

REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE INVESTMENT BOARD

1 Refurbishment/Construction of New Public Conveniences in the Rochford District

- 1.1 This item of business was referred by the Investment Board on 10 July 2018 to Full Council with a recommendation in respect of undertaking installation or the refurbishment/replacement of public conveniences in the Rochford District. An extract of the key elements of the report of the Assistant Director, Environmental Services to the Board is appended.
- 1.2 The Assistant Director, Environmental Services emphasised that there was no option for the Council to do nothing: one of the three options for capital investment in the Hockley toilets by the Council and transfer of future maintenance to Hockley Parish had to be agreed as the toilets were in need of refurbishment.
- 1.3 In response to Member questions, the Assistant Director, Environmental Services advised that:-
- 1.4 The refurbishment/replacement of the Hockley toilet block could not be linked in with the Essex County Council consultation on the future of the adjacent library site in Hockley, due to the fact that the Essex project was ongoing and unlikely to be completed within a timeframe suitable for the purposes of the District Council's proposals.
- 1.5 All of the three options for investment in the toilet block outlined in the report were available to Hockley Parish Council, whose preference would be taken into account before a decision was made
- 1.6 The expected life of the 'partial renovation' option was anticipated to be five years; the 'full renovation' option could have a life of 10 to 15 years and the option to replace the current facilities with a new purpose-built unit could be expected to offer a life of 20 years or more. In addition, the purpose-built unit would be moveable and could be relocated if required.

2 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed that Council **RESOLVES** 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 officer report.

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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	£15,300

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	£69,600
Repair and make good, including automatic locking doors	£28,000	£2,400	£2,000	£32,400
Replacement with new unit	£80,000	n/a	£8,000	£88,000

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.