

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

meeting date: 28 MARCH 2023
title: REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE – BERRY LANE TOILETS
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES
principal author: LAWSON ODDIE

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider a request from Community Services Committee for an additional capital programme scheme and also a supplementary revenue estimate in respect of the provision of Berry Lane Toilets by this Council rather than by Longridge Town Council.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Service committees manage their services within the budgets agreed at the beginning of the financial year. The budget for 2023/24 was approved by Policy and Finance Committee on 14 February 2023 and by Full Council on 7 March 2023.
- 2.2 Any revenue or capital expenditure over and above what has already been approved must be agreed by Policy and Finance Committee.

3 COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE 14 MARCH 2023

- 3.1 Community Services Committee considered a report submitted by the Head of Cultural and Leisure Services. In respect of financial issues, the report (attached at Annex 1) requests that Community Services Committee decide what standard the toilets should be brought up to and the associated costs and also asks Community Services Committee to approve a corresponding cleaning budget.

- 3.3 At its meeting, Community Services Committee resolved the following:

RESOLVED THAT COMMITTEE:

1. Approved the decision to return the provision of Berry Lane toilets back into the control of Ribble Valley Borough Council from Longridge Town Council.
2. Agreed that a sum of up to £45,000 is required so that the toilets can have a vandal proof design. This sum will be put to Policy and Finance Committee for its approval.
3. Agreed that there should be flexibility with regards to the opening times of the toilets and to request Policy and Finance Committee to approve the corresponding revenue budget for cleaning and repairs.
4. Approved the decision that if the toilets were to continue to be vandalised a review of their future should be undertaken.

- 3.4 Policy and Finance Committee are being asked to approve a capital programme scheme of £45,000 so that the toilets can have a vandal proof design and are also asked to approve a supplementary estimate of £3,640 to the revenue budget in respect of annual cleaning and repair costs. It is proposed that both amounts be funded from the VAT Shelter Earmarked Reserve in 2023/24 and in the case of the revenue item, that this be included in the base budget for future years.

4 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 4.1 Approve a capital programme scheme of £45,000 for the Refurbishment of Berry Lane Toilets in a vandal proof design funded from the VAT Shelter Earmarked Reserve; and
- 4.2 Approve a supplementary estimate of £3,640 to the revenue budget in respect of annual cleaning and repair costs of Berry Lane Toilets funded from the VAT Shelter Earmarked Reserve in 2023/24 and included in the base budget for future years.

HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
PF29-23/LO/AC
17 MARCH 2023

DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

meeting date: 14 MARCH 2023
title: BERRY LANE TOILETS
submitted by: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Committee with an update and consider further the proposal for the Borough Council to take the provision of these toilets back from Longridge Town Council, who currently operate them.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives - To help make people's lives healthier and safer.
- Corporate Priorities - To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley.
- Other Considerations – The provision of public toilets is not a statutory requirement, however access to them can determine whether some people are able to enjoy the same freedom to visit areas as others do.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Longridge Town Council took over responsibility for these toilets around 2012, when the Borough Council proposed their closure.

2.2 At Committee in January, a proposal was made to consider the Borough Council taking back the responsibility for these toilets, in line with the responsibility it has for other public toilets in the Borough.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The toilets in Berry Lane are currently closed, because they were vandalised leaving them unfit to be opened.

3.2 The estimated cost for carrying out the repairs is £6,000 to return them to working condition. In addition to bring them up to the standard of other toilets with a more vandal resistant design will require c£30,000.

3.3 Longridge have a contract with a cleaning company for the toilets covering weekdays only, the current cleaning costs are £500-£600 per month. The Council operates a 7-day cleaning service for many of the public toilets. It is estimated that the additional cost for cleaning by the Council will be £3,640 per year. Although this figure may rise, because at present no discussion has taken place with the Council's existing toilet cleaners to determine if they are able to increase their hours of work to accommodate the Longridge toilets.

3.4 The Borough's current toilet cleaners work on a rota of 22.5 hours which would need to be extended, assuming they were willing to work the extra hours to cover Longridge. If not, then a post would need to be created specifically for the Berry Lane toilets.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Public toilets provide a useful facility for residents and visitors alike, although some are subject to high levels of vandalism, which mean the Council bears the cost of repair. The Castle, Market and Railway View toilets have been badly damaged in recent times, resulting in thousands of pounds of repairs.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

- Resources – there is currently a budget provision of £5,140 for 2023/24 for the Berry Lane toilets, which covers utilities, depreciation, insurance etc but not cleaning or internal repairs. If the Council decide to bring them back under its provision, it will require an initial budget to cover the cost of work needed to put them back into use (either £6,000 to repair them to working condition or circa £35,000 for a more vandal resistant design). In addition, the revenue budget will need to be increased to reflect the cleaning cost and a sum to cover ongoing maintenance.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – the current arrangement with the Longridge Town Council will need to be ended formally to enable the Borough Council to once more to take control of the toilets.
- Political – none in the context of the report
- Reputation – The Borough Council provides toilets in many other parts of the Borough and the existing arrangement in Longridge is seen as less desirable by the Longridge councillors.
- Equality and Diversity – the provision of toilets is an important issue for some people, especially those with a disability, having accessible public toilets in Longridge is an integral part of providing for that group of people as well as the wider population.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Committee decide if provision of Berry Lane toilets should be taken back inhouse from Longridge Town Council. If so then:

6.1.1 Decide what standard the toilets should be brought up to (either repairs to a working condition or more vandal resistant design) and request Policy and Finance Committee to approve the corresponding budget (£6k or circa £30k)

6.1.2 Decide that the toilets be open 8am until 4pm daily and request Policy and Finance Committee to approve the corresponding revenue budget for cleaning and repairs.

6.1.3 Decide that if the toilets were to continue to be vandalised a review of their future should be undertaken.

Mark Beveridge
Head of Cultural and Leisure Services

BACKGROUND PAPERS None

For further information please ask for Mark Beveridge 01200 425111