



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	19 th November 2018 **
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Service Area	Environmental Health
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
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To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Draft Local Toilet Strategy

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

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

1.2 Local authorities in Wales now have the responsibility to:

- carry out an assessment of the need for toilets in its area by mapping existing toilets available for public use, identifying gaps through engagement with communities and working with partners to find solutions;
- produce a local toilets strategy;
- review the strategy, update and publicise revisions.

1.3 A working group led by the Environmental Health Manager has produced a draft toilet strategy.

1.4 The draft Toilet Strategy is required to undergo a 12 week minimum public consultation.

1.5 The Toilet Strategy is required to be published by local authorities by 31st May 2019.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Council undertakes a minimum of 12 weeks public consultation on the draft local toilet strategy from January 2019 to March 2019.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Toilets for public use matter to everybody who goes “away from home”. They are, however, even more important to certain groups within society, including older people, people with disabilities, people with particular needs (including certain medical problems), women, children and young people and their families. These groups can be disproportionately affected by poor provision; for example, poor provision is understood to have particular 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.
- 3.2 The provision of toilets accessible to the public provides the infrastructure necessary to facilitate the enjoyment of the County Borough by visitors and residents alike. Well managed and maintained toilets can make a significant impact upon the comfort of individuals and families who visit public spaces in the area, and their perception of Merthyr Tydfil as a desirable place to visit.
- 3.3 Although the Welsh Government, Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, Part 8 focuses on ‘Provision of Toilets’, the provision and maintenance of toilets in public places is a discretionary function of local authorities who have the power under section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 to provide public conveniences. There is no duty for local authorities to provide public toilets directly. In considering the provision and maintenance of toilets for public use, the Council has to balance a competing local demand for a broad range of public services. Therefore The Council must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by the local population.
- 3.4 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires each local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy for its area by 31st May 2019. In line with the statutory guidance a draft strategy has been produced.

4.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 4.1 The overarching aim of this strategy will be to provide or facilitate the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for residents and visitors to the County Borough at locations where the need for such facilities has been identified.

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF NEED

- 5.1 The draft strategy incorporates feedback following a public consultation exercise undertaken during September 2018. The consultation was designed to assess the needs of residents, and people visiting or working within the county borough. The responses received have been used to inform the content of the draft strategy.

5.2 The draft strategy has been developed following a public consultation was undertaken throughout September 2018. The consultation sought to assess the needs of residents, and people visiting or working within the county borough with a view to identifying gaps in provision and how these might be addressed. The public consultation was publicised via the Council's online consultation system and by contact with interested groups. A total of 438 responses were received comprising 149 complete and 289 partial responses. The majority of respondents to the needs assessment survey, 88% are resident in the Borough.

5.3 The main findings of the needs assessment was that there is:

- A significant gap between need and provision of toilet facilities available for public use, which has a direct impact on whether people will venture away from home.
- People were reluctant to use outlets where they felt they needed to make a purchase and there were concerns about the cleanliness of some toilets, and safety.
- There was an almost universal view that there is insufficient information on where the toilets actually are.

6.0 IMPROVING ACCESS TO TOILET FACILITIES:

6.1 Recognising that there is no quick fix and that austerity measures mean that the Council is continuing to face financial pressures the draft strategy commits Council to take action to mitigate the gaps between what toileting provision is available and identified need.

6.2 The draft strategy sets out proposals, spanning the next two years and for exploring ways to increase the provision of toilets available for public use within the County Borough. This includes the expansion of the current Council toilet portfolio by the building of a new bus station in the town centre. However, more than ever success of any strategy is about working in partnership to get the most from scarce resources. This will include establishing a new relationship between the public, private and voluntary sectors to drive forward sustainable toilet provision.

6.3 Mapping will be an important part of our strategy so that people who need to visit a toilet can easily access information about the location, opening times, accessibility and type of facilities available. Locations of toilets will be promoted via mapping on the Lle and Dewis websites and via apps specifically designed for mobile technology and smart phones. Participating premises will also display a sticker in a prominent place, indicating that toilets are available for the public. The sticker will display the logo stipulated by Welsh Government.

7.0 NEXT STEPS- PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The next step is to conduct a formal 12 public consultation to seek views from a wide range of stakeholders on the proposals contained within the draft strategy. The consultation will commence in January 2019.
- 7.2 The results of the consultation will be considered and the draft strategy finalised. The local toilet strategy will then be published on or before 31st May 2019 in accordance with the requirements of the Statutory Guidance.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 As the recommendations in this report are to consider and review matters there are no direct financial implications at this stage. However, financial implications may arise if and when the matters under review are implemented with or without any modifications and may include: costs associated with the new bus station toilets; making a Community toilet grant available; and physical signage in town centre

9.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

1. Summary

As a result of completing this Impact Assessment, how many positive and negative impacts does your proposal have?

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	3 of 4	0 of 4	1 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	5 of 5	0 of 5	0 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics <i>(including Welsh Language)</i>	5 of 10	0 of 10	5 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1

Summary:

The main positive impacts are: enabling access to toilet facilities is important to everyone but can become even more important to those with a disability, young families or health condition. By mapping publicly accessible toilet provision residents and visitors will be able to easily find out where the toilets are located within the County Borough, the opening times and what facilities are available at each location.

There are no negative impacts.

**ALYN OWEN
CHIEF OFFICER REGENERATION**

**COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR
REGENERATION AND PUBLIC
PROTECTION**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017: Provision of Toilets	2017	
The Provision of Toilets in Wales: Local Toilet Strategies Statutory Guidance	June 2018	
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.