



**RYDE**  
TOWN COUNCIL

## **RYDE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICER REPORT**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Committee:</b>       | <b>FULL COUNCIL</b>                         |
| <b>Date:</b>            | <b>27 NOV 2023</b>                          |
| <b>Title of Report:</b> | <b>PUBLIC CONVENIENCES RYDE INTERCHANGE</b> |
| <b>Report from:</b>     | <b>TOWN CLERK – LISA DYER</b>               |

## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Previously, Ryde Town Council ran the former toilet block building on Western Gardens which was demolished to make way for the new access road to the Pier.

New toilet facilities have been designed into the renovated interchange building; however, the rail company have made it clear that they will only operate the minimum required (1 easy access toilet).

RTC were approached by the Project manager to see if we would be interested in running the facility. The initial conversations were that RTC would be happy to arrange for cleaning but would not take on responsibility for the building or any repairs.

Unfortunately, this is no longer acceptable to them, and we are being offered a 20-year repairing lease meaning we would be responsible for the repairs to any of the fixtures and fittings.

If RTC decide not to go ahead with taking on the lease of the facilities they would not open, I have been informed that they will not open.

A copy of the proposed lease will be circulated to members, we are required to keep the details of the lease confidential following a request from South West Trains due to commercial sensitivity.

## 2. CONSIDERATIONS

Reduced risk of vandalism due to the following:

- The new facility is designed to be vandal proof wherever possible with modern fixtures and fitting purpose built for these facilities.
- High foot fall area, the toilet block will be overlooked by a café with a public walkway passing outside the doors.
- The block is situated inside the station and will be closed by vandal proof shutters every evening.

Members of the public have often raised that toilets in the area are required. Since the Western gardens block closed, we have seen an increase in the use of Eastern Gardens, to the point we are now suffering from repeated blockages, and they have had to be closed on occasion to rectify the issues.

The area has high footfall and during public consultation regarding the interchange upgrade the need for toilet facilities in the Western gardens area was a common concern.

Budget – Members should note that it was previously agreed to reduce the capacity at St Johns as the block there was not well used. We are now operating one toilet to make budgetary savings to enable the cleaning at the interchange to go ahead. The cleaning costs should be comparable as the new facilities are designed to be easily cleaned, however we believe the facilities at the interchange will be well used so we will see an increase in the cost of supplies.

I have now received a copy of the proposed lease which demands that we contribute to the legal costs of both South West trains and Network rail £1,500 plus VAT to the former and £1,062 plus VAT to the latter.

They are also requesting a contribution towards insurance and other matters that Officers are uncomfortable with.

Legal advice is required from our solicitors to review the lease, cost estimate £1000.

There is an option for the IWC to take on the lease and sub-let to RTC, my advice is to explore both options before committing to lease circulated. I would not recommend taking on the lease as presented. Further negotiations are required to ensure the Town Council's interests are protected and that we avoid any unnecessary liability.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

The Clerk recommends the Council agree to take on the lease of the facilities in principle. However, there is a need to negotiate further with regards to the lease arrangements and the terms of the lease. The final decision to be delegated to the Clerk following consultation with the Special Projects Task Force, and the Town Council's solicitor.