

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-017-2011/12  
**Date of meeting:** 12 September 2011



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Finance and Economic Development

**Subject:** Redevelopment of public toilets in Bakers Lane, Epping into a restaurant/takeaway whilst retaining toilet facilities for public use

**Responsible Officer:** James Issako Estates and Valuation (01992 564135)

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

(1) To request the Council to approve a supplementary capital estimate of up to £5,000 to engage consultants to prepare and submit a planning application for the redevelopment of the toilet block in Bakers Lane, Epping for a restaurant/ take away service.

### **Executive Summary:**

The report sets out proposals to convert the toilet block to a restaurant/ takeaway which will retain public use of the toilet facilities and to remove the adjacent Universal Superloo (USL) to Queens Road Buckhurst Hill to replace the Automated Public Convenience (APC). This proposal will reduce the current maintenance and lease costs to the District Council and to Epping Town Council and will result in valuable additional income from the restaurant/take away service.

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

- The District Council will save £18,016 in lease charges currently paid to JCDecaux for the APC at Queens Road.
- The redevelopment is estimated to add £10,000-£15,000 p.a. to the District Council's rental income.
- The redevelopment of the traditional toilets would save the Town Council £6,000 p.a. in running and maintenance costs, and remove the liability for dilapidations.
- The public will have toilet facilities maintained to a high standard as required in catering premises. The intention is that the toilets would be open for at least the same hours as at present. However this will have to be negotiated with the ingoing lessee.

### **Other Options for Action:**

- Not to redevelop the toilets, and continue paying rent for the USL in Bakers Lane and possibly the APC in Queens Road and the ongoing maintenance liability.

## **Report:**

1. The District Council is the freehold owner of the land housing the traditional toilets in Bakers Lane near to the rear of Marks and Spencer, Epping High Street. The toilets are let to and maintained by Epping Town Council. The building is traditional brick construction with a pitched and tiled roof and is in need of substantial repair. Whilst a detailed survey has not been undertaken, a professional view is that a refurbishment of the whole block to bring it up to modern day standards would cost in the region of £20,000- £30,000. There is an adjacent USL.
2. The District Council has two separate Agreements with Messrs JCDecaux to provide four USL toilets located at, Bakers Lane, Epping; Quaker Lane, Waltham Abbey; Brook Path, Loughton; The Broadway, Loughton and one APC. The Agreement for the USLs is for 20 years until 2024, the Agreement for the APC in Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill was for 15 years and ends 28 September 2012. Under the terms of this Agreement the Council have to give 18 months notice to terminate and if not the term automatically renews for five years. To protect the District Council we have served notice.
3. The lease cost of the USL in Bakers Lane, Epping is £28,933 per annum and increases annually in line with the Retail Price Index or RPI.
4. The lease for redevelopment as a restaurant/takeaway would require the lessee to provide and maintain toilet facilities for the public free of charge.
5. The existing traditional toilet block would not be of sufficient size to house both public toilets and a small restaurant/takeaway. It is expected that a lessee would extend the building sideways to where the USL toilet is sited. The USL would be relocated to Queens Road, Buckhurst Hill to replace the APC.
6. Preliminary advice from our advisers, Messrs Bidwells, commercial property agents, has been positive about the demand for this type of facility in Epping and interest has all ready been conveyed by at least one major food outlet franchise.

## **Resource Implications:**

A full repairing and insuring lease will provide an income to the District Council and reduce the current management and maintenance liabilities for both the District Council and Town Council and additionally the District Council will save on its costs of its lease of the APC at Queens Road Buckhurst Hill.

## **Legal and Governance Implications:**

The proposal stems as part of an ongoing review of the Council's assets to ensure maximum income is being generated and the use of the assets is achieving best value.

## **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

Improved security of use, maintenance and management of restaurant toilets.

## **Consultation Undertaken:**

Meeting with Epping Town Council resulted in a positive response to the proposal, EFDC planners, the Councils Parking Manager and Commercial Property agents.

## **Background Papers:**

Lease agreements with JCDecaux.

## **Impact Assessments:**

### Risk Management

If the toilets are not redeveloped as proposed the District Council could have to deal with dilapidations estimated at between £20,000 - £30,000.

### Equality and Diversity:

Queens Road is not fully accessible where as the USL does allow full compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 2010.

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?* No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* No

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*  
N/A.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*  
N/A.