

GWYNEDD COUNCIL – Report to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet

Title of item:	Local Toilets Strategy
Cabinet Member:	Councillor June Jones
Relevant Officer:	Steffan Jones, Head of Highways, Engineering and YGC Department
Date of meeting:	14 October, 2025

1. Decision Sought:

We are looking for Cabinet to accept and adopt the Local Toilet Strategy.

2. The reason why the Cabinet must make the decision:

Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 places a duty on all local authorities in Wales to draw up and publish a local toilet strategy for their area. The Act requires regular reviews to be conducted and subsequent progress reports submitted. The current strategy dates back to 2019, and we have updated it as required. The cabinet is therefore asked to adopt the 2025 Local Toilets Strategy.

3. Introduction and Rationale

3.1 Background / Introduction

The Welsh Government agreed to adopt the Public Health (Wales) Bill in May 2017. The Act brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act particularly sets out toilet provision, and local toilet strategies. From a public facilities perspective, the overall aim of the legislation is to ensure that all local authorities in Wales assess the needs of their communities with regard to toilets and then use a strategic and transparent approach to meet that need in the best possible way.

Local authorities in Wales have a responsibility to:

- Assess the need for toilet provision in their communities;
- Planning to meet those needs;
- Prepare a local toilet strategy; and
- Review the strategy, update and publish any amendments.

Gwynedd Council will therefore in line with these recommendations address the needs of the community and improve the standards of public facilities under the control of the local authority.

3.2 The rationale and justification for recommending the decision

The aim of this strategy is to ensure that the Council continues to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd despite the fact that the Council's resources are dwindling. The emphasis of this strategy will be to ensure that Gwynedd has adequate provision for the future and that we are able to work closely with our stakeholders to provide alternative delivery models in order to achieve this. The strategy will ensure:

- Provision of clean, safe and well-maintained facilities;
- Maximise the availability of toilets through partnerships;
- Informing and promoting information about toilet provision through websites and other media;
- Ensure public awareness of toilet locations through the use of good reference signs and individual facility information signs;
- Assess the availability and distribution of facilities as required;
- Suitable provision within the available budget.

3.3 Public Toilet Provision

We are responsible for 60 public toilets and it has been possible to keep this high number of toilets open through the Community and Town Council Partnership scheme. The Partnership Scheme works by Community and Town Councils contributing towards the running costs of the toilets.

The financial contribution through the partnership scheme of £261,600 in 2025/26 is essential to meeting the annual or seasonal cost of running the toilet.

3.4 Community Toilets

The Community Toilet Grant Scheme is funded and managed by Gwynedd Council. This Scheme allows members of the public to use toilet facilities at a range of approved local establishments during their opening hours. The facilities are provided free of charge and without any expectation that consumers will purchase goods or services when they are at the premises. All participating properties will need to keep their toilets safe, clean, accessible and with enough supplies. The maximum grant is £500 per year for each setting. The exact amount will depend on the number of hours the toilet is available in a week. To receive the full £500 the toilet must be open for 37.5 hours a week.

We currently have 41 properties across Gwynedd taking part in the scheme. The service provider must display at least one sign provided by Gwynedd Council on their window or door to show that they are a member of the scheme so that the public know they have the right to use the toilets. An application has been made from one further establishment which will receive an audit to see if they are suitable or not.

3.5 Improving provision

The department has been successful in attracting money from the Shared Prosperity Fund – Gwynedd Ni in order to provide improvements to public toilets. A sum of £234,000 has been secured to upgrade the public toilets in Barmouth and Abersoch during 2025/26.

The department received a capital bid of £80,000 to upgrade payment doors in 3 of the 5 toilets in the county where a fee of 20 pence is payable. The machines will enable users to pay in a "contactless" way as well as with cash. The doors have been installed in toilets on the Maes in Pwllheli. The intention is to install the new doors in the Empire toilets in Caernarfon and the Dolgellau toilets.

Work has recently been completed on upgrading toilets in Aberdyfi, Pwllheli and Criccieth following a grant of £140,000 through the Shared Prosperity Fund – Pethau Pwysig.

3.6 “Changing Places” facilities

People with multiple learning disabilities as well as people with other physical impairments often require additional equipment and space so that they can use the toilets comfortably and safely. "Changing Places" toilets aim to meet these needs.

Although Gwynedd Council does not have such provision itself, there are three sites with 'changing places' provision within the county, namely Ffestiniog and Snowdonia Railway Station in Caernarfon, Pontio Centre in Bangor and Corris Craft Centre.

It is noted that it is not a statutory requirement to include 'changing places' toilets in any new scheme. If there are opportunities for such facilities, the Council will consider all opportunities going forward, particularly if a grant is available to develop new facilities. Ideally 'changing places' facilities need to be located within a staffed premises such as libraries, community centres or museums to avoid concerns about vandalism.

3.7 Promotion

The location of Gwynedd's toilets can be found on MapDataCymru which includes the location of all public toilets in Wales. There is also a list of Gwynedd's toilets on the Council's website which indicates their location and whether or not it is a seasonal toilet. There is also a list of community toilets available across Gwynedd on the website stating location, opening hours and what type of facilities are available at the location. The department will look at ways to promote our toilets using the Department's Business Unit, which has expertise in communications and e-development.

3.8 Consultation

As a new strategy will need to be drawn up for the period 2029 onwards and the department will undertake a consultation with the public and stakeholders over the next two years

3.9 Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

The aim of the Act is to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. In developing this strategy, the Council had to give full consideration to the Act.

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

- Consider the importance of balancing short-term needs which also safeguard the ability to meet long-term needs;
- Operate in an integrated manner;
- Collaborate with others in order to find sustainable solutions;
- Involve people in the decisions that will affect them; and
- Take action to prevent problems from happening or getting worse.

3.10 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 implemented in Wales.

Recently, a ruling was issued by the supreme court that gender, within the Equality Act 2010, means only biological sex. We as a Council expect users to respect this ruling.

That said, we recognise that we do not have suitable provision for transgender and non-binary people in the majority of our toilets. We hope that the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance will provide us with further guidance on this.

One option being considered by some organisations in the short term is the use of accessible toilets. That is not possible in Gwynedd's accessible toilets as they can only be opened with a "radar" key which is especially for disabled people.

The recent ruling has been taken into account in the equality assessment for the Local Toilets Strategy 2025. See a copy of the full updated assessment at Appendix 3.

3.11 Next steps

The key steps and timeline are set out as follows:

Next Steps	Meal
Local Toilets Strategy review published following Cabinet approval	
Review the charging structure on some toilets in the County by installing new payment doors including card or cash payment options	October, 2025
Review the provision within Council buildings, including libraries etc to ensure maximum use for the public where possible	January, 2026
Continue to inform and update the Community Grant Scheme for local businesses as a way of obtaining additional provision in areas where the greatest need has been identified.	Continuous
Review the current provision of public toilets and monitor the cleaning regime to ensure the most effective and efficient provision	April, 2026
To explore opportunities for grants to further develop and to collaborate with Council departments and partners and others to increase the provision of 'Changing Places' facilities available in Gwynedd within Council buildings	Continuous
Reviewing the Partnership with Community and Town Councils	2025/26
Continue to attract opportunities for grants to upgrade public toilet stock	Continuous
Looking at different options for environmental features and sustainable energy developments	Continuous
The Council will continue to work with the Police, Community Safety and residents, community groups and others to ensure the facilities are as safe as possible	Continuous
Review the Strategy and conduct a consultation	Before 2029

4. Views of the statutory officers

4.1 Chief Finance Officer

The adoption of this Strategy meets statutory requirements on the Council. As can be seen from the previous report, this area is one where there have been several financial challenges in the past and attempts to find alternative ways of funding the service. Finance officers will continue to support and assist the relevant officers as the plans in the strategy develop.

4.2 Monitoring Officer

The need to review a Public Toilets Strategy is a statutory arrangement. The statutory requirements attached to the Strategy's review are appropriately outlined in the report as well as the steps taken to address them.

List of Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Local Toilet Strategy

Appendix 2 – Existing Provision of Public Toilets

Appendix 3 – Equality Assessment