



Report of the Director of Place

Economy & Infrastructure PDC

19 November 2020

Local Toilet Strategy and Public Consultation

1. Background

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 received Royal Assent on the 3 July 2017. The Act brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically local toilets strategies.

To achieve this, the Act places a duty on each LA in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy for its area. The Act provides that a strategy must include an assessment of the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for disabled people. The strategy must also provide details of how the LA proposes to meet the identified need.

The duty to prepare a strategy does not in itself require LAs to provide and maintain public toilets themselves, but they are required to take a strategic view across their area on how these facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. In doing so it is envisaged that LAs will consider a full range of options for making facilities available to the public. By way of example, if a toilet is not available at a park but a LA identifies a need for one, then the LA should consider different ways of meeting that need. This could be by the LA directly providing the facility, or by the LA working with a private business within or near to the park to make their facilities freely available to the public.

As part of the process the council is required to firstly assess the need for public toilets which has been completed and then draft its strategy which was carried out in conjunction with the British Toilet association. Following this it was published so that the Council could seek views via public consultation. This report outlines the feedback from the public consultation which was unfortunately delayed due to the Covid pressures earlier this year.

2. Public Consultations

The full strategy and an easy to read version were published for public consultation and which closed on the 18th September.

There were 68 responses by this date with the responses enclosed in Appendix A and by and large the results were positive with some of the key findings as follows:

- 70.8% of people thought the strategy covered what was needed;
- 70.4% agree or strongly agreed that it was easy to understand and also the same result of easy to read;
- 77.8% of people agreed or strongly agreed that it was informative;
- however slightly less, 53.5% agreed or strongly agree it was the right length.

The main points made in these responses were:

- the overwhelming support for public toilets;
- the fact that the strategy was published and views sought was welcomed;
- the concern the strategy was too long (it is assumed that these responses hadn't picked up on the easy to read version);
- the concern that there are insufficient toilet provisions in some areas;
- strong support for changing places toilets;
- concern that the document was about what currently was in place as opposed to what would be provided in the future. *This is a fair comment although the action plan was always intended to flow from the strategy and consultation*

It is therefore believed that the overall responses were positive and welcomed the strategy but that some changes can be made which are summarised as follows:

- consider in the future the need to have the full version and easy to read;
- a need to publish the forward plan of proposed changes and improvements;
- ensure that the current toilet provision is well published;
- considered where any shortfall in provision exists with particular focus on changing places toilets and toilets in the wider city and county area.

3. Recent and upcoming developments

It seems appropriate to also refer within this note some of the more recent commitments made by the council in relation to public toilets which are summarised below:

- the completion of the new public toilets in Swansea Market opened to the public in September;
- the completion of a changing places toilet block at Caswell which is now closely aligned with the new surfability building delivered by DIY/SOS and into which the council provided significant support;
- the new toilet being delivered as part of the “pod in the park” alongside the new digital area due for completion at the end of next year;
- the new changing places toilets being delivered as part of the arena development;
- the new Toilet Map for Swansea delivered in conjunction with the British Toilet association which sets the template for roll out across the whole of Wales;
- the reopening of Gorseinon toilets following a period of closure after refurbishment works was completed;
- the reopening of public toilets in the Marina;
- the inclusion of a capital allocation for Public Toilets for 19/20 with the intention for this to apply in future years (subject to Cabinet approval) .

4. **Next Steps**

The views of the PDC are welcome both on the strategy itself and the results of the public consultation prior to it being reported to cabinet. Following Cabinet a cross Council delivery group will be set up to take the recommendations forward. There will also be a stakeholder forum developed and many of those who responded to the consultation indicated that they would like to remain involved or consulted going forward.

5. **Legal Implications**

There are no direct legal implications.

6. **Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report.

7. **Equalities Implications**

There are no equality implications associated with this report.