

# RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 10 JANUARY 2012  
title: REVIEW OF THE PROVISION AND OPERATION OF PUBLIC TOILETS  
submitted by: JOHN C HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: TERRY LONGDEN

## 1. PURPOSE

1.1 To update the committee on the findings of the Public Conveniences Working Group and to seek approvals to implement the resultant recommendations in respect of the operation of the Council's public conveniences.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Council Ambitions – To be a well-managed Council providing efficient services based on identified customer needs.
- Corporate Priorities:

With respect to PEOPLE:

- Promote community cohesion.
- Encourage more involvement in community participation.
- Maintain the sustainability of the rural community across Ribble Valley.

With respect to PLACES:

- Maintain the sustainability of our towns and villages as service centres.

With respect to PROSPERITY:

- Develop the tourism offer in the area.
- Encourage and support social enterprises.
- Other Considerations – Economic – encouraging greater levels of spend through tourism by attracting visitors into the retail premises.

## 2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The September 2011 meeting of this committee agreed that a working group of Members be formed to consider officers' proposals in the development of an acceptable and sustainable solution for the provision of the conveniences across the borough that are accessible to the public. It was noted that in order to maintain and to even, in places, enhance the provision of publically accessible toilets, there would need to be tailored solutions for each locality. These local solutions would draw or take benefit from the local circumstances.

2.2 The last meeting of this Committee (8 November 2011) agreed to the early launch of a Borough wide Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) and the development and trial of automated locking systems. The committee also noted the views of the working group which were that the set of conveniences at Dunsop Bridge should continue to be provided.

2.3 Three meetings of the working group have been held.

### 3. ISSUES

#### 3.1 Introduction of a Borough Wide Community Toilet Scheme (CTS).

3.1.1 The borough wide Community Toilet Scheme was launched in both the Clitheroe and Longridge town centres in the first week of December. The number of businesses that have agreed to support the initiative is currently 35 (14/12/11). These premises are detailed in Appendix A but the current position is given on the Ribble Valley Borough Council web site where a map showing the positions of both the CTS and the Council facilities is available.

3.1.2 It is anticipated that membership of the initiative, which is supported by the Clitheroe Chamber of Trade and Commerce, will increase. Once membership has stabilised the locations of the additional facilities will be promoted.

3.1.3 The locations of some of the CTS facilities are such that the additional toilets are alternatives for the RVBC public conveniences. These facilities are particularly useful to people who, for whatever reason, prefer not to use "public conveniences". In some cases, the use of these additional facilities is already established and their inclusion in the CTS therefore merely recognises their usage. In any event these facilities will undoubtedly share the load of providing publically accessible facilities and hence their presence is relevant when considering the provision of a sustainable toilets service.

3.1.4 Some of the CTS facilities however, are in locations where no council facilities exist and can hence be seen as an addition to the overall amenity of the areas concerned. The CTS facilities identified in Read and in Tosside are examples of this.

#### 3.2 Automatic Unlocking and Locking Systems

3.2.1 Automatic time controlled locks were installed in a number of facilities, the immediate aim of which was to test the systems to ensure that the locks are user friendly and reliable. Problems were initially experienced in one location, but the retention of a local person as a "Toilet Guardian" has overcome the difficulties and their presence has contributed to the overall delivery of the service. The successful operation of these locking systems, which have now been installed in six locations, means that separate trips by Council staff to merely lock or unlock the particular facilities are no longer required and an ongoing financial saving can therefore be realised.

3.2.2 The installation of automatic locking systems in a further facilities in order to support or assist with the functioning of local management or cleaning arrangements will be required.

#### 3.3 Sustainability of RVBC conveniences

3.3.1 The ratio of the number of sets of Council operated public conveniences to residents of the borough is approximately 1 set to every 2,500 residents. In a neighbouring authority the ratio is much lower at 1 set per 70,000 residents. Ribble Valley Borough Council provides and operates 24 sets of public conveniences. This high number reflects the combination of the predominately rural nature of the borough and its attraction to visitors as a tourism and leisure orientated area.

3.3.2 The continued operation of all of the 24 sets of conveniences is not however financially sustainable. Whilst alternative and innovative ways to support and maintain the toilets at reduced costs are being introduced, some facilities will still need to be closed. This unfortunate but necessary measure should be considered against the long term change in the usage of public conveniences that have occurred as a result in the variations of both travel patterns and leisure activities. The use of some toilet facilities has reduced whilst the use of others, driven primarily by the increase in outdoor leisure pursuits, has increased.

3.3.2 It should be noted that residents are unlikely to use a set of public toilets near to, or for example, in the same village as their home. These same residents however, will have an interest in any alternative use for a facility that may now be proposed for closure. Alternative uses for such facilities may be considered by the Council's Asset Management Group.

- 3.3.3 The aim is to minimise the effect the closure of any facilities on the public by retaining those facilities where usage remains considerable and where no suitable alternative facilities exist. A full range of factors, as listed below, have been considered for each of the toilets sites.

Selection criteria considered in order to arrive at the initial proposals.

Provision of facilities

1. Degree to which the facility is used –

- usage (high / medium / low)
- type of customer (walker / driver/ shopper/ visitor)
- single user or groups of customers (coach parties)

2. Availability of alternative facilities .

- Alternatives located near to the source of the demand. (village centre / car park / retail outlets / transport hub etc)
- Opening hours of the alternative (days / hours)

3. Consider match between demand and provision of facilities

- How well can any potential alternative satisfy demand
- Are the Council facilities warranted

Servicing & Support Issues

- Premises susceptible to vandalism?
- Security or potential misuse issues
- Availability of local key holders
- Suitability for automatic locking
- Travel distance for RVBC toilet cleaner
- Potential for Local Management / Local Guardian / Local cleaner
- Frequency of cleaning routines
- Direct maintenance costs of the toilet building
- Condition of existing RVBC facility – (rebuild or refurb required)

- 3.3.4 The consideration of the criteria when applied to the individual toilets is a complex analysis based on a detailed knowledge of the individual circumstances, usage patterns and customer types using each facility. The conclusions of the of the working group are given in Appendix B to this report but salient features worthy of note are:

- Toilets that are located on or adjacent to the Council car parks in rural areas that can specifically accommodate coaches should be retained as the coaches are primarily used by visitors to the area, and any the alternative toilet facilities are unlikely to be able to cater for the potential peaks of demand created by a coach party.
- Other car parks that cannot accommodate coaches can still attract large numbers of visitors and hence should still be retained.
- Whilst two relatively lightly used toilets are in need of refurbishment no funding for this work is available.

3.4 Consultations

- 3.4.1 The Clitheroe and the Longridge Town Councils have been consulted on the initiative. The Longridge TC remains positive and recognises that the potential negative effects of the recommended closure of the Berry Lane and the “mothballing” of the Market Place facilities can be mitigated by further local membership and promotion of the CTS. Clitheroe TC have offered an annual contribution of £3,000 to the Council to support the continued operation of the facilities in the town centre as shown by Appendix B.

- 3.4.2 None of the Parish Council’s consulted as part of the on going review have welcomed or supported the potential closure of any on the conveniences within their parishes. These councils have been invited to submit proposals that may reduce the servicing costs of the facilities within their areas.

#### 4. RISK ASSESSMENT

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

- Resources – Adoption of the recommendations will support the delivery of the cost savings from the Public Conveniences service as outlined in the report to the Policy & Finance Committee 22 November 2011 (Min No.526).
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political – There are no specific political issues arising out of this report.
- Reputation –Whilst there is a risk that the closure of any toilets will damage the reputation of the Council, the proposals and the methods of implication seek to minimise any effect of any closures on the public.

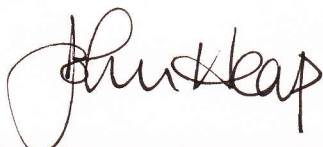
#### 5. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 That the Committee:

a) approve the recommendations as given by Appendix B to this report, the measures to be implemented prior to April 2012

b) accept the proposed funding from Clitheroe Town Council as a contribution for the continued operation of the town centre facilities as outlined by Appendix B.

5.2 That the operation of the revised service be reviewed by the Conveniences Working Group and the outcome reported back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Community Services Committee in the 2012/13 cycle.



DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Background Papers:-

Community Services Committee 13 September 2011 (Min No. 327)

Community Services Committee 8 November 2011 (Min No. 438)

Policy & Finance Committee 22 November 2011 (Min No.526)

For further information please contact Terry Longden on 01200 414523.

**APPENDIX A**  
**RIBBLE VALLEY COMMUNITY TOILET SCHEME - MEMBERSHIP DETAILS**  
 correct as of 14/12/11

Establishment Name	Location	M F Dis, B/C
Lower Buck PH	Edisford Road, Waddington	M, F
Higher Buck PH	The Square, Waddington	M, F
Waddington Arms PH	Clitheroe Road, Waddington	M, F, D
Country Kitchen	Clitheroe Road, Waddington	M, F
Café Nero	Clitheroe TC	M, F, D
Tesco's	Clitheroe TC	M, F, D, BC
Sainsbury's	Clitheroe TC	M, F, D, BC
Atrium Café	Clitheroe Castle	M, F, D, BC
Maxwell's	Clitheroe (King Street)	M, F, D
Swan and Royale	Clitheroe (Castle Street)	M, F, D
LCC Library	Clitheroe (Church Brow)	M, F
Callooh Callay	Clitheroe (Moor Lane)	M, F
Brown Cow	Chatburn	M, F
The Black Bull Inn	Chatburn	M, F
Sainsbury's	Inglewhite Road Longridge	M, F, D, BC
Hemmingways wine bar	Berry Lane (mid) Longridge	M, F
No.65 (café & deli)	Berry Lane (mid) Longridge	M, F
Old Station Cafe	Berry Lane (mid) Longridge	M, F, D, BC
Bite 2 Eat (café)	Berry Lane (mid) Longridge	M, F
LCC Library	Berry Lane (Top) Longridge	M, F, D
White Bull	Market Place (Longridge)	M, F
LCC Library	41 Whalley Road, Read	M, F
Texaco Garage	A59 Gisburn	M, F
Blackbull Ribchester	Church St, Ribchester	M, F
Ribchester Arms	Blackburn Road, Ribchester	M, F
The White Bull Hotel	Ribchester	M, F
New Drop Inn	Old Clitheroe Road, Dutton	M, F
Tosside Community Centre	Tosside	M, F, D
Calves Head PH	Worston	M, F, D
Bashall Barn	Twitter lane	M, F, D, BC
The Plate Backridge Farm	Twitter Lane	M, F, D, BC
MacDonald's	Barrow Brook	M, F, D, BC
Cooperative Service Station	Barrow Brook	M, F, D
Primrose Service Station	Little Moor Clitheroe (South)	M, F, D
Black bull Old Langho	Old Langho	M, F

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**RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL TOILETS**

Area	Location	Opening times (winter)
Bolton-by- Bowland	Bolton-by-Bowland Car park	Continuous
Chatburn	Sawley Road - by Library	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Chipping	Chipping Pay & Display car park	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Clitheroe	Brungerley Park (Waddington Road)	Continuous
Clitheroe	Castlefields playing fields	8 :00AM till 4:00PM
Clitheroe	Cemetery	8 :00AM till 4:30PM
Clitheroe	Church Walk Pay & Display car park	8 :00AM till 5:30PM
Clitheroe	Clitheroe Market	8 :00AM till 4:00PM
Clitheroe	Edisford Bridge along riverside	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Clitheroe	Woone Lane opposite Emporium	Continuous
Downham	Downham free car park	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Dunsop	Dunsop car park	Continuous
Gisburn	Mill Lane	Continuous
Hurst Green	Avenue Road ( by working mens club)	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Longridge	Berry Lane - by Townley Arms	8 :00AM till 4:30PM
Longridge	Market Place	8 :00AM till 4:30PM
Longridge	Stonebridge by Bond's garage	8 :00AM till 4:30PM
Mellor	Mellor Lane (by Butchers)	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Newton	Newton - village centre	Continuous
Ribchester	Ribchester Pay & Display car park	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Sabden	Sabden Pay & Display car park	8 :00AM till 5:00PM
Slaiburn	Slaiburn Pay & Display car park	Continuous
Waddington	Slaiburn Road (on fell road)	Continuous
Whalley	King Street (by bus station)	6 :00AM till 5:00PM

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See [www.ribblevalley.gov.uk](http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk) for latest membership

APPENDIX B – “Overall Proposals”

Toilets	Area	Potential Peak Usage	Comments	Retain / Close	Servicing Arrangements
Bolton-b-Bowland	Bolton-b-B	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Pursue local servicing arrangements
Sawley Road	Chatburn	High	Supports recreational area & local business.	Retain	Guardian & RVBC Mobile Cleaner
Chipping	Chipping	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Guardian & RVBC Mobile Cleaner
Brungerley	Clitheroe	Low	Poor standard. Cemetery Toilets as alternative	Close	Not applicable
Castle Field	Clitheroe	Medium	High incidence of parent and children users. Very high summer use.	Retain	Auto locks & RVBC mobile cleaner
Cemetery	Clitheroe	Low	Facility integral to the cemetery facility	Retain	Site staff & RVBC mobile cleaner
Church Walk	Clitheroe	High	High usage (ex Sundays) Suitable CTS available	Retain	Auto Locks & RVBC mobile cleaner
Clitheroe Mkt	Clitheroe	Medium	Public facility Market days only. Alternative CTS facilities available	Retain	Site staff & RVBC mobile cleaner
Edisford Bridge	Clitheroe	High	Very high summer recreational use, particularly children	Retain	Auto Locks & RVBC mobile cleaner
Woone Lane	Clitheroe	Low	Poor standard. Rebuild required. Low use. Adequate CTS available	Close	Not applicable
Downham	Downham	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Guardian & RVBC mobile cleaner
Dunsop	Dunsop	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Pursue local servicing arrangements
Mill Lane	Gisburn	Low	Alternative CTS facilities available	Close	Not applicable
Avenue Road	Hurst Green	High	Occasional coach parties / No suitable CTS alternatives	Retain	Guardian & RVBC mobile cleaner
Berry Lane	Longridge	Low	Poor condition / Alternative CTS facilities available	Close	Not applicable
Market Place	Longridge	Low	Alternative CTS facilities available / “Mothball” for community events	Close	RVBC mobile cleaner
Stonebridge	Longridge	Low	Integral to local business use.	Retain	Pursue local servicing arrangements
Mellor Lane	Mellor	Low	Low usage / limited CTS facilities available	Close	Not applicable
Newton	Newton	Low	Very Low usage	Close	Not applicable
Ribchester	Ribchester	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Guardian & RVBC mobile cleaner
Sabden	Sabden	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Guardian Auto Locks - RVBC mobile cleaner
Slaidburn	Slaidburn	High	Located on car park / potential for coach parties	Retain	Pursue Local servicing arrangements
Slaidburn Rd	Waddington	Low	Low usage – adequate local CTS as alternatives.	Close	Not applicable
King Street	Whalley	High	Essential for bus station & town centre- provide enhanced servicing	Retain	Guardian -Auto Locks – RVBC mobile cleaner