

11 MARCH 2014

Review of MDDC Public Convenience provision**Cabinet Member:** Clive Eginton**Responsible Officer:** Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager**Reason for this report:** To provide an update on the review of the provision of public conveniences following the Member briefing on 17 December 2013.**Recommendation:** To continue discussions with Parish Councils as detailed and recommend the revised provision of public conveniences in Tiverton to Cabinet to meet the 2014-2015 budget.**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** No direct impact**Financial Implications:** As part of the 2014-2015 budget setting process for Public Conveniences a reduction of £10k needs to be met, in addition further savings are going to be required for 2015-2016.**Legal Implications:** There is no statutory obligation for a local authority to provide public conveniences**Risk Assessment:** Environmental impact considered as to proximity of alternative public conveniences where the review has recommended closure.**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 A review of the current provision of public conveniences took place following the last round of budget setting for 2014-2015. It was identified that a saving of £10k was required to meet budget targets and the need to look ahead to further budget reductions in 2015-2016. The Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager sent letters to all Town and Parish Councils to ask for their suggestions and feedback on the convenience provision within their area in light of the financial situation. The Head of Housing and Property Services held a Member briefing on 17 December 2013 where it was suggested that officers meet with Town and Parish Councils to discuss the provision of public conveniences within their Parish.

1.2 By implementing the recommendation outlined in this report for public conveniences in Tiverton, our costs would reduce by circa £40k once investment works were complete that will be based on a spend to save approach at circa £20k. An additional circa £10k is to be saved by continuing negotiations with the other Town and Parish Councils.

2.0 Existing Provision

2.1 The Council makes provision for twenty one conveniences available to the public within the district. The detail overleaf shows where they are located.

Tiverton Eight properties with conveniences
Crediton Five properties with conveniences

Remaining locations have one property with public conveniences

Cullompton
Hemyock
Down St Mary
Sampford Peverell
Bampton
Chawleigh
Cheriton Bishop
Lapford

3.0 Partnership arrangements

3.1 The public conveniences in Tiverton and Bampton are Council assets, however we receive contribution payments from Tiverton Town Council for two Tiverton sites and pay contribution sums for the remaining five.

Peoples Park, Tiverton (contribution received)	£3,584.00
Westexe Recreation, Tiverton (contribution received)	£1,700.00
Orchard Way Car Park, Lapford	£500.00
Luke Street, Bampton	£3,696.17
The Village Hall, Chawleigh	£371.75
Woodleigh Coach House, Cheriton Bishop	£975.00
Old Crediton Town Hall	£1,250.00

4.0 Investment works

4.1 During the financial year 2006-2007, the Council spent circa £70K of capital expenditure for improvement works that consisted of wall tiling, decoration, and disabled access improvements. At Sampford Peverell we created a Disabled convenience in space reducing the oversized convenience within the Gents. Works were completed at the following locations.

- Cullompton
- Westexe South Tiverton
- Sampford Peverell
- Phoenix Lane (minor works)

5.0 Total cost of running the service

5.1 The total operating budget for the public convenience provision for the current financial year 2013-2014 is £183,800.00 for direct and indirect costs.

5.2 Direct costs	
• Employees	£38,980.00
• Premises	£61,260.00
• Transport	£7,250.00
• Supplies & Services	£29,850.00

5.3 Indirect Costs	
• Internal Recharges	£19,270.00
• Capital Deprecation	£33,260.00
• Tiverton Town Council Contribution	-£6,070.00

6.0 Challenges of providing the service

6.1 Providing the public convenience service can be challenging, the Property Services unit responds to call outs across the portfolio that need to be met from our operating budget, currently vandalism costs of circa £5k for 2013-2014 to date.

6.2 The list below details some of these challenges:-

- Drug activity – proven by removal of multiple syringes from drainage systems resulting in call-outs
- Alcohol use
- Vandalism on the building fabric
- Arson
- Mis-use of facilities for cleanliness
- Cost of provision

7.0 Cleaning

7.1 The Council provides a cleaning service seven days a week. We have three dedicated members of staff who provide this service, two part-time and one full time employee. The full time position is employed to clean the Tiverton, Sampford Peverell, Cullompton and Hemyock conveniences, contract cleaners are used to cover holidays and every other weekend. Salary costs for cleaning these facilities averages £1,860.00 for each property per annum and external contract cleaning costs are circa £10k per annum.

The Crediton and Down St Mary conveniences are cleaned by the two part-time employees without contract cleaning support. Salary costs for cleaning these facilities average £2,862.50 for each property per annum.

Existing arrangements for the frequency of cleaning are:-

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| • Hemyock | Cleaning frequency three times a week by MDCC |
| • Bampton | Cleaned daily by Bampton Town Council |
| • Sampford Peverell | Cleaned three times a week by MDCC |
| • Down St Mary | Daily by MDCC |
| • Crediton | Twice daily |
| • Tiverton | Twice daily |

8.0 Responses from Town and Parishes

8.1 At the time of writing this report, we have received responses from the following Town and Parish Council's and officers have met with the following Town and Parish Council's

- Hemyock – attended meeting 4 February 2014
- Down St Mary (Morchard Road) – attended Parish Council meeting 11 February 2014
- Bampton - meeting held at Phoenix House – 13 February 2014
- Tiverton Town Council - attended working group meeting - 31 October 2013
- Crediton Town Council - met with Town Clerk – 29 October 2013
- Sampford Peverell - parish council meeting -18 February 2014
- Cullompton Town Council – to be confirmed

8.2 Hemyock

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
5,119.18	236.49		436.50	782.00	£6,574.17

8.2.1 The Facilities and Corporate Building Manager met with representatives from Hemyock Parish Council on 4 February 2014 to discuss the public convenience, it was felt that Hemyock have a continued need for a convenience. Discussions took place regarding the Parish raising their percept to budget for taking on the operation of the convenience; a summary of the discussion is shown below:

- Structural survey to confirm the current condition of the facility
- It was felt that the Ladies WC was too small, possibly convert to a winter store
- Facility requires minor works prior to possible parish transfer, windows, cubical doors, decoration
- Converting existing disabled WC to uni-sex and install coin operated locks to this WC and the Gents
- Up to date expenditure information for 2013-14 to be collected and sent at year-end
- Water usage shown is not a true reflection of annual water costs; that will be addressed when providing the above action point

8.2.2 Property Services will provide the above information to Hemyock Parish Council so the Parish can discuss and a further follow up meeting will be arranged.

8.2.3 Recommendation: To work through the discussion points and attend further meetings to work towards transfer of asset for 2015-16 via a lease agreement and to cap the investment works to circa of £5k to bring the facility up to a good standard.

8.3 Down St Mary

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£1309.77	£223.63	£113.40	£2,137.50	£654.18	£4,438.48

8.3.1 The Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager attended a parish meeting held on 14 January 2014 and discussed the public convenience that included the following points:-

- Parish Council believe that the convenience is of vital importance to the community and users of the railway link.
- The Parish Council would be willing to consider contributing towards the facility in order for the conveniences to remain operational circa £1,000-£1,500 per annum.
- It was felt that the business rates were high for the convenience and it was asked that MDDC consider business rate appeal.
- Cleaning costs to be looked at further as current arrangements mean that members of the Crediton cleaning team are completing this, costs to be provided as shown in 7.1.
- It was felt that due to the location of the conveniences coin operated locks would be at risk of repeated vandalism

8.3.2 Recommendation: To work through the discussion points and attend further meetings to work towards Down St Mary contributing circa £1,250.00 per annum. If an agreement cannot be agreed planning permission should be sought for an alternative use.

8.4 Bampton

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£750.69	£246.31		£1,057.50	£1,472.64	£3,527.14

8.4.1 A meeting took place at Phoenix House on 13th February with two members of Bampton Parish Council to discuss the public convenience, the following points were discussed:-

- The public convenience is very important to the town and is of economic importance for the Bampton tourist industry

- Lighting sensors now installed and will demonstrate a financial saving on electricity, this could be further improved to individual cubicles
- Bampton Town Council will not accept the transfer of the public building due to the previous administration introducing high precept increases, however, the Town Council is willing to help wherever possible to reduce the running costs.
- BTC felt that coin operated locks would not work at this location due to possible vandalism and that the car park relied on an honesty box that is regularly used and it was felt that the public would not pay for using the car park if payment is required for the public convenience as well.
- BTC would work with us to lock the building daily rather than 24/7 operating hours and to have British Summer Time hours of 06:00-21:00 and Winter operating times of 07:00-19:00; this will reduce running costs slightly and help with maintaining cleaning standards.
- To seek quotations from contract cleaners to ensure that we are getting value for money, any reductions would reduce the annual contribution figure.

8.4.2 Recommendation: To work through the points above and seek agreement with BTC to meet the annual cleaning costs and for MDDC to continue to provide the facility. Closure to be considered if an agreement cannot be reached.

8.5 Tiverton Town Council

8.5.1 The current cost of providing public conveniences in Tiverton is circa **£56,350.00**, this includes cleaning and staff.

8.5.2 At present Tiverton Town Council pays an annual contribution of **£5,284.00** for the retention of the toilets in People's Park and to open the toilets in Westex Recreation Grounds during the summer.

8.5.3 Tiverton Town Council has set up a working group and the Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager and the accountant for Property Services attended a meeting with the working group to discuss the public conveniences provision in Tiverton.

8.6 Tiverton Market Car Park

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£2,348	£1,222	£227	£3,504	£896	£8,197

8.6.1 It is suggested that Tiverton Town Council takes over the operation of these toilets from MDDC, subject to the following provision:

- It is felt that there should be at least one good quality public convenience in the town. With the introduction of a coach park in William Street it is

suggested that the focus should be on the toilets in the Market Car Park. They should be refurbished and a pay system introduced. It is felt that if you have to pay for using the facilities people normally have a higher regard for them. The present operating charges for that toilet excluding staffing (2012/13 figures) are **£8,197**.

- It is suggested that because MDDC operate the Pannier Market they should make a contribution of **£4,000** per year towards the cost of running these toilets
- That the toilets be updated and a charging device be put into operation prior to handing over the toilets
- That Tiverton Town Council introduces a fee for use of the toilets. This device to be paid for by Tiverton Town Council.

8.6.2 Recommendation: To agree with TTC a schedule of works to reconfigure the property to reduce circulation space and to construct a store. To consider budget for the improvement works and to negotiate the suggested contribution figure from £4k to £2k per annum, to proceed with transferring this convenience based on a lease agreement. Opening hours to be agreed.

8.7 Westexe Recreation Ground

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£1,011	£152	0	N/A	£1,219	£2,382

- There are no rates on toilets within a park.
- The toilets are only open during the summer
- Tiverton Town Council already contributes towards these toilets
- It is suggested that Tiverton Town Council takes over the operation of these toilets from MDDC, subject to them being refurbished prior to being handed over.

8.7.1 Recommendation: To meet with Tiverton Town Council and agree a schedule of affordable works and proceed with transferring the Westexe Rec convenience via lease agreement, taking into account that the facility is only operational during the summer months.

8.8 Phoenix Lane

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£4,979	£985	£170	£3,690	£1,819	£11,643

- It is suggested that Tiverton Town Council does not take over these toilets and that the Shop Mobility Office be asked if they would permit their toilets to be used as a public facility, for which the Town Council would provide a grant of **£2,000** per annum.

- Shop Mobility Office is very interested in this proposal. It is further suggested that the Museum could be approached to see if they would also be willing to let members of the public use their toilets for a small grant. It is felt that if these suggestions were implemented that MDDC should pay for the relevant signage.

8.8.1 Recommendation: It is recommended that the Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager arrange for this building to be de-commissioned and convert the building for other purposes to generate income.

8.9 Lowman Green

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£2,736	£604	£170	£2,340	£1,262	£7,112

- It is suggested that Tiverton Town Council does not take over these toilets.
- A local estates agent has shown an interest in the property and is estimated to return circa £8k- £10k per annum.

8.9.1 Recommendation: To arrange for this building to be de-commissioned and to provide a business case to convert the building for other purposes to generate income at circa £8k-£10k per annum.

8.10 Westexe South

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£1,938	£256	£113	£1,642	£2,125	£6,074

- It was felt that the toilets are in a fairly poor state of repair and are not that well used.
- It is suggested that Tiverton Town Council does not take over these facilities
- It is suggested that Weatherspoons be approached to see if they would permit public use of their toilets for an annual grant of £1,000.

8.10.1 Recommendation: To arrange minor improvement works, it is suggested that this facility remain with MDDC.

8.11 Peoples Park

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£2,132	£288	£113	N/A	£1,013	£3,546

- At present the toilets are managed by MDDC but the park is run under a trust, which is made up of our Tiverton elected members. It is understood that the trust does not wish for the ownership of the toilets to pass over to

a third party, the building insurance implications would therefore need to remain with MDDC.

- Day to day cleaning of the toilets would be dealt with by Tiverton Town Council.
- It was also felt that the opening of this facility could be restricted to British Summer Time (BST) in line with the other toilet in Westexe Recreation Grounds
- Recommended that the toilets be reduced to being open only during the summer months in the same way as Westexe Recreation Grounds. This would reduce the costs by **50%**; therefore the cost would be **£1,773**.

8.11.1 Recommendation: For the facility to change its operating hours to British Summer Time and for Tiverton Town Council to operate the facility and to continue with the existing arrangement.

8.12 Conclusion - Tiverton Town Council

8.12.1 The present costs of maintaining the number of toilet facilities within Tiverton is very high. It is believed that if Tiverton Town Council does not take over ownership of these facilities, MDDC will have little choice but to close most of them.

8.12.2 The Working Party considers that the cost of keeping all of the present facilities open is too costly, and that it would be better to have one really good facility, plus the two park toilets during BST, supplemented by the provision of toilet facilities in the Shop Mobility Centre, and, if possible, the White Ball public house and the Museum.

8.12.3 The total cost to TTC would be circa **£33,000** which is felt to be a reasonable cost for the provision of public conveniences in Tiverton.

8.13 Crediton Town Council

8.13.1 The Green

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£1,963.75	£468.72	113	£911.25	£812.50	£4,156.22

8.13.2 Newcombes Meadow

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£693.25	£830.50	113	£1,620.00	£1,027.62	£4,171.37

8.13.3 Market Street

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£1,926.68	£213.61	£222.60	£1,282.50	£1,382.43	£5,027.82

- Crediton Town Council replied to the consultation letter by stating that they felt every penny was well spent on the conveniences, CTC have asked for automatic counters to be fitted to determine footfall.
- CTC asked if the business rates for the Newcombes Meadow convenience be appealed as it was felt that the location of the building was within the park. MDDC have instructed an appeal process, however initial feedback from the valuation office was that this may fail as the convenience can easily be accessed from the road.

8.13.4 Recommendation: It is suggested that the Green toilets be closed and developed for other purposes, it is the only facility in Crediton that does not have disabled access. It is also suggested that the partnership payment for the Old Town Hall, Crediton be ceased given the number and concentration of facilities available in Crediton town centre.

8.14 Sampford Peverell

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£293.65	£190.59	£113.40	N/A	£934.90	£1,532.54

8.14.1 The Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager attended a parish meeting held on 18 February; a summary of the discussion is shown below:

- Possibility of Sampford Peverell raising their precept to cover the annual running costs of £1,500.00, the Parish Council has not raised their precept for five years and a precept rise of circa 20% would be required that would be a significant rise for residents. Comments were also made about the economics of asking the Parish to increase their precept to reduce MDDC costs. The Parish could consider a contribution but would need to discuss before suggesting a figure.
- Possibility of the canal operator contributing as the facility is well used by people walking alongside the canal.
- Good standard of public convenience (refurbished 2007).
- It was felt that due to the location of the property, coin operated locks would be vandalised.
- Parish Council not aware of any complaints regarding the convenience.
- MDDC could offer support with supplying cleaning materials kept at Old Road.

- Cleaning costs to be provided as shown in 7.1 but drilled down to time actually spent on site as it is not cleaned as regularly as the other conveniences.

8.14.2 **Recommendation:** It is suggested that the cost of cleaning the facility be shared and discussed with the Parish in detail and a contribution to match be sought. Closure to be consider if agreement cannot be reached.

8.15 Cullompton

Water	Electric	Sanitary	Rates	Maintenance	Totals
£718.60	£202.39	£170.40	£1,777.50	£1,098.09	£3,966.98

8.15.1 A meeting with Cullompton Town Council will take place as soon as possible; this convenience was included in the refurbishment program and is in good order.

8.15.2 Recommendation: As there is only one public convenience in Cullompton, this facility should remain in operation and continue to be managed by MDDC. An efficiency review will take place and a contribution will be sought from the Town Council towards ongoing maintenance costs.

Contact for more Information: Nick Sanderson, Head of Housing & Property Services or Andrew Busby, Facilities and Corporate Buildings Manager, 01884 234948, abusby@middevon.gov.uk