

<b>Meeting</b>	Communities Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date</b>	5 October, 2023
<b>Title</b>	Public Toilets
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones
<b>Contact Officers</b>	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department Amanda Murray, Municipal Asset Manager
<b>Purpose</b>	To present an update on the Public Toilets Service and to receive comments and feedback on the contents.

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Since the Covid emergency, we have seen a significant increase in the use of the County's public toilets. Many of our sites are part of the former municipal stock that have not been designed to cope with the high number of users, equality needs along with expectations of a modern asset.
- 1.2 Options within this report are offered to address the concerns that have arisen and also the financial challenges faced by the Service.
- 1.3 The Welsh Government agreed to adopt the Public Health (Wales) Bill back in 2017. The overall aim of this legislation was to ensure that all local authorities in Wales assessed the needs of their communities with regard to public toilet provision.
- 1.4 In accordance with these responsibilities, the 'Gwynedd Local Toilets' Strategy was formed in May 2019 (See Appendix 1). It is timely to review the current Strategy assessing its suitability and relevance to the needs of the Council and the needs of our communities.
- 1.5 It is over 4 years since the current Public Toilet strategy was adopted. The main changes since the strategy was published are our Community and Town Council Partnerships Scheme, door payment scheme, an increase in maintenance costs and the new requirements for the provision of our facilities.
- 1.6 In accordance with the Strategy's pledges, an interim progress report will need to be submitted to the Cabinet before November 2024. The options presented as part of this report will be an important element of the future Strategy.
- 1.7 Back in 2017, following the Her Gwynedd exercise, and to achieve a £244,000 cut in the service, the Community and Town Council Partnership Scheme was implemented in order to keep the majority of the County's public toilets open.
- 1.8 The Council has 61 public toilets within the County, in terms of numbers, we have the highest provision in Wales managed by a Local Authority. See Appendix 2 for a list of all public toilets, their locations, if it is a toilet that is open all year, or one that is seasonal and if there is a fee-charging provision for admission.

- 1.9 Since the establishment of the Partnerships Scheme, agreements have been established with the Community and Town Councils to reflect their commitment to the Scheme. However, at the time, a reference to include inflation within the annual fee was not reflected in the agreement. It is the intention of the Service to include inflation on the annual fee from now on.
- 2.0 Back in 2010, a door payment regime was introduced within 5 public toilets in Gwynedd. The current fee for toilet access is 20 pence and the toilets with the door payment provision are listed below:
- Caernarfon x2
  - Dolgellau
  - Porthmadog
  - Pwllheli
- 2.1 Appendix 3 highlights the costs of running the payment doors, income from the doors, their target income and actual income.
- 2.2 There are a number of problems in relation to these doors, namely:
- The machines have come to the end of their lifespan, and it is not possible to order parts for repairs
  - The Service is facing incidents of recurrent vandalism which disrupts the door payment procedure
  - The cost of collecting the cash is high and the fee cannot be paid in any other way within the current regime.
- 2.3 Accordingly, the following options are being considered:

Option	Description
1	Abolish the charging provision altogether from the current 5 toilet highlighted.
2	Continue with the payment doors within the current 5 public toilets and change the payment doors to a technology of machines that accept contactless payments and cash.
3	Expand the provision of an entrance fee payment.

- 2.4 Improve the image of the asset and meet consumer expectations - It is also important to note that our public facilities contribute towards the goal of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 - 'Clean and Tidy Communities' which focuses on creating attractive, viable and safe communities.
- 2.5 The condition of our public toilets, the substructure and the infrastructure of coastal tourist destinations has been recorded as a top strategic priority and county investment in the consultations held by the Authority in 2021/22 with community and business leaders formulating the priorities of Gwynedd and Snowdonia sustainable visitor strategy 2035 and Gwynedd Council's Regeneration Plan 2035.

- 2.6 In order to improve the condition of our toilets, the Service has taken advantage of previous grant opportunities e.g. (this year we were successful in receiving £135,860 through the 'Pethau Pwysig' fund to upgrade 4 toilets in Gwynedd.)
- 2.7 However, given the need to address public expectations and improving the stock image of 61 toilets, the Service will submit a capital bid, to seek improvements to the stock of public toilets.
- 2.8 If the bid is successful, we are confident that we could introduce improvements to the assets and meet user expectations.

The type of improvements we would introduce are shown below:

- Provision of sanitary bins in women's and men's toilets in accordance with equality requirements
  - Insert new LED energy-efficient lighting
  - Improve provision of washing and drying facilities
  - Provide new toilet seats
  - Raising the internal standard of the site by introducing anti-slip floor tiles
  - Installation of solar panels
- 2.9 Upon receiving feedback from the Scrutiny Committee, the Service will implement an Improvement Plan with the intention of presenting to the Cabinet in the new year.