

GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



Date of Meeting: 7 May 2019
Cabinet Member: Councillor Catrin Wager
Contact Officer: Steffan Jones, Head of Highways and Municipal
Contact Telephone Number: 32402
Title of Item: Public Toilets Strategy

Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

That the Cabinet accept and adopt the attached Public Toilets Strategy

2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

Section 8 of Public Health Act (Wales) 2017 places a responsibility on every local authority in Wales to produce and publish a local toilets strategy for its area by 31 May 2019.

3. INTRODUCTION

LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

The Public Health Act (Wales) 2017 received Royal Assent on 3 July 2017. Section 8 came into force on 31 May 2018. The Act brings a range of practical measures together to improve and safeguard health. Section 8 of the Act presents the work of providing toilets, and specifically local toilet strategies.

The aim of Section 8 is to improve the way public toilet provision is planned, by ensuring that every local authority in Wales assesses the needs of its communities with regard to toilets, and then uses a strategic and transparent method of meeting that need in the best possible way.

The process of developing the strategy has made it possible for us to consider wider options available for providing toilets for the public. The way this is provided can vary from traditional public toilets to new solutions. The aim of this is to address the current challenges relating to providing facilities within communities, with a considerable reduction in the service's budget.

Consultation exercises have taken place in order to draw up the strategy. The Strategy incorporates the feedback received from the consultation exercise with the public, equality characteristic groups, and community and town councils' that was held in November and December 2018. The consultation was drawn up to assess the needs of the residents and the people who visit or work in Gwynedd. The responses received were used to inform the content of the draft strategy. A further consultation was held on the draft Local Toilets Strategy.

The Draft Strategy was presented at the Communities Scrutiny Committee on 7 February 2019. It was resolved to accept the report and to recommend that the Cabinet Member address the observations when drawing up the final Toilets Strategy.

The public consultation on the Draft Strategy took place between 11 February 2019 and 1 May 2019. At the time of writing this report, the consultation had not yet closed, therefore the observations received so far are summarised, and further information and an update on the report will be provided before the meeting, along with any additional responses received before the closing date and whether they affect the recommended resolution.

4. A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE DRAFT STRATEGY

Respondents were asked whether they Agreed or Disagreed with the objectives of the Local Toilets Strategy.

It was noted:

- 97.5% Agreed with the objective of 'The provision of appropriately maintained clean and safe facilities'
- 94.5% Agreed with the objective of 'Maximising the availability of toilets through a partnership with the Council and another provision'
- 89.3% Agreed with the objective of 'Advertise and promote information about toilet facilities via websites and other media.'
- 95.1% Agreed with the objective of 'Easy to find facilities with good directional signage and individual facilities information signs'
- 77.9% Agreed with the objective of 'Assess the availability and distribution of facilities based on the demand'
- 68.9% Agreed with the objective of 'A suitable provision within the available budget'

There was an opportunity to comment on any of the above objectives. The main observation referred to the importance of keeping as many toilets open as possible, in suitable locations, which included rural locations. Respondents noted that there was a need to ensure that there was a suitable budget to maintain public toilet provision.

5. THE WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS (WALES) ACT (2015)

Whilst developing this strategy, the Council must give full consideration to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The aim of the Act is to improve social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It makes local authorities think more about the long-term, work better with people and communities and with each other, attempt to prevent problems, and work in a more joined-up manner. The Act also imposes a 'sustainable development principle' which informs establishments on how to fulfil their duty with regard to the Act, which means that Gwynedd Council must operate in a more sustainable manner.

The Local Toilets Strategy incorporates the five ways of working that Gwynedd Council must follow to ensure that we develop a sustainable strategy:

- Consider the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to also safeguard the ability to satisfy long-term needs;
- Work in an integrated manner;
- Work with others in order to seek sustainable resolutions;
- Include people in the decisions that will affect them; and
- Work to prevent problems from happening or from exacerbating.

6. EQUALITY ACT 2010

There is a statutory requirement to prepare and consider the findings of an equality impact assessment when preparing the strategy in accordance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 as is implemented in Wales.

Generally, the Local Toilets Strategy will have a positive impact on the equality characteristics. The aim of the strategy is to seek to improve the way the provision of toilets available for public use is provided. In developing the strategy, the Council has assessed the needs of its communities for toilets, and has used the information to propose six objectives in order to meet this need in the best possible way within budget, and where appropriate. The full assessment can be seen in Appendix 5.

7. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

The following key actions and timescales are noted:

Next Steps	When
Cabinet - Submit the Local Toilets Strategy to the Cabinet for approval.	7 May 2019
Publication - It is a statutory requirement that the Council publish its Local Toilets Strategy by 31 May 2019.	31 May 2019
Interim progress statement - The Council needs to produce and publish an 'interim progress statement' explaining the measures it has taken in accordance with its strategy over the previous two years.	Before the end of May 2021
Review the Strategy - submit a period end progress statement - within a year following all usual local government elections.	November 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Local Toilets Strategy

Appendix 2 - Current provision

Appendix 3 – Needs assessment

Appendix 4 - Results of the Consultation on the Draft Strategy

Appendix 5 - Equality Assessment

Background Documents:

"The Provision of Toilets in Wales: Local Toilets Strategy, Statutory Guidance, August 2018"

8. VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Monitoring Officer:

The need to adopt a Public Toilets Strategy is a new statutory arrangement. The statutory requirements associated with preparing the Strategy is outlined appropriately in the report along with the steps taken to address them. It is also noted that an update on the results of the consultation process will be provided after the full period is closed.

Head of Finance Department:

I'm advised that the Public Toilets Strategy is a process, to fulfil a new statutory requirement, and that there is no financial commitment linked to the recommendation presented here.

Views of the Local Member:

Irrelevant.