

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No. 9

meeting date: 13 JANUARY 2015
title: STONEBRIDGE PUBLIC CONVENIENCES - LONGRIDGE
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: TERRY LONGDEN – HEAD OF ENGINEERING SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider a proposal for the disposal of the existing public conveniences at Stonebridge in Longridge and the provision of alternative conveniences.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Corporate 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 The Council provides a set of public conveniences (male & female, no separate provision for the disabled users) at Stonebridge, adjacent to the Bonds of Longridge petrol station at Longridge. The toilets are infrequently used.
- 2.2 The condition of the facilities does not match the more modern internal conditions of all of the other public toilets provided by the Council. There are no plans to improve or refurbish these facilities within the foreseeable future. The toilets are part of the construction of the Bonds garage but they are owned by the Council. Their location and the approximate area of the plot are highlighted on Appendix 1 to this report.
- 2.3 Bonds garage are currently engaged by the Council to clean the facilities. The involvement of the Council is limited to funding the cleaning operation, the maintenance of the facilities and the provision of toilet requisites e.g. tissues & soaps etc.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 The garage owner has expressed an interest in purchasing the toilet block with the intention of demolishing the block and incorporating the area into a refurbishment of the former car sales room and fuels sales counter area in order to provide a convenience store to be operated in conjunction with the existing fuel station.
- 3.2 The proposal includes new toilet facilities within the convenience store. The garage owner states that the toilet facilities would be available for public use when the store is open, which is early until late, seven days per week. The toilets would be a single facility for use by male, female and disabled users located at ground level and accessible directly from inside the proposed convenience store.

- 3.3 The fuel dispensing and vehicle workshops side of the operation would continue. Fuel filling stations are now frequently supported by convenience stores, an arrangement that promotes a more commercially viable and hence sustainable filling station operation than a stand alone fuel station.
- 3.4 The Longridge Town Council, who were advised of this proposal at their meeting of the 26 November, support the replacement of the current facilities with a new toilet accessible from the inside of the proposed convenience store
- 3.5 The incorporation of the new toilet facility within the convenience store would create an improved accessible facility at no cost to the council.

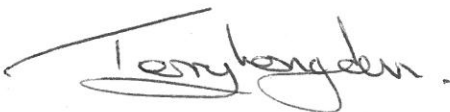
4 RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources - The disposal of the freehold of the existing toilet block would generate a one off capital receipt at the market value, estimated at £4,000. The Council's revenue commitment for the facility (budgeted in the 2014/15 year at £3,590) which covers the maintenance, the toilet cleaning provided by Bonds, the NNDR, sewage disposal charges and the water and electricity consumption costs would cease with the sale of the facility.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal - Whilst the continued access to the new facility can be made a condition (covenant) of the sale of the existing toilet block to the garage owner, this condition cannot be enforced upon a subsequent owner of the garage should the ownership be transferred to a third party. Note that three other convenience stores attached to petrol stations successfully offer their toilet facilities for use as part of the Community Toilet Scheme.
- Political - There are sections of the community that would prefer the Council to continue to provide public toilet facilities and for that reason this proposal may not be universally welcomed. It cannot however be argued that the proposal will not improve the standard and accessibility of publically accessible toilets in this part of Longridge.
- Reputation – The majority of the potential users of the facility will be visitors to Longridge. They will be grateful for the use of a clean and welcoming facility. The reputation of the Ribble Valley as a welcoming visitor destination will be supported by this initiative.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That the sale of the existing toilet block to the garage proprietor at the market value is pursued on the understanding that the site is to be incorporated into a convenience store to be operated in conjunction with the fuel / petrol station, and that a new single sex fully accessible toilet facility which is incorporated at ground level in the new convenience and is made available to the public as part of the Ribble Valley Community Toilet Scheme.



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REF: TL-/CSC/130115

APPENDIX 1

