Maldon District Council
Public Convenience Service
Action Plan
1. BACKGROUND

Maldon District Council currently provides traditional public conveniences at 9 sites across the District which include;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Opening Times</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butt Lane car park</td>
<td>Maldon</td>
<td>07:45 – 19:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade Park (The Valley)</td>
<td>Maldon</td>
<td>08:00 – 19:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade Park (The Coach Park)</td>
<td>Maldon</td>
<td>07:30 – 17:30 (Oct – Apr) &amp; 19:00 (May – Sept)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promenade Park (Sea Wall)</td>
<td>Maldon</td>
<td>07:30 – 17:30 (Oct – Apr) &amp; 19:00 (May – Sept)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Horse Lane</td>
<td>Maldon</td>
<td>10:00 – 16:30 (With attendant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors Lane</td>
<td>Burnham-on-Crouch</td>
<td>08:15 – 20:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverside Park</td>
<td>Burnham-on-Crouch</td>
<td>08:00 – 19:30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car Park</td>
<td>Southminster</td>
<td>Disabled Access by RADAR key only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodrolfe Road</td>
<td>Tollesbury</td>
<td>09:30 – 16:30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In addition to these facilities the Council also provides 6 Automated Public Conveniences (APCs) via a contract with JC Decaux which expires in October 2010. These facilities are located in;

Southminster (Car Park)
Heybridge Basin (Daisy Meadow Car Park)
Burnham-on-Crouch (Millfields)
St Lawrence (Main Road)
Maldon (White Horse Lane)
Maldon (Promenade Park)

Following a public consultation and a review of usage of the facilities during 2008 it was evident that the APCs were not liked or being used. As a result of this information and the significant cost of running these facilities, approximately £120,000 pa, Members of the Community Services Committee agreed on the 21 October 2008 that this contract will not be renewed and that Officers explore the possibility of terminating the contract early.

Additionally the review showed that the existing facilities were in need of refurbishment if they are to meet modern hygiene and accessibility standards. To achieve this would require capital investment but the considerable annual revenue savings from cancelling the APC Contract could be used to upgrade these facilities.

To ensure that the Council is not seen to be reducing provision, Officers were also asked to investigate the possibility of introducing a Community Toilet
service whereby local businesses offer their facilities to the public in return for a small subsidy from the Council.

2. ACTION PLAN

In formulating this action plan the following views and considerations were taken into account;

- Results of the Public Consultation – ‘Your views on our loos’.
- Usage statistics collated during peak usage (July to August).
- Ongoing costs to the Council including cleaning and maintenance.
- Requirement of refurbishment; and
- Effective asset management.

In view of this, the action plan aims to achieve a high quality, cost effective public convenience service which meets the needs of local residents and visitors to the District.

How will this be achieved?

**Early termination of the Automated Public Convenience (APC) contract**

Following the decision by Members’ of the Community Services Committee, Officers of the Council have obtained the costs of terminating this contract early. Despite the early termination charges, by terminating the contract on the 31 March 2009, giving the required 12 months notice and terminating the contract 6 months early, this would result in a saving of £23,600 compared to running the contract until its natural end date. Full details are available in Appendix 1.

Due to the low usage levels, and public perceptions about the units, it is anticipated that the impact of removing the APCs early will be minimal.

**ACTION:**
Instigate early termination of the JC Decaux contract by the 31 March 2009 with the units being removed by the 31 March 2010 (This is the earliest the facilities can be removed due to the 12 month notice period required under the termination clause in the contract).

**Community Toilet Scheme**

To date we have received 3 expressions of interest from local businesses that would be keen to become part of the proposed Community Toilet Scheme.

The scheme will allow members of the public to use facilities within commercial premises without the requirement to make a purchase. It is hoped that such a scheme will be a positive and cost effective way of expanding the existing public convenience provision across the District, particularly in remote rural locations. Additionally it will help to support the
business community by encouraging extra footfall into the business premises whilst providing a small subsidy to assist with increased costs.

Payments which would be made would be in accordance with the schedule in Appendix 2. In the event of more than one business expressing an interest in a particular area Officers will initially select the facility which meets all of the criteria. Should all facilities meet the criteria Officers will carry out a further assessment to determine the most suitable location.

**ACTION:**

To secure Community Toilets, initially for a one year period, in locations outside of Maldon and Burnham-on-Crouch where there is substantiated need.

**Refurbishment of Existing Facilities**

During the public conveniences review it was identified that many of the existing facilities were in need of refurbishment and or alterations to facilitate disabled access or baby changing facilities.

In the interest of best value those premises with the highest usage would be given priority for refurbishment which is as follows;

Identified as key facilities

**White Horse Lane, Maldon** – No disabled access or unisex baby changing facilities.

**Doctors Lane, Burnham on Crouch** – Total refurbishment required due to age of fixtures and fittings, no unisex baby changing facilities.

Facilities Subject to separate review

**Woodrolfe Road, Tollesbury** – Total refurbishment required due to age of fixtures and fittings, no unisex baby changing facilities.

**Car Park, Southminster** – Due to removal of APC this unit will need to be converted to general public use if we wish to continue to provide a service.

**ACTION:**

Savings realised from the APC contract are reinvested into bringing key facilities up to British Standards for Public Conveniences including disabled access and providing unisex baby changing facilities at each location.

Calculate costs of refurbishment of key facilities and schedule in 2009 update to the Asset Management Plan.

**HANDING OVER FACILITIES TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL’S**

Following the review, the facilities in both Southminster and Tollesbury were shown to be used the most in-frequently. No formal monitoring was undertaken on the facility in Southminster as access is restricted; however, in the responses to the consultation only 6.5% (20 of 308) of respondents used the facility.
Monitoring of the Tollesbury facility showed that it only attracted on average 39 uses per day, compared to the next highest used facility, Riverside Park Burnham, which attracted 112 uses per day.

When considering these figures in comparison to the other facilities in the District, and the fact that Maldon District Council does not provide such facilities in any other Parish, there is a strong case for transferring these to the Parish Council to run or closing the facility and replacing them with Community Toilets. Either of these options will allow the District Council to concentrate its resources more efficiently on those facilities within the principal towns where need is greater.

Initial exploratory meetings with both Tollesbury and Southminster Parish Council have received differing responses. Tollesbury Parish Council was of the opinion that the facility should be kept open and additional investment made, however, at the informal meeting there was no interest in taking the building on. Southminster Parish Council did express an initial interest in taking on both the public convenience and the car park providing it was in a serviceable condition, however, in both cases this would need to be addressed formally to each Council before the final decision could be made.

**ACTION:**
Formally offer to hand both facilities over to each respective Parish Council. Should this be unsuccessful, close the facilities and secure Community Toilets in their place.

Estimated cost saving:

- Tollesbury – Cleaning costs £5,592
- Southminster – Cleaning costs £1,048
- Potential cost of 1 x Community Toilet in each location - £800

Total annual revenue saving £5,840

**OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADVERTISING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR**

Advertising within public conveniences has some divided opinions; however, there is a significant opportunity for businesses to use a high footfall location and additionally for the Council to generate revenue to reduce the cost of the service.

**ACTION:**
Explore advertising opportunities with local businesses specifically for White Horse Lane and Butt Lane in Maldon and Doctors Lane in Burnham.
APPENDIX A

The contract expires on 9 October 2010 and at this point the Council would not need to pay the contractor for removal of the units and making good, nor would the Council need to pay the termination charges.

**Savings by terminating the contract on 31 March 2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Costs (Exclusive of VAT)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Removal Charges (Including Cranage, Labour, Administration, Transportation)</td>
<td>£30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Termination Charges (15% of remaining contract sum)</td>
<td>£9,468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Cost</td>
<td>£39,468</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Savings (Exclusive of VAT)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-payment of rental charges for 192 days</td>
<td>£63,141.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Cancellation Costs</td>
<td>(£39,468)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Saving</strong></td>
<td><strong>£23,670.12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ladies/Gentleman/Unisex</th>
<th>Baby Changing Facility</th>
<th>Fully Disability Discrimination Act Compliant</th>
<th>Annual Fee Payable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>£200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>£300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>£400</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note this scheme operates in the London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames and individual sites are paid £500 pa. It is anticipated that the footfall in these locations is significantly higher therefore would warrant a higher annual fee than would be offered in the Maldon District.