

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 15 JANUARY 2013
title: PROVISION OF PUBLIC TOILETS
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: TERRY LONGDEN, HEAD OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To reconsider the proposal for the disposal of selected former public conveniences.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- To be a well managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
- To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley, encompassing our objective to encourage economic development throughout the borough with a specific focus on tourism.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 A report was submitted to the November 2012 meeting of the Community Services Committee that: -

a) outlined progress with the development of the Ribble Valley Community Toilets Scheme, membership of which then totalled 50 separate premises. It was recognised that both the signage to, and identification of the facilities as offered by the Community Toilet scheme should be improved in order to increase the public's awareness of the arrangement.

b) summarised the operational arrangements that have been tailored to suit the particular needs of the remaining 16 set of facilities that continue to be operated by the Council.

c) outlined proposals for the dealing with the sites of the 8 facilities (closed), including the disposal of 5 of these sites.

2.2 It was resolved that Committee approve the recommendations of the working group for the disposal of the closed toilets and that a report on the proposed disposals be submitted to the Policy and Finance committee. That subsequent report to the Policy and Finance Committee meeting of the 20 November outlined the main features of the original report to the Community Services Committee. The sites of the 8 former facilities as listed for disposal or demolition are set out in Table A below.

Table A

Location	Proposal
Berry Lane (Longridge)	Demolish facility & landscape area
Brungerley Clitheroe	Demolish facility & landscape area
Gisburn	Offer site for sale
Market Place (Longridge)	Offer site for sale
Mellor	Offer site for sale
Newton in Bowland	Offer site for sale
Waddington	Offer site for sale
Woone Lane (Clitheroe)	Demolish facility & landscape area

- 2.3 The matter of the closure and disposal of the toilets was discussed in some detail by the Policy and Resources Committee. It was highlighted by members that the loss of the one Council toilet facility in Gisburn and the provision of facilities in Longridge, since 2 of the 3 Ribble Valley Borough Council operated facilities were now closed, were of particular concern. The Policy and Finance committee subsequently resolved that the matter be referred back to the Community Committee for their consideration.

This referral was made to enable the Committee to investigate options for the improvement of the current provision of publically accessible toilet facilities in Gisburn and Longridge.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The closure since February 2012 of the 8 of the 24 sets of facilities operated by the Council is contributing to a substantial reduction in the Council's annual expenditure which has been incorporated into the Council's budget provision. The reversal of any closure will lead to unbudgeted expenditure, which because of the travel distance of Longridge and Gisburn from the operations depot at Clitheroe, would be disproportionately large. More innovative arrangements of operating a facility need to be developed if a cost effective expansion of the current provision of public toilets is to be considered.

3.2 Gisburn

The usage of the Council operated toilets in Gisburn was not high. It is recognised however that whilst there are premises in Gisburn that readily make their toilet facilities available to both their customers and visitors, no local premises are currently listed as being a member of the Community Toilets Scheme.

A proposal to address this position is to offer the former Council toilets for sale to a local business that is known to interested in purchasing the facility to make it available to their customers but, with the condition that as long as the facility remains in use as a toilet it is included in the Community Toilet Scheme. It should be noted however that when the facility was operated by the Council it was available for use 24 hours per day. Whilst this was done for operational reasons this availability was no doubt a factor in the abuse that the facility suffered. Hence it is most unlikely that if an arrangement with a local purchaser is eventually agreed the accessibility of the toilets would not match the original continuous opening.

3.3 Longridge

The schedule attached at Appendix A to this report lists the Community Toilet facilities within Longridge and the approximate availability of the facilities. The location of these premises is now included on a plan attached to the former facilities on Berry Lane and Market Place, and the identification of the premises has also been refreshed with the issue of new signage. The alternative facilities, some of which are of a far higher standard than those that were originally provided by the Council and are available over a wide range of hours. The availability of toilets within the Community Toilet Scheme should be viewed against the availability of the Council's original facilities in the town which, whilst open on 7 days per week from 7:00AM, all closed no later than 17:00 each night in winter and 18:00 in summer. The opening hours of the Council retained toilets at Stonebridge (Kestor Lane) has also been extended to 21:00 each evening.

At its meeting of the 12 December the Longridge Town Council further discussed the provision of public conveniences within the town centre and as a result confirmed that they did not seek to operate them. The Town Council did however perceive that, the closure of the public toilets in Longridge had created problems to which that the 'Community Toilet Scheme' had so far been unable to respond.

The Town Council resolved to propose to the Borough Council that a working group be set up comprising officers of the Borough and Town Councillors. It was agreed that the group should inspect the facilities at an early point, and input from the Police should also be invited. It was agreed that the Town Council's representatives on the proposed working group would be Councillors Adamson, Moon, Rogerson and Swarbrick

It should be noted that at the meeting of the Full Council on 18 December 2012, the Mayor received a petition requesting the reinstatement of public toilets in Longridge.

3.4 The issues as raised by the Policy Finance Committee centred on the provision of facilities at Gisburn and in Longridge town centre. Above are measures that, if pursued, may satisfy concerns over the provision of facilities at these locations.

If the 3 sets of closed facilities in Gisburn and Longridge are removed from the schedule for disposal or removal, a further 5 sets of closed facilities as listed in the Table B below remain listed for action.

Table B

Location	Proposal
Brungerley (Clitheroe)	Demolish facility & landscape area
Mellor	Offer site for sale
Newton in Bowland	Offer site for sale
Waddington	Offer site for sale
Woone Lane (Clitheroe)	Demolish facility & landscape area

Whilst it is recognised that the loss of a Council facilities is rarely universally welcomed, the disposal or removal of the 5 sets of facilities as listed above should be pursued so that the residual property based charges and the inherent risks of having boarded up building and facilities is removed.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources

The disposal of the 3 sites may generate a one off capital receipt of up to £60,000. The costs of the demolition and resulting landscaping of the 2 sites (Woone lane and Brungerley) is estimated to be £10,000. This one off expenditure can be accommodated within existing revenue budgets. The completion of these works will bring the provision of public toilet convenience in the borough to a more sustainable position.

- Technical, Environmental and Legal –

No particular implications arise out of this report although there may be legal implications or matters attached to the disposal of the individual sites that need further consideration.

- Political - No such implications arise out of this report

- Reputation –

The closure of the toilets has generated adverse responses to the detriment of the Council, but the disposal or treatment of the now redundant sites will open opportunities for alternative uses of the sites to be introduced which should improve the overall amenity of the areas.

- Equality & Diversity – No such implications arise out of this report

5 RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That the measures described to investigate options for the improvement of the current provision of publically accessible toilet facilities in Gisburn and Longridge be pursued and that the outcome is reported to the next meeting of the Community Services Committee.

5.2 That a report on the proposed disposals of the 3 listed sets of former toilets be submitted to the next meeting of the Policy and Finance committee

JOHN HEAP
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List of Background papers:-

Policy & Finance Committee 20 November 2012(min 463)
Community Services Committee 6 November 2012 (min 406)
District Valuer's Sites Appraisal 13 June 2012
Community Services Committee 12 January 2012 (Min No. 612)
Policy & Finance Committee 22 November 2011 (Min No.526)
Community Services Committee 8 November 2011 (Min No. 438)
Community Services Committee 13 September 2011 (Min No. 327)

For further information please ask for Terry Longden, extension 4523

REF: TL/CS/15:01:13

Shedule of Commumity Toilet Scheme participation - Longridge

Name	Location	Facilities	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Sainsbury's	Inglewhite Road	M F D BC	07:00 - 22:00	07:00 - 22:00	7:00 - 22:00	07:00 - 22:00	07:00 - 22:00	07:00 - 21:00	10:30 - 16:30
Old Station Cafe	Berry Lane (mid)	M F D BC	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	09:00 - 17:00	Closed
Jay Z Bar	Berry Lane (mid)	M F	11:00 till late	12:00 till late					
No.65 (café & deli)	Berry Lane (mid)	one toilet	09:00 - 18:00	09:00 - 18:00	09:00 - 18:00	09:00 - 18:00	09:00 - 18:00	09:00 - 17:00	10:00 - 13:00
Bite 2 Eat (café)	Berry Lane (mid)	one toilet	09:00 - 14:00	09:00 - 14:00	09:00 - 14:00	09:00 - 14:00	09:00 - 14:00	09:00 - 14:00	Closed
LCC Library	Berry Lane (Top)	M F D BC	09:30 - 17:00	09:30 - 19:00	Closed	09:30 - 19:00	09:30 - 15:00	09:30 - 13:00	Closed
Durham Ox	Berry Lane (Top)	M & F	16:00 - 00:00	16:00 - 00:00	16:00 - 00:00	16:00 - 00:00	15:00 - 01:00	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00
White Bull	Market Place	M & F	16:00 - 24:00	16:00 - 24:00	16:00 - 24:00	16:00 - 24:00	16:00 - 24:00	11:00 - 24:00	11:00 - 24:00
Bull & Royal	Inglewhite Road	M & F	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00	12:00 - 24:00
RVBC Facilities									
Stonebridge	Kestor lane (Btm)	M & F	07:00 21:00	07:00 21:00	07:00 21:00	07:00 21:00	07:00 21:00	08:00 - 21:00	8:30 - 21:00

Key

- M** Male
- F** Female
- D** Disabled
- BC** Baby Changing