

**PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23RD NOVEMBER 2023**

DRAFT LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to outline a draft approach to the implementation of a Local Toilet Strategy and Action Plan

THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IS ASKED TO:-

Review and assess the information contained in report and provide any recommendations, comments, or advice to the Cabinet Member and / or Director prior to the report's consideration by Cabinet.

Reason

To formulate views for submission to the Cabinet / Council for consideration

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER:-

Cllr Edward Thomas - Member for Transport, Waste and Infrastructure Services

Directorate

Name of Head of Service:

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Report Author:

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Designations:

Business Improvement Manager

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
PLACE, SUSTAINABILITY & CLIMATE CHANGE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23RD NOVEMBER 2023

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1. BRIEF SUMMARY OF PURPOSE OF REPORT.

Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017: Provision of Toilets came into force on 31 May 2018 and places a duty on each local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy for its area.

Local authorities in Wales now have the responsibility to:

- assess the need for toilet provision for their communities.
- plan to meet those needs.
- produce a local toilets strategy; and
- review the strategy, update, and publicise revisions.

There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public toilets and the duty to prepare a strategy does not in itself require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets themselves.

Local authorities are however required to take a strategic view on how these facilities can be provided and accessed by the local population. In doing so it is envisaged that local authorities will consider a full range of options for making facilities available to the public.

The current number and location of public toilets is appended- Appendix 1.

Key themes for Consideration in the Development of a New Strategy

The aim of the strategy will be to improve toilet provision within the county. With this in mind we will look at changing the way we provide certain services as we seek to utilise more creative ways of providing public toilet facilities. Key themes will therefore involve : ·

- Is there adequate provision in the right location?
- How do we ensure users with specific needs are met?
- How does toilet provision impact on business and tourism?
- If additional provision is needed, how do we achieve it?

Key Issues to Consider

Social Inclusion- With an aging population we should carefully consider the large numbers of elderly citizens who find themselves locked out of our towns because of the lack of freely available public facilities. This social group has considerable spending power and has the time to choose their preferred location to visit. If provision is lacking in the County, then these individuals will travel to other destinations and spend their monies elsewhere.

Changing Places Provision- Each Changing Places toilet is designed for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets. It provides accommodation for people who experience multiple and complex disabilities and have one or two carers with them. Toilets include benches, hoists and enough space for carers. Carmarthenshire has endeavoured to include these facilities in new provisions where we can.

Community Toilet Provision -In consultation with the British Toilet Association (BTA) we have seen a significant drive from the larger town and city councils to entice major retailers and business holders to enter into a range of managed schemes, known as the local Community Changing places facilities Toilet Scheme (CTS). The challenge is to tap into this additional, already available provision to help increase provision.

Role of Community Councils- Transfer of assets to town & community councils has had a beneficial effect on retaining some facilities and has promoted local management. This allows town and community councils to run their own facilities and also permits local people to make local decisions regarding opening times and flexibility of use.

Charging- Charging is commonplace now across the UK and is a valuable source of income to many local authorities. We currently have nine units that are controlled by a 20p pay to enter system and this could potentially be extended to some other units in future. These units can be accessed by those needing to use a RADAR key and this entry is FREE of charge.

Entry Control-The individual cubicle set up in the majority of our toilets means the only entry control point is the main door. Open - and anybody can walk in, shut - and nobody gains entry. In most instances a member of staff has to go around unlocking the toilets in the morning and then returning to repeat locking them up again in the evening.

There are a number of problems associated with this:

- Toilet opening/closing is subject to staff attendance and vulnerable to illness and holidays.
- Often a time expensive process with the routine taking up to two hours morning/evening
- Environmental impact associated with the travelling between the toilets.

We continue to rationalise this process where appropriate so that wherever possible, this is either managed locally or through possibly automating the opening/shutting process.

Consultation

The aim of the consultation was to gather information on the key themes and issues. The purpose of opinions and ideas is to improve public toilet provision in Carmarthenshire. Key questions were around:

- Safety and cleanliness of facilities
- Location of facilities
- Quality of the service currently provided
- Baby changing facilities
- Disability access

The stakeholder engagement exercise took place over a six week period and ended on the 10th of October 2023. One thousand, one hundred and fifteen (1115) questionnaires were completed online, in person at our Hwbs or by telephone by our Contact Centre.

Key results and themes are highlighted by the following :

- **Locating** a Public Toilet- 88% respondents indicated they thought it wasn't easy to find a public toilet in Carmarthenshire.
- **Impact** on Tourism and Business-84% thought the availability of public toilets prevented people visiting a shopping area or other location of interest.
- **Availability** -There are a range of locations identified where respondents thought facilities could be enhanced. Outside Llanelli and Carmarthen, three locations in particular were mentioned- Pensarn, Crosshands and Burryport.
- **Condition** -Visitors to public toilets were asked to rate their experience 1 (lowest)-10 (highest) Disappointedly only 15% of respondents gave a score of greater than 8 highlighting condition and cleanliness as the main issue.
- **Meeting** Needs-77% of visitors to public toilets indicated they met their needs (baby changing/accessibility).
- **Charging** -There was a mixed response to the question of charging for the use of public toilets, 48% of indicated they were willing to pay a small charge.

DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?

YES

IMPLICATIONS

I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :

Signed: Jackie Edwards Business Improvement Manager

Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Staffing Implications	Physical Assets
YES	YES	YES	NONE	NONE	NONE	NONE

1. Policy, Crime & Disorder and Equalities

An integrated impact assessment is currently being undertaken.

Without prejudice to any other obligation, we have fully considered Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act.

There are no negative impacts as we are seeking ways to increase public access to toilet provision.

2. Legal

The Authority has a statutory duty under Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for Carmarthenshire.

3. Finance

One of the key priorities will be to develop a financial plan with the view of trying to enhance provision. This will involve a review of current revenue and capital budgets.

There is also an action to review the current provision for charging. There is 20p charge for use of the 9 facilities managed via the external provider. This charge generates an income of £7k, but the total cost of delivering this service is over £312k (includes management fee to external provider) and therefore the net cost to the Council for delivering this service is £305k.

This does not account for any additional provision (revenue or capital).

7. Physical Assets

Public Toilets represent a significant collective physical asset. As to undertake a review of the condition all toilet facilities.

CABINET MEMBER PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S) AWARE/CONSULTED

YES

Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

NONE