

MEETING	Communities Scrutiny Committee
DATE	20 March, 2025
TITLE	Public Toilets
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	Progress Report on Gwynedd Local Toilet Strategy
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CABINET MEMBER	Councillor June Jones

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised

- 1.1 The Council has 61 public toilets in Gwynedd which, in terms of numbers, is the highest provision in Wales. These are managed by the Highways, Engineering and YGC Department. We also have 39 toilets available for public use as part of the Public Facilities Grant Scheme which allows members of the public to use toilets at various local establishments within their opening hours.
- 1.2 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 in terms of public toilet provision. In line with these responsibilities, the 'Gwynedd Local Toilets' Strategy was formulated in May 2019. 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 today.

2. What needs to be scrutinised

- The Public Toilet Strategy
- What has been done to improve the image of public toilets and meet consumer expectations
- What funding sources are available to improve the provision
- What's the latest timeline on the rollout of contactless payment technology
- What is the income situation.

3. Summary of the Key Issues

3.1 As noted above, the current 'Gwynedd Local Toilets Strategy' was adopted by the Cabinet back in May 2019. The main aim of the strategy was/is:

- Provision of clean, safe and well-maintained facilities;
- Maximising toilet availability through a partnership with the Council and other provision;
- Informing and promoting information about toilet provision through websites and other media;
- Ensure public awareness of the location of toilets through the use of good reference signs and individual facility information signs;
- Assess the availability and distribution of facilities as needed;
- Suitable provision within the available budget.

4. Background / Context

4.1 The management of public toilet provision was scrutinised at the Committee meeting on 5 October 2023 and an update is provided below on our progress to date which also addresses the matters discussed at the above Committee.

4.2 Over the last year we have successfully attracted grants for improving the condition and standard of the following toilets: - Y Maes Pwllheli, Y Cei Aberdyfi and Y Maes Criccieth.

4.3 The service will continue to apply for similar grant opportunities, building on recent success in improving the provision.

4.4 We will also make best use of the available revenue budget, however, with ageing buildings and pressure at times due to the level of vandalism, the revenue budget is often prioritised for maintenance requirements.

4.5 The Grant Scheme is extremely popular with a full list of businesses participating at the current time. There is also a waiting list of businesses as any changes arise.

4.6 The service monitors the above regime ensuring that the business display signs highlighting that their toilet is available for public use. This is undertaken through an annual visit to the business and discussions with the owner. This is also a requirement of the grant. Overall, this scheme is a success with minimal examples where businesses need to be reminded of the requirements and their commitment.

4.7 The Council's Website identifies the businesses participating in the above scheme and is updated with any changes as they arise. It is recognised that there are opportunities to improve on promoting this scheme which will be undertaken before the summer holidays.

4.8 The toilet cleaning provision is now part of the service and overall, the standard is satisfactory. It is recognised that there are opportunities for improvement and the service is currently reviewing cleaning arrangements together with opening and closing times.

- 4.9 As previously reported, we are now in partnership with the Community and Town Councils, which is essential to running the current public toilet service. An annual funding contribution of £227,450.00 is collected via the partnering arrangement which is a combination of an annual or seasonal fee. This contribution will need to be reviewed this year as no inflation has been raised on the contribution since the scheme was introduced.
- 4.10 There are 5 toilets where we charge for their use. The locations of these toilets are: Caernarfon, Pwllheli, Porthmadog and Dolgellau. These payment doors are no longer fit for purpose as they have reached the end of their lifespan, the service submitted a bid to renew the doors looking to install modern payment doors where it is possible to pay by either by card or cash.
- 4.11 Our bid for funds was successful and the service has now decided on the type of door to be installed. However, due to work pressures there has been a delay in the programme seeing the first new doors to be installed in the Pwllheli toilet before the Easter break.
- 4.12 On completion of installation of all the new doors, the service will monitor their use and present a report early in the new year highlighting their success or failures before considering extending the arrangements to other toilets within the County.
- 4.13 You will find in Appendix 1 a copy of the updated Local Toilet Strategy with a complete list of the Public Toilets within the County. The updated Strategy contains an Action Plan which addresses our aims for the next term ensuring that we maintain and provide the standard of public toilet provision.

5. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Improving the image of the asset and greeting consumer expectations – It is important to note that our public facilities contribute towards the well-being goal of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 which is a 'Wales of cohesive communities' which focuses on creating attractive, viable and safe communities.

6. Impact on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and the Socio-Economic Duty

The Service has already considered, and recognises the need for, impact assessments (e.g. Language and Equality), and assessments will be reviewed and changed during any further need to consult/engage with our communities.

7. Next Steps

Accept the Scrutiny Committee's comments to the progress report on the implementation of the actions set out in Gwynedd Council's Local Toilet Strategy, by subsequently submitting a further report to Cabinet.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Public Toilet Strategy

Appendix 1a - List of Public Toilets