



CABINET – 19TH APRIL 2023

SUBJECT: LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Cabinet of the outcome of the review of the Caerphilly County Borough Local Toilets Strategy 2019 and seek approval for the updated Strategy (2023).

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 On the 17th May 2019, Cabinet agreed the Caerphilly County Borough Local Toilets Strategy.
- 2.2 Caerphilly CBC has a duty to review the local toilets strategy within a year of each ordinary election for its area. The most recent election date in Wales was Thursday 5 May 2023 so the latest date for review is 4 May 2023. As such a review of the Strategy has been performed with the intention to publish a statement of the steps taken in accordance with the Strategy (appendix 1), together with the revised Strategy (appendix 2).
- 2.3 The duty to prepare a local toilets strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The Local Authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That Cabinet;
- I. Consider the content of this report and recommendations made by the meeting of the Environment & Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on 21st March 2023.

- II. That Cabinet approves the findings of the review and the updated Local Toilets Strategy with a view to adopting and publishing the updated Local Toilets Strategy.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To comply with the statutory requirement to review and publish a Local Toilets Strategy.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Toilets for public use matter to everybody, however some groups can be disproportionately affected by poor provision; for example, poor provision is understood to have negative impacts on older people, as some may be less likely to leave their homes without having confidence that adequate facilities will be available to them. This can contribute to increased social isolation and inactivity, as well as affecting people's ability to maintain independence and dignity in later life.
- 5.2 A Local Toilets Strategy was prepared in 2019 and incorporates feedback following a consultation undertaken as part of a Needs Assessment exercise during September 2018. A public consultation exercise on the proposed strategy was undertaken between the 14th December 2018 and the 8th March 2019. Cabinet agreed the Caerphilly County Borough Local Toilets Strategy on the 17th May 2019.
- 5.3 Caerphilly CBC has a duty to review the local toilets strategy within a year of each ordinary election for its area. As such, the most recent election date in Wales was Thursday 5 May 2022 so the latest date for review is 4 May 2023. There was also a requirement to publish an interim progress report setting out the steps taken in line with the strategy at two years commencing from the date of the last published strategy and to publish the interim progress report within six months of the end date of the two-year period. Therefore, following publication in May 2019, the review was to take place before the end of May 2021 and be published before the end of November 2021. However, due to competing demands associated with officers redeployed to the Covid 19 pandemic, it was not possible to deliver such an interim report.
- 5.4 The duty to prepare a local toilets strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The Local Authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population.
- 5.5 The 2019 Strategy set out 14 options for consideration to increase the provision of local toilets over the next two years. A review of those options has been undertaken and the findings have been used to inform the revised Local Toilets Strategy 2023, as detailed in appendix 1. The main outcomes of the review are listed below:

1. The Council has worked with third parties to successfully re-open the former CCBC public toilet facilities at Bargoed, Risca, Blackwood, and Caerphilly Bus Stations.
The Council has also worked with Gelligaer Community Council, to successfully re-open the toilet facilities at the bus stops in Ystrad Mynach and in Nelson.
Businesses have again been surveyed to establish if they are prepared to allow their facilities to be used by the public (without purchasing items), to display a sign and be identified via the data maps. Nine such businesses provided consent.
New provision will be provided at the developing transport hub in Caerphilly. These modern toilets will assist commuters and those utilising the night time economy offerings.
2. The promotion of equal opportunities and provision of appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities is embedded in all strategies and operational work.
3. Toilet logo stickers are displayed at entrances to appropriate Council buildings where toilets are accessible without entering secure work areas.
Stickers are provided to partner providers for display.
4. Health care settings have again been surveyed to establish if they are prepared to allow their facilities to be used by the public, to display a sticker and be identified via the data maps. Five such settings provided consent, compared to three in the previous survey.
5. The Strategy will be published on the council's website, with a link to the Welsh Government's [National Toilet Map](#). The map is interactive and provides details relating to locations, facilities provided, opening hours etc. Updated spreadsheets detailing such information will be provided to Welsh Government as necessary.
The tables included in the appendices of the 2019 Strategy have been reduced to a list of the locations and post codes within the 2023 Strategy. The extensive tables detailing facilities, opening times etc. have been removed from the revised strategy, as the information is available via the National Toilet Map.
6. The provision of online information maps, physical maps and information sheets, and downloadable information accessed via mobile phone technology has been superseded. The preferred option is digital by default. There is no longer a need for local authorities to publish the locations on their website via a map. Welsh Government are also transitioning from the Lle website to the [National Toilet Map](#). The map is accessible via mobile phones and as the data is open source, in time companies may use the data to produce apps that pinpoint locations and facilities etc.
Additional signposting to the nearest toilets is to be provided in town centres.
Hard copy maps and spreadsheets will not be produced as they become outdated and require reprinting.
7. As stated in item 1 above, CCBC has worked with partners to improve

provision near key night-time gathering points such as taxi ranks, car parks, railway/bus stations and stops. Third party operators are managing the former Council public toilets. These are located at transport locations.

8. Business premise operators have a duty to maintain their toilets in a clean condition. Third party partner provision is inspected by Environmental Health Officers when they inspect premises, and the public can report failings for investigation.
Council buildings are subject to daily cleaning and are monitored by the Facilities Management Team and/or and building management teams depending on the type of premise.
9. The Council has a good working relationship with Gwent Police, particularly via the Community Safety network, with Police officers embedded with the Community Safety Team. The Police also engage with business proprietors and link with Licensing Officers and the Licensing objectives, particularly in relation to night-time economy. Reports relating to antisocial behaviour, vandalism and substance misuse within such facilities are reported to the Police for investigation.
10. There is no charge for the use of toilets within appropriate council buildings.
11. Dedicated facilities are not available for rough sleepers.
12. Event organisers are requested to supply details of toilet facilities to the Events Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) when planning an event. ESAG members provide appropriate advice and may check the provision when visiting the event.
13. Sustainable development and energy considerations are embedded into all new builds and where appropriate into retro fitting existing locations. New provision will be provided at the developing transport hub in Caerphilly. These modern toilets will assist commuters and those utilising the night-time economy offerings.
14. Planning Officers have raised the matter with Welsh Government. Additionally, developers are encouraged to consider provision when designing new developments.

5.6 Cabinet is therefore requested to consider and approve the findings of the review and the updated Local Toilets Strategy.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 A review of the strategy has been performed with the intention to publish a statement of the steps it has taken in accordance with the strategy (appendix 1), together with the revised strategy (appendix 2).

7. ASSUMPTIONS

7.1 That there have been no significant changes to the demographics across the county borough and therefore that the needs of residents have not changed

since the Needs Assessment Consultation Report produced for the 2019 strategy.

- 7.2 That private businesses will continue to participate in a scheme that allows non-paying customers to utilise their facilities.

8. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 This is a review of an existing strategy and therefore does not require a new Integrated Impact Assessment.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

10. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

11. CONSULTATIONS

- 11.1 The consultees listed below have been consulted on this report and their views have been incorporated accordingly.

The report on the Local Toilets Strategy was considered by the Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee on March 21, 2023.

One Member asked about the timescale between closing certain toilets and the responsibility then being transferred to Gelligaer Community Council. Officers advised that information on this would be provided to the Member outside the meeting.

A Member sought clarification on third-party cooperation to run toilets at bus stations across the County Borough and wished to know the timescale of these arrangements. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment advised that this information would be provided to the Member outside the meeting as each third-party arrangement was different. For example, the facilities at Blackwood bus station were operated by the Taxi Association.

One Member sought clarification on the duty to review the strategy within a year of each ordinary Council election. The Environmental Health Manager provided clarification on this duty and also outlined how a 2 year post-publication review had been delayed due to staff being redeployed because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

A Member expressed his disappointment that the Council did not run the toilets in major towns such as Blackwood. The Member outlined how the Taxi

Association in Blackwood was sometimes forced to close the facilities in the town due to vandalism and that this had a negative impact on the experience of those shopping in the town. The Corporate Director for Economy and Environment advised the Committee that there was no statutory duty on Local Authorities to provide public toilets and that the Council had decided to no longer provide such facilities as part of a previous basket of savings within its medium-term financial plan as a response to austerity measures which were imposed by central government. The Environmental Health Manger provided additional information on the work being done by Community Safety Wardens to tackle anti-social behaviour in Blackwood bus station and the wider town itself.

One Member observed that the National Toilet Map information needed updating as some of the businesses listed no longer participated. The Environmental Health Manger provided information on the survey of businesses who wished to participate, the Toilet Stickers that were issued at premises that allowed their premises to be used and she also provided assurances that the list of participating businesses would be fully updated and passed to the Welsh Government when the Strategy under discussion was finally approved by cabinet.

During the ensuing discussion a Member observed that a continental shift system which facilitated attendants at public toilets was the best solution, but the associated costs were prohibitive. The Chair expressed concern that the number of businesses participating in the strategy had reduced since the last review and he asked if a £500 grant was still available as an encouragement to take part. The Environmental Health Manger advised that this was no longer the case. Another Member observed that if the Council no longer ran public toilets because of the costs involved it was unfair to expect local businesses to take on the additional financial burden with no remuneration.

12. STATUTORY POWER

12.1 Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017

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Consultees: Councillor Philippa Leonard, Cabinet Member for Planning & Public Protection
Councillor James Pritchard Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Prosperity, Regeneration and Climate Change
Councillor D.T Davies Chair Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor A Hussey Vice Chair Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee

Christina Harray, Chief Executive
Mark S. Williams, Corporate Director for Economy and Environment
Rob Hartshorn, Head of Public Protection, Community and Leisure Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and S151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Ben Winstanley, Head of Land and Property Services
Councillor D.T Davies, Chair of Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Councillor Adrian Hussey, Vice Chair of Environment and Sustainability Scrutiny Committee
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director Economy and Environment
Steve Harris, Head of Financial Services and Section 151 Officer
Lynne Donovan, Head of People Services
Rob Tranter, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Background Papers: Local Toilets Strategy 2019

Appendices:

- Appendix 1 Review of the 2019 Local Toilets Strategy
- Appendix 2 Local Toilets Strategy 2023