. Tiles have numerous impact marks and ingrained paint marks. The 'Meshlite' security glazing is easily burnt by cigarettes/lighters. Vandalism however is not predictable and may occur at any time. One particular toilet may have damage done over a period of several weeks and then be left alone for months. This has occurred recently at Great Wakering and also last year at Hullbridge.

3.3 Details of maintenance costs and costs due to vandalism are included below for the year 2000 to the present. The costs associated are those reported as vandalism.

Location	No of Incidents	Cost of repairs £
Back Lane Rochford	2	490
Crown Hill Rayleigh	0	0
High Street Great Wakering	2	145
Hockley Woods	0	0
Old Ship Lane Rochford	6 <i>Two of these incidents are subject to an insurance claim to the value of £2,500.</i>	2592
Pooles Lane	2	209
Spa, Hockley	0	0
Total	12	3436

- 3.4 The cleaning contractor is responsible on a day-to-day basis for 'graffiti' removal, toilet seat renewal and general abuse/misuse of the toilets. The occurrences of this type cannot therefore be quantified.

4 PROPOSED GENERAL REPAIRS AND MINOR IMPROVEMENTS

- 4.1 There is very little that can be done, on a minor works basis, to provide significant change to the appearance and aesthetics of the toilets. To provide improvement it will be necessary to prepare a programme of general repairs and minor modifications that can be funded over a number of years

- 4.2 The works which would provide significant improvement in each toilet would be a combination of some or all of the following:

- Renew Wall Tiling To repair damage, improve appearance and aid cleaning.
- Re-plaster Ceilings To repair damage and improve appearance.
- Renew Floor Tiling To repair damage, improve appearance and aid cleaning.
- Renew Cubicle Doors & Frames To improve operation and appearance.
- Renew Entrance Doors & Frames To allow self-locking and to give doors that are more robust.
- Renew Windows & Glazing To improve appearance, operation and security.
- Rewire To update electrical systems
- Replace Urinal Stalls To aid maintenance and cleaning.

- Renew Sanitary Ware To improve ease of maintenance and aid cleaning, (excludes Disabled toilets). Replacement items to be of the ceramic type.
- Internal & External Decoration To improve general appearance.

4.3 Arising from the Disability Audit of Council Buildings the issue of summoning help for Disabled people if they have difficulties in the public conveniences should also be considered and would form part of any improvements, although no provision has been included within these estimates.

5 PROPOSED MODIFICATION IMPROVEMENTS

5.1 As well as the above works, it would be possible to improve the toilets further by carrying out modification works at the same time as the above general repairs.

5.2 Such works could include:

- Increased size and improved layout of WC cubicles to give pushchair access in Ladies cubicles.
- Provision of Baby-Change facilities in Ladies toilets and, where possible, in the Gents toilets.
- Provision of a 'Services' core to allow concealment of services and sanitary disposal units.
- Provision of 'Wallgate' Hand-Wash units within each Ladies WC cubicle, also where these are not already provided in other areas.

5.4 These additional improvements would be possible at the following toilets.

	<u>Baby Change</u>	<u>Larger Cubicles</u>	<u>Services Core</u>	<u>Wallgate</u>	<u>Cost (£)</u>
Pooles Lane Spa	Yes	Yes	existing	Yes	9,000
Gt.Wakering	No	No	No	Yes	3,000
	Yes	Yes	existing	existing	<u>4,000</u>
Sub – Total:					16,000
Old Ship Lane	Yes	Yes		Yes	<u>14,000</u>
Total if Old Ship Lane included					30,000

NOTE

A Baby-Change facility at Great Wakering could only be provided by reducing the Ladies provision from two cubicles to one. This reduction is not expected to cause any particular problems.

- 5.5 Hockley Woods - There are three options to provide a long term solution and provide facilities that would be in keeping with the development of the Woodlands and adjoining countryside. Construction of New Purpose Built Conveniences would cost in the order of £150,000, Extension & Major Refurbishment of the Existing £100,000, and Refurbishment of the Existing £50,000, which is considered to be the best and most cost effective option.
- 5.6 However, in order to achieve the necessary provisions within the limitations of the size of the building, refurbishment would have to utilise 'Direct External Access Unisex Cubicles'. This would allow provision of one disabled WC, three unisex WC's and a separate men's urinal cubicle. One cubicle would also house a baby-change facility. With the 'New Build' or 'Extension & Major Refurbishment' approaches, a more traditional style, with separate Ladies & Gents, could be provided.
- 5.7 The Spa, Hockley - only the provision of additional 'Wallgate' units is possible within the small size of the existing building. There are two ways to overcome this, extension & major refurbishment of the existing building costing £100,000 and refurbishment of the existing at a cost of £50,000. The most cost-effective solution would again be a refurbishment of the existing. However, as with Hockley Woods, in order to achieve the necessary provisions refurbishment would have to utilise 'Direct External Access Cubicles'. However, unlike Hockley Woods these could be of single sex use. This would allow provision of one disabled WC, two Ladies WC's, one Men's WC and a men's urinal cubicle. One ladies cubicle, and possibly the Gents cubicle, could house baby-change facilities. With the 'extension & major refurbishment' approach, a more traditional style, with separate Ladies & Gents, could be provided.

6 PROPOSED PROGRAMME OF SPECIAL REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENT WORKS

- 6.1 The following is a proposal to carry out a 5 year programme of works if Old Ship Lane is to be retained. This gives estimated cost for the 'Special Repairs and Minor' Improvements and the proposed optional 'Additional Improvements' at each site and refurbishment at Hockley Woods and indicates the considered priority.

Estimated Costs (£)

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Additional</u>		<u>Total</u>	<u>Major</u>
		<u>Repairs</u>	<u>Improvements</u>		<u>Refurb.</u>
		£	£	£	£
1. Hockley Woods	2003/4		-		50,000
2. Pooles Lane	2004/5	15,000	9,000	24,000	--
3. The Spa	2005/6	15,000	3,000	18,000*	50,000
4. Gt. Wakering	2006/7	13,000	4,000	17,000	--
5. Old Ship Lane	2007/8	26,000	14,000	40,000**	--

* Note that the works at the Spa would be either £18,000 or £50,000 not both.

** Works at Old Ship lane would be dependant on a decision to retain this toilet.

7 CLEANSING OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

- 7.1 The condition of the surfaces identified in this report causes some difficulties with cleaning of the public conveniences, although this is not the cause of identified lack of thoroughness of the cleansing regime.
- 7.2 Changes have been made to the monitoring system for the cleansing contract for public conveniences which are delivering some improvement. However it should be noted that the cleansing regime is still considered to be somewhat less than ideal, inasmuch as some toilets are opened and cleaned in the early morning and are not cleaned again until the following day. This gives the potential for toilets to be in a poor condition for up to 24 hours.
- 7.3 In order to overcome the long interval between cleansing, it would mean that the cleansing contract would need to be extended to provide additional cleaning during the day. Hockley Woods and Pooles Lane in particular would benefit from two cleans on Saturday and Sunday due to the high levels of activity, especially in the summer period.
- 7.4 The additional cleaning would require a significant increase in the cleansing budget, which could double the budget requirement from £27,000 to £54,000.

8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 As indicated in the report, vandalism has been a problem around the public conveniences. Both the newly refurbished toilets at Back Lane and Crown Hill have self closing doors, which close at dusk. This has

significantly reduced the problem in the context of these two toilets. There is funding in the current financial year to provide self locking doors at the other toilets at a cost of £6,000 at four of the sites. It is important that these self-closing doors are installed in the current financial year, irrespective of any decision on a programme of refurbishment, as these doors are to reduce vandalism which tends to occur during the hours of darkness. Any doors installed this financial year will complement this programme.

- 8.2 The general condition of the other public conveniences could be significantly improved by putting into place a programme of refurbishment.
- 8.3 The adoption of the direct external access cubicles with a suitable front screen are seen as a means of reducing the opportunity for vandalism. by removing the common areas where people may congregate.
- 8.4 Provision of larger cubicles capable of allowing buggies and shopping to be taken in does provide better security for people using the public conveniences.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Good quality public conveniences do provide the public with the impression that the Council is maintaining its facilities to a good standard, which would add to the well being of the District.

10 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There is no current funding for the proposed refurbishment programme and if Members wish to proceed with this, funding will have to be identified over the period 2003 -2008. Members will need to consider an additional revenue provision of £25,000 per year in order to undertake the special repairs and improvements programme. In addition the capital programme would require provisions of £50,000 for 2003/04 and 2005/06.
- 10.2 Members will need to consider an additional revenue provision of £25,000 per year in order to undertake the cleaning programme
- 10.3 The above programme includes works to the Old Ship Lane. If Members were to consider disposal of this asset, then there would be a capital receipt which could be used to help fund the improvement programme. There would also be a lower requirement for additional revenue expenditure in respect of cleaning (currently approx. £4,000 p.a.) and the special repairs programme.

11 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Improvements to the public conveniences will provide enhanced facilities within the Parishes, and Parish Councils will not need to close public conveniences when self-closing doors are fitted.
- 11.2 In providing this programme the main beneficiaries will be the Parishes in which the Conveniences are located. Members may wish to see Parishes provide support in the management and maintenance of the Public Conveniences.

12 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that the Committee **Resolves**

- (1) To advise the Community Services Committee of this Committee's views on the need for a programme of refurbishment to the five public conveniences not already updated.
- (2) To ask the Community Services Committee to submit a bid in the Estimates process for resources in respect of any decisions made. (CD(F&ES))

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Background Papers:

Survey report 2002
SAFFRON works orders reports

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APPENDIX A

Summary Background Information on Public Conveniences

Pooles Lane, Hullbridge Floor Area 21m²

Situated in the car park area, these toilets were built in 1963. They were refurbished in 1983 with a disabled toilet facility being added at that time.

Provision:	2 Ladies WC's, 1 Gents WC & a Stall Urinal
Sanitary Fittings:	Ceramic WCs and Stall Urinal with 'Wallgate' hand wash units.
Internal Features:	Painted Ceiling, White Wall Tiles, Red Quarry Floor Tiles, Painted Timber Doors.
External Features:	Pitch tiled Roof, Painted Rendered Walls, Painted Timber (metal clad) doors, timber painted windows.

The Spa, Southend Road Hockley Floor Area 17m²

Situated next to the public library these toilets were built in 1951. They were partially refurbished in 1982, when a disabled toilet facility was added.

Provision:	2 Ladies WC's, 1 Gents WC & a Stall Urinal
Sanitary Fittings:	Ceramic WCs, 'Wallgate' hand wash unit in Ladies, ceramic stall urinal and wash basin with electric hand drier in Gents.
Internal Features:	Painted Ceiling, White Wall Tiles, Red Quarry Floor Tiles, Painted Timber Doors.
External Features:	Pitch tiled Roof, Brick Walls, Painted Timber doors & roller shutters.

Old Ship Lane, Rochford Floor Area 40m²

Situated behind the Old Ship public house, these toilets were built in 1939. They were refurbished in 1986 and a disabled toilet facility was added at that time.

Provision:	3 Ladies WC's, 2 Gents WC's & a Large stall Urinal
Sanitary Fittings:	Ceramic WCs, stainless steel stall urinal and wash basin, electric hand dryers.
Internal Features:	Painted Timber Ceiling, White Wall Tiles, Red Quarry Floor Tiles, Painted Timber Doors & frames.
External Features:	Pitch tiled Roof, Flat roof to Disabled toilet, Part Brick/Part Rendered Walls, Painted Timber doors.

