

LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY FOR TORFAEN – DRAFT V3 (7th November 2018)

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INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF THE LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY

Torfaen County Borough Council (CBC) already provides a number of public toilet facilities across the borough as part of our Neighbourhoods (Streetscene) Services.

Since 2003, as part of the local response to the national Strategy for Older People in Wales, we have been party to the national Community Toilet Scheme campaign to work with community groups and businesses to promote toilets by providing a leaflet of facilities across the borough, encouraging participation and display of a national logo.

Access to toilet facilities is important to all parts of our population and not just to older people, although the focus on the older population through the national Strategy was to encourage people to continue going out and about in their local communities and further afield. Lack of public toilets is commonly given as a reason that older people become socially isolated and loneliness can set in. However, many people (including younger people, families and people of all ages with a disability or health condition) require access to toilet facilities and a lack of provision can often lead to them also limiting their social contact with others.

Research has shown that loneliness can be a major factor in diminishing health and well-being, especially of older people. It is associated with poor mental health and with conditions such as cardiovascular disease, hypertension, and dementia. The risks are similar to smoking and obesity (Holt-Lunstad, 2015 /Hawkey et al, 2010)¹ This research discovered that lonely people had a 50 per cent increased risk of early death, compared to those with good social connections. In contrast, obesity raises the chance of dying before the age of 70 by around 30 per cent.

In July 2017, the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 ('the Act')² set out a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health and Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically local toilets strategies.

The aim of Part 8 is to ensure each local authority in Wales assesses the needs of its community in relation to toilets, and then takes a strategic and transparent approach to best meet that need. The Act recognises the financial pressures on councils so does not require local authorities to provide public toilets themselves but it does require them to work with others to provide access to toilets in their area. This includes community facilities, wider public services opening their facilities and engaging with private businesses.

The intended effect of Part 8 is not to prevent local authorities from taking decisions which they need to take during the course of their activities, which may include decisions to close a traditional public toilet or building when appropriate to do so. Instead, the intended effect is to improve the planning of provision so that where such decisions are taken, this is within the overall context of meeting their communities' identified needs. A strategic approach will also help to mitigate any negative impacts of changes to provision.

Torfaen CBC does not currently plan to close any of its toilet facilities or to reduce their opening hours. Partners we are already working with also say they have no

plans to close or change access to their facilities. Should this position change due to continuing financial pressures, this Local Toilets Strategy will provide information and direction on how access to toilets can be provided through alternative services and so aid future decision making by the local authority.

This Strategy sets out the findings of the assessment of need and what our plans are going forward, for the people of Torfaen to be able to access toilet facilities that support them being able to go out and about within Torfaen.

ASSESSMENT OF NEED

An assessment of need in relation to local toilets has been undertaken during the summer and early autumn of 2018. We used the Torfaen Public Services Board Assessment of Well-being (2017)³ and the Gwent Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessment (2017)⁴, to understand the demography of our population, the range and level of health conditions affecting people in Torfaen, as well as related information on people interacting with their communities.

We have mapped current toilets, looked at travel plans and commuter routes, noting petrol stations and retailers with customer toilets, tourist attractions, parks and open spaces. We have also taken account of public services other than the council, where toilets are available.

We have gathered people's views from across the borough through our engagement survey and attending community groups during the summer of 2018.

The full Torfaen Toilet Assessment of Need can be seen at **appendix 1**. Here is a brief overview of our findings.

Population

Torfaen has a population of around 92,300 and as people live longer, we will have a growing proportion of older people. Population projections show that by 2039, the percentage of total population in Torfaen who are aged 65 and over will rise from 20.1% in 2016 to 28.3%. The number of Torfaen residents aged 85 and over is projected to more than double in the next 23 years, from 2,372 in 2016 to 5,595 in 2039; an increase of 136% [source PSB Assessment of Well-being].

Keeping people independent and able to participate in their local communities is an important factor in managing future demands on critical health and social care services. Ageing Well is an international programme that is promoted by the Welsh Government and Age Friendly Communities is one part of this programme – ensuring that people of all ages can access and negotiate the built and natural environment, and the role that toilets play in enabling this. Access to toilet facilities is part of this approach.

The British Toilet Association makes recommendations on the number of toilet facilities needed in an area based on population density, gender mix and footfall. The

ideal level is recommended as 1 cubicle per 550 females and 1 cubicle or urinal per 1100 males, which is a ratio of 2:1 in favour of women.

It is difficult to calculate if these quotas are broadly met in Torfaen as there is further work to do in understanding all the businesses that provide access to toilets that can complement those facilities available from the Council and other public services. We will conduct further analysis of this as our efforts to bring more toilets into the Community Toilet Scheme proceed. However, it is worth noting that capacity of toilet facilities was not raised by anyone responding to our survey, suggesting there are rarely – if ever - long waits to access cubicles.

The British Toilet Association also suggests that one accessible toilet and one baby change facility should be provided for every 10,000 population. The current toilet facilities in Torfaen already meet these suggested requirements.

Health

The 2017 Assessment of Well-being for Torfaen Public Services Board tells us that Torfaen has a higher rate of chronic ill health than Wales overall - and this is the case for most categories, most notably for rates of respiratory illness and poor mental wellbeing. There are many conditions that lead people to require frequent or urgent access to a toilet.

The Bladder and Bowel Community research⁵ indicates that around 14 million people in the UK have a bladder control problem (approximately 1 in 5 people) and around 6.5 million suffer with a bowel control problem that is bothersome (approximately 1 in 10 people).

Extrapolating these figures against the population of Torfaen (92,300) would suggest that approximately 18,460 people in Torfaen have a bladder control problem and 9,230 people in Torfaen suffer with a bowel control problem that is bothersome.

Loneliness and social isolation can lead to ill-health and by the same token, people who are experiencing poor bowel or bladder health, are more likely to find themselves lonely or isolated.

There is a wealth of evidence to demonstrate that loneliness and social isolation can lead to both physical health and mental health problems. These are significant issues affecting people from all age ranges, including our older population. Data from the Cognitive Function and Ageing Study – Wales found that 25.3% of older people (aged 65 and over) in Wales reported being lonely and 26.9% socially isolated⁶.

Overall, 42% of respondents to our Local Toilet Survey agreed that there are sufficient suitable public toilet facilities for them to be able to go out and meet family or friends in public places, whilst 44% disagreed. This is broken down to 50% of accessible toilet users' agreed and 37% disagreed, whilst 38% of Changing Places users agreed and 56% disagreed.

About a third of respondents (percentages were fairly consistent amongst user groups) felt that a lack of suitable toilet facilities prevents them from attending venues where leisure activities take place.

Just over a third of respondents to our Local Toilet Survey agreed that a lack of suitable public toilets prevents them from being as physically active as they would like to be. This was a consistent level of response amongst the user groups.

Commuting and Active Travel

In September 2014, the Welsh Government introduced the Active Travel (Wales) Act 2013 which places a legal requirement on local authorities in Wales to map, plan, improve and promote routes deemed suitable for active travel. Active travel means walking and cycling for everyday short-distance journeys, such as journeys to school, work, or for access to shops or services.

In development of this Local Toilet Strategy we asked Torfaen residents broadly whether they had experienced difficulties commuting to work due to a lack of toilet facilities.

Our survey revealed that 31 of 133 (23%) respondents aged 18-64 claimed they have experienced difficulty commuting to work due to a lack of toilet facilities between their home and workplace. Further research would need to be conducted in order to ascertain any specifics in terms of the frequency of difficulties experienced, travel methods or correspondence to travel routes. Whilst 23% is a concerning figure, through our survey we also found that 66% of respondents in this age grouping felt there is not enough information about the whereabouts of public toilets and the facilities they offer, suggesting that at least some of this group may simply not be aware of toilets they could access on the way to work.

Our mapping exercise showed that (whilst within Torfaen) people commuting by car are never more than 3 miles from the nearest toilet and always have a toilet within 6 miles in their direction of travel.

In most instances there is parking available in the vicinity of toilets, although not always immediately outside. Some people with disabilities raised this as being problematic.

We also considered people commuting by bus and by rail, but there were no obvious issues with these travel methods raised by respondents to our survey, or in face to face engagement.

EXISTING FACILITIES

As mentioned in the introduction section above, Torfaen CBC already has a Community Toilet Scheme and provides information on facilities provided by the local authority and some other providers. There is also information being gathered at an all-Wales level to map toilet facilities and add to this, as each local authority develops its Local Toilets Strategy and identifies additional participating organisations and businesses.

Local authority owned and run public toilets

When most people hear the words 'public toilets', they immediately think of traditional public toilet blocks. These have usually been stand-alone, purpose-built buildings providing separate areas for Ladies, Gents and more recently an accessible unit for disabled people.

Torfaen CBC currently has a portfolio of five toilet blocks, located in Blaenavon (Lion Street); Pontypool Park; Pontypool Town Hall (Hanbury Road); at Cwmbran Boating Lake and; at South Fields (sports changing rooms), Llanyrafon. The two older toilet blocks in Pontypool do not include accessible toilets, although accessible toilets can be found in very close proximity, within Pontypool Active Living Centre (adjacent to Pontypool Park Toilet Block) and Pontypool Library (adjacent to Town Hall Toilet Block).

Torfaen CBC has responsibility for the maintenance, management and cleaning of these toilet blocks and directly employs staff who look after these facilities.

To assist people to enjoy the sports fields, skate park and riverside walks between the Boating Lake and Croesyceiliog in Cwmbran, management of the Boating Lake toilet block includes the opening, cleaning and maintaining toilets at South Fields (Sports) Changing Rooms, on a daily basis.

Torfaen CBC buildings that open their toilets to the public

We try to make the toilet facilities within Torfaen CBC buildings available to the general public where the individual location, access and circumstances allow, such as within the libraries, adult learning centres and some council offices. These facilities ensure that all services offered are accessible by all members of the community. There are nine buildings that provide toilets accessible to the public and are listed in the assessment of need for toilets.

Other public services that open their toilets to the public

There are six Community and Town Councils in Torfaen and most allow access by the public on a discretionary basis, when staff are present. However, as staff can be present at irregular times in order to manage expectations, not all of these facilities are currently advertised.

Pontypool Community Council make a financial contribution towards the cost of maintenance and management of the Town Hall Toilet Block on Hanbury Road, Pontypool.

Third sector premises that open their toilets to the public

There are a number of other public services in the borough who support people accessing toilet facilities during their hours of business. These include four centres run by Torfaen Leisure Trust and five other third sector organisations These

buildings are located in Blaenavon, Garndiffaith, Pontypool and two different areas of Cwmbran – assessment of need for toilets.

Further engagement with public services and third sector organisations is part of our strategic approach to widening access to toilet facilities across the borough.

A list of the toilet facilities in Torfaen that are accessible by the general public (i.e. open to paying and non-paying customers) is provided in the Torfaen Toilet Assessment of Need. *(We have listed toilets currently available – from public services and private businesses – that have given permission for their details to be included in the national map. These are shown at Appendix 2 and will be updated for publication of the final strategy).*

Businesses that open their toilets to the public

Many toilet facilities provided by commercial and retail businesses have been primarily or solely for use by paying customers. Some shops understand that people come in to use the toilets and recognise that this may lead to people buying goods whilst inside. Four large supermarket sites – located in Pontypool and Cwmbran - and two large shops within the Cwmbran Centre shopping area are notable examples, in addition to the public toilets that Cwmbran Shopping operate within the town centre. Cwmbran Retail Park also provides large retail space to a number of established national chains, two of whom provide toilets for customer use and are not typically advertised as available for use by all.

Torfaen has a significant number of industrial parks that sell goods to both trade and public; toilets within these premises tend to be for staff use only.

Leisure and entertainment venues such as the cinema, bowling alley and private gyms/leisure centres all have toilet facilities for customer use. Engagement with these businesses is required to discuss the possibility of use by the general public and allowing public use to be publicised.

All local authorities in Wales have joined together to write to a large number of national retailers to identify where they are willing to join the Community Toilet Scheme, for their outlets to display national signage and to appear on the national toilet map. Further engagement with private and commercial businesses will be part of our strategic approach to widening access to toilet facilities across the borough.

Baby Changing Facilities

At least one dedicated baby changing room exists in each of Torfaen's three major settlements. In most other toilets, baby changing facilities comprise of a single baby changing station, in the form of a purpose made contoured plastic table that folds up parallel to a wall when not in use.

Most Torfaen CBC toilets provide a baby changing station. These are not present within the two toilet blocks in Pontypool, but will be added within this financial year. We will also look at other ways of making our toilet facilities more family friendly.

There are some toilets in community halls, operated by third sector organisations which include an additional strap-in seat to safely secure additional young children. These are not currently available to the non-hall users and again, further discussions are required to identify any such premises wishing to participate in the Community Toilet Scheme.

Torfaen CBC's engagement with residents of Torfaen suggested that many parents and guardians of young children requiring baby changing facilities feel uncomfortable using the facilities of businesses without buying anything. 86% of the parents/guardians completing our survey said they would feel more comfortable about using the baby changing facilities of businesses if they displayed a sign to highlight that their facilities can be used without buying anything or using their service.

COST OF PROVIDING CURRENT TORFAEN CBC FACILITIES

The following table indicates the cost of operating local authority run 'stand-alone' public toilets only. The costs relating to toilets within public buildings are integral to the individual building.

1) Repairs & Compliance inspections		(£)	(£)	(£)
Location		2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Lion St, Blaenavon		1,677	1,986	1,253
Hanbury Road, Pontypool		2,543	1,540	2,449
Pontypool Park		1,213	807	889
South Fields Public Toilet		923	3,944	413
Boating Lake		3,173	3,359	7,953
	Total (Year)	9,529	11,636	12,958
2) Running Costs				
Electricity		2,039	2,509	2,497
NDR		1,638	1,652	1,370
Water		5,611	3,814	3,433
Soap/disposables/cleaning materials		6,545	6,600	6,720
Sanitary collections		1,300	1,300	1,300
Opening & Closing (staff time apportioned)		14,600	14,800	15,000
	Total (Year)	31,733	30,675	30,320
	Total Cost	41,262	42,311	43,278
	Less Contribution from Pontypool Community Council*	- 12,500	- 12,500	- 12,500
	*since 2015			
	NET COST	28,762	29,811	30,778

There are no current plans to close any of these facilities or reduce the allocated budget. However, should there be a future need for the council to re-consider its position due to budget pressures, this strategy will provide an approach of working with partners to provide alternative facilities.

OPENING TIMES

The local authority aims to provide access to these toilet facilities for as long as possible on a seven day basis. However, anti-social behaviour, drug-related misuse, vandalism and graffiti damage to public toilets in the past, has led to stand-alone facilities being locked up at a scheduled time in the early evening to prevent this happening. Budget considerations have also been a factor in the determination of closing times of the facilities Torfaen CBC provides.

Facilities provided by shops and other organisations are limited to their business opening hours. Likewise, toilets that third sector organisations and community councils have in their buildings are sometimes accessible, but only when staff are present.

24 hour toilet facilities are available at Folly Tower Service Station on the outskirts of Pontypool and at Asda in Cwmbran, providing options for travelling shift workers and taxi drivers working during the night, whilst several supermarkets and pubs open until 9.00pm or 10.00pm and 11.00pm or midnight respectively.

Access to Green Spaces

We have recognised residents' concerns about access to green spaces; only 1 in 5 respondents to our Local Toilet Survey felt there is enough suitable toilet provision to allow them to access green spaces and only 1 in 10 disagreed that they would access green spaces more regularly if there were more suitable toilet facilities.

Canal:

The lack of toilets along significant stretches of the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal was highlighted by many respondents to our Local Toilet Survey. Whilst there are some commercial businesses (such as pubs) along some parts, we are pleased to say that some significant plans have already been approved to improve access to the canal.

In July 2018 Welsh Government announced that a £4 million project to transform the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal into an adventure hub has had the green light for EU funding. The project will include construction of a Visitor Activity Centre at Pontymoile Canal Basin in Pontypool, as part of an overall programme of planned improvements to the basin. The aspiration is to upgrade the toilet provision to include a better design and layout, baby changing facility, access for all and changing facilities for water sport activity. In promotion of the new development at Pontymoile Canal Basin we will actively promote the availability of these toilet facilities.

In addition, through the Community Toilet Scheme, future engagement with businesses along other stretches of the canal will aim to encourage them to open up use of their toilets to the public.

These access points will then be promoted widely to raise awareness of accessible areas of the canal networks, giving people who need to use a toilet regularly the confidence to enjoy the canal, improving physical activity and mental wellbeing.

Parks:

We recognise the importance of the toilet facilities that exist in or near parks and playgrounds. Through the work of Torfaen's Streetscene Services team (and when appropriate our Community Safety Hub) and by working with external partners, we will do our utmost to ensure that toilet facilities remain available at or near our major parks, doing our best to improve issues identified.

We recognise that the majority of smaller parks do not have accompanying public toilets nearby. Although we are keen for families to be able to access parks across the borough, our current financial position does not allow us to provide toilets in such locations. We will be taking future opportunities to work with any new partners or businesses in local areas who could make their toilet facilities available to park users. Also we will engage with community groups who may be able to propose solutions to this issue in specific locations.

Equality of access - being able to shop where we want to and pay a fair price:

It is important for people with disabilities - including bowel and bladder needs - to have fair access to shops; it is vital that they have an equal social experience, the same level of choice of goods and services and that they are not forced to pay over the odds for goods due to the constraints of toilet locations.

Overall, 38% of people who responded to the Local Toilet Survey felt their choice of shops is limited because of a lack of suitable toilets. This increased to 63% of people who use accessible toilets and 56% of people who use Changing Places.

66% of all respondents felt supermarkets provide sufficient toilet facilities to enable them to shop there, though there were some negative comments with to maintenance programmes and out of order signs reducing accessibility on occasion. In comparison, 48% felt town centres have sufficient toilet facilities to enable them to shop there, and only 22% felt retail and trading estates have sufficient toilet facilities to enable them to shop there.

People requiring accessible toilets told us that they would like to know whether the toilet facilities are suitable for them, before entering a premises.

To support people using the right toilet facilities and we will work with small businesses and local traders in our town centres to promote the accessible toilet facilities of these areas, which people might not be aware of.

As part of the Community Toilet Scheme we will encourage retail/trading estate businesses to make their facilities available to the public. All such participating businesses will be promoted through the Scheme.

Changing Places national scheme

Standard accessible toilets are usually a larger cubicle that provides some hand rails, low level hand basins and dryers to assist people who are disabled / use a wheelchair. They do not meet the needs of all people with a disability.

People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well people with physical disabilities such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places toilets.

Each Changing Places toilet provides:

The right equipment:

- a height adjustable adult-sized changing bench
- a tracking hoist system, or mobile hoist if this is not possible

Enough space:

- adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person and up to two carers
- a centrally placed toilet with room either side
- a screen or curtain to allow some privacy

A safe and clean environment:

- wide tear off paper roll to cover the bench
- a large waste bin for disposable pads
- a non-slip floor

Changing Places toilets are different to standard accessible toilets (or "disabled toilets") and where possible, should be provided in addition to accessible toilets.

A Changing Places toilet has specific dimensions and requirements and can only be classified as a Changing Place if it meets the Changing Places Standard, based on the BS8300:2009.

There is currently one existing Changing Places toilet facility within Torfaen and this is located at:

- ASDA Cwmbran Superstore, Llewelyn, Cwmbran, NP44 1UL

Significant funding would be required to develop new Changing Places. Estimated equipment costs for a Changing Places toilet can vary but are in the region of between £12,000 - £15,000 including VAT [source: www.changing-places.org]. However, equipment costs will vary depending on the specific equipment chosen.

There are further costs to providing Changing Places toilet and these will vary depending on the venue. For example:

- building costs if structural changes need to be made to an existing building
- maintenance costs
- security costs

Torfaen CBC will support those service areas and external organisations to access funding to provide new Changing Places facilities in Torfaen.

RADAR National Key Scheme

The National Key Scheme, sometimes known as the RADAR Scheme, was developed because some public toilets designed for disabled people had to be locked to prevent damage and misuse. This has been countered by their being locked separately from other toilets. The National Key Scheme aims to provide disabled key holders with independent access to the toilets provided for them and increase the likelihood of the facilities being in a useable state.

Keys are purchased by those requiring such facilities and provide access to RADAR toilets across the UK. Details can be found at:

<https://www.bluebadgecompany.co.uk/blog/radar-keys-locked-disabled-toilets-explained/>

RADAR toilets in Torfaen are located at:

Lion Street, Blaenavon; Pontypool Indoor Market; Monmouth Square and Bus Station (both within Cwmbran Shopping); Cwmbran Library; Woodland Road Sport & Social Centre, Croesyceiliog and; the Boating Lake, Llanyrafon. There are further RADAR toilets in commercial businesses such as pubs and supermarkets and all RADAR key purchasers are provided with information on locations.

Torfaen CBC have no plans to change current arrangements in relation to Radar Key access. Nor are we aware of any partners or businesses looking to add or remove National Key Scheme locks.

OUR STRATEGIC APPROACH:

WELL-BEING AND THE FIVE WAYS OF WORKING

People's well-being is important for physical and mental health as it helps to keep us healthy or to better manage any ill-health or condition. Having access to the outdoors for play, exercise and leisure; being able to go to and from school or work; being able to do day to day tasks such as shopping, visiting friends or social groups; and feeling safe, are just some of the things that help our well-being. They are also the main things that people tell us are important to them, and knowing there are toilet facilities available for them to use at these times means they can feel confident in going out and about.

The Welsh Government has set two pieces of legislation to improve well-being; the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. These Acts require public services across Wales to consider and improve the well-being of both the places we live in and the people who live here.

The Well-being of Future Generations Act sets five ways of working that must be applied to all policy and service developments to make sure we are doing the best we can to improve well-being. In developing this Local Toilets Strategy we have:

 Integration	Looked at other parts of the Council's business and regional activities such as public transport and travel plans, parks and open spaces, libraries and heritage sites, so we can work towards people being able to access toilets when travelling or using these places.
 Long term	Looked at the location of the toilet facilities the Council currently operates and our current and future maintenance and refurbishment plans. Identified the gaps and how we can work with partners to provide toilet facilities in these areas.
 Prevention	Considered the importance of toilets in relation to social isolation and physical activity and the impact of this on people's need to access health services in future. Looked at the cost and other resources needed to provide and maintain toilet facilities and how we can prevent any reduction going forward. Looked at the areas where there are no toilet facilities and identified other public services, community buildings or private businesses that we can approach to make facilities available in the future.
 Involvement	Engaged with people across Torfaen and asked for their views on toilet facilities, what issues they may have and, what they think some of the solutions could be. We are using this information to plan our actions and we will be keeping in touch with people who have shown a particular interest in this work. This will make sure we listen and work together to provide toilet facilities that are clean and safe for people to use.
 Collaboration	Worked with some of our partners in the public and private sectors to identify additional facilities to those the Council provides. We have further work to do in this area to maximise access to toilets in Torfaen.

SEEKING TO MEET THE ASSESSED NEED

A detailed analysis of the responses received about the provision of toilet facilities in proximity to services, green spaces and in relation to social isolation, physical activity and day to day activities such as shopping, is provided in our Assessment of Need.

Below are the proposed actions to seek to meet the assessed need:

Clean, safe and well maintained facilities

- Torfaen CBC **will review cleansing operations and standards** on a periodic basis to ensure the most efficient and effective provision within allocated resources.
- Our Community Safety Team **will continue to work with the Police, residents, community groups and others when necessary**, to ensure that facilities are as safe as possible.
- For a variety of environmental, safety and financial reasons, effective management of heating, lighting and other considerations within toilet facilities is essential. Torfaen CBC **will continue to effectively manage our facilities in this regard**.

Consultation question 1: Do you agree that our proposed actions will provide clean, safe and well-maintained public toilets?

Facilities accessible to all, at all practicable locations

- Toilets within many **Torfaen CBC buildings and Community Toilet Scheme subscribed buildings will be promoted for public use**. For safeguarding and security reasons, toilets in premises such as schools, care homes and buildings where there are substantial security concerns, will not be included.
- Torfaen CBC promote equal opportunities to provide appropriate, accessible and effective services and facilities to all sections of the community without prejudice or bias. We **will do more to highlight the nearby availability of accessible toilets in close proximity to our traditional toilet blocks in Pontypool that do not feature an accessible toilet**.
- These responses make a strong case for valuing the importance of existing facilities and **recognising that more can be done** to make leisure environments more accessible, **which we will consider when we engage with the businesses** that predominantly provide these kind of meeting places.
- The national on-line map of toilet facilities in Wales will be available during 2019/20. This **map will be widely promoted by Torfaen CBC** and other local authorities so people will have better information about locations and accessibility of facilities. Issues that have been raised in connection to commuting will be looked at when the Strategy is reviewed in 2021.

Consultation question 2: Do you agree that our proposed actions will support and improve access to toilets?

Geographical considerations

- There was a clear message from respondents to our survey that the provision of toilet facilities in Pontypool is insufficient, either because toilets are not available at certain times, or generally inadequate in their provision.

We will review:

- **The opening times of facilities in Pontypool and how we provide accessible toilets near the centre of Pontypool.**
- **The facilities in each location to ascertain if any improvements can be made, for example adding baby changing stations, improving furnishings or widening cubicles.**
- Our Local Toilet Survey and accompanying engagement in development of this Strategy received a few comments about previous closures / lack of facilities in some areas. Whilst it is not possible for the local authority to re-open facilities, **we will seek to engage with businesses and organisations with a view to them joining the Community Toilet Scheme.** However, not all locations mentioned as lacking toilets have businesses or public services in the area for us to approach.
- For people needing frequent or urgent use of a toilet, we believe that the **national toilet map and local promotion of facilities that are available**, will mean people can better plan their access to open spaces, parks and leisure facilities within the borough.

Consultation question 3: Do you agree that our proposed actions will improve access to toilets in most areas of Torfaen?

RETAINING CURRENT TORFAEN CBC FACILITIES

There are no current plans to close any of the facilities provided by the local authority or reduce the allocated budget. However, should there be a future need for the council to re-consider its position due to budget pressures, this strategy will provide an approach of working with partners to provide alternative facilities.

WORKING WITH PUBLIC SERVICE PARTNERS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES

- Over the coming two years **we will work with local people to approach businesses to discuss ways of making their customer toilets accessible to everyone.**
- **We will refresh and relaunch our Community Toilet Scheme and introduce new signage that has been produced by Welsh Government.** Participating **premises will be asked to display a sticker in a prominent place** (i.e. in their entrance, or a window if more visible), indicating that toilets are available for the public. The sticker will display the following logo stipulated by Welsh Government, which has been developed in consultation with a number of organisations working with people with visual impairments and other accessibility needs:



- On a local level we **will look to introduce complimentary accompanying stickers** as a no cost / low cost solution in addition to the logo above, **highlighting the availability of a) an accessible toilet, and b) a baby changing station.**

Consultation question 4: Do you agree working with other public services and private businesses will support and improve access to toilets?

ONLINE MAP OF FACILITIES (WALES WIDE)

Mapping locations is an important part of our Strategy. We want people who need to visit a toilet to easily be able to access information about the location, opening times, accessibility and type of facilities available.

Torfaen CBC already provide information on toilets within Torfaen on our website: <https://www.torfaen.gov.uk/en/RoadsTravelParking/StreetCareandCleaning/Publicconveniences/PublicaccesstotoiletsinTorfaen.aspx>

Whilst this document is an accessible format for many, we warmly welcome a decision by Welsh Government to create, with the support of local authorities, an online map of all existing toilet facilities available for public use in Wales. This map will not only help people to find local toilets but also take the stress out of planning journeys further afield. Torfaen CBC **will be providing up-to-date information to ensure all toilets in Torfaen are included in this national map.**

We **will provide a direct link to the national map on our website**, when it is made available. The link to the Lle portal that will host the map, is:

<http://lle.gov.wales/home>

Torfaen CBC **will embed the locally configured map into our own website**. We will also show a link to the national map, to assist people in searching for toilets in other areas they may be visiting.

As the data provided by local authorities is to be made available as open data, it will be available for reuse by third parties, including app developers. We would therefore expect new smartphone apps to be created and the accuracy of existing third party smartphone apps – of which there are already several available - to be improved.

We **will regularly review the facilities that have been included** at least every two years, in line with our progress reports and Strategy review periods, as detailed on page 20. If we hear of changes to the availability of facilities, such as closures or changes to opening times, or indeed new businesses allowing use, **we will update the information in a timely manner** rather than waiting until the review date.

Consultation question 5: Do you agree the national and local maps will support and improve access to toilets?

INFORMATION & PROMOTING LOCAL FACILITIES

Our plans to provide a detailed map of toilets - including accessible toilets, Changing Places facilities and baby changing facilities - will significantly improve information available to the public. In the Spring/Summer of 2019 we will run a promotional campaign to raise awareness of the map and the availability of the toilets identified through this ongoing work.

We will:

- **produce leaflets (and publish as downloadable documents on our website so they can be regularly updated) providing information and location of toilets:**
- **work with appropriate partners such as the local health board and GP surgeries to improve access to these materials by people with various conditions affecting their bowel or bladder function.**
- **request that businesses selling Radar Keys provide the web link to purchasers.**
- **request that businesses selling mobility equipment provide the web link to purchasers.**

Consultation question 6: Do you agree that the production and promotion of online leaflets will improve information and access to toilets?

Signage

The British Toilet Association recommends that signs be fitted on the outside of toilets with information such as opening hours, contact information for reporting problems and the specific facilities provided inside, such as whether there is a baby-changing room. Our Assessment of Need also highlighted a need for information on alternative facilities nearby that can be accessed when a facility is closed.

We will therefore:

- **seek ways to produce further bilingual signage that includes the above information, on all Torfaen CBC owned and run public toilets.**
- **support participants involved in our Community Toilet Scheme to provide the same information, where space allows, using our signage as a consistent template.**

Consultation question 7: Do you agree that we should explore ways to improve signage on toilets the local authority provides?

And that we should encourage other organisations and private businesses to display these signs?

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Gender Neutral Provision

Any future developments to include publicly accessible toilets should seek guidance from Torfaen CBC, in liaison with equality and diversity organisations, to ensure developments meet the needs of our LGBT+ communities. We **will encourage the provision of individual cubicles that are not gender specific in all new premises.**

Environmental considerations

Where new toilet and/or baby changing facilities are created, consideration should be given to power usage and the ongoing environmental impact of the facilities. Options like compostable toilets, solar powered lighting and factors such as flush efficiency should be considered.

Developers seeking planning approval should carefully consider sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions and all providers of toilets and baby changing facilities should be concerned with the environmental impact of their facilities and should do everything they can to lessen environmental impact.

We will encourage the promotion of environmental considerations in relation to renovation of existing toilet provision and for new provisions.

Consultation question 8: Do you agree that we should encourage and promote

(a) gender neutral provision in new facilities developed? (i.e. individual cubicles with no gender specified)

(b) environmental considerations?

CONSULTATION & SCRUTINY

For this draft Strategy, we will be consulting with members of the public through the Council’s consultation webpages, through our Engagement and Participation Officers and front line staff where feasible with their day to day duties. We will also ask our partners in the Health Board, Housing Associations, Town & Community Councils, Third Sector Services, Police and Fire Services to promote this draft Strategy and encourage people to let us have their views.

We will take people’s views into account when finalising this Strategy.

The Council’s Cross-Cutting Scrutiny Panel will scrutinize the work we have done to produce this draft Strategy as well as the document itself. We will take account of any recommendations from the Scrutiny panel in the final document.

The final Strategy will detail the process we have followed and the people we have consulted with, as well as a summary of their responses.

REVIEW, REPORTING AND REVISION

The Act requires local authorities to undertake regular reviews of the local Strategy and provide progress reports. These should be done on a two year cycle, except where there is a general local authority election in which case the review should be carried out within one year of the election and either the Strategy redrafted or, an interim progress report provided.

Timescales for our planned review and reporting cycle is set out in the table below:

Statutory review & interim progress report for period 30 th May 2019 to 30 th May 2021.	June to October 2021
Secure Cabinet approval and translate into Welsh	October & November 2021
Publish (bilingual) interim progress report on website	30 th November 2021
Review within one year of local authority election (5 th May 2022).	By 4 th May 2023
If changes to the Strategy republish the full approved (bilingual) document.	By 3 rd November 2023
If no changes to the Strategy, prepare an interim progress report for 22 nd November 2022 to 22 nd November 2024.	December 2024 to April 2025
Secure Cabinet approval and translate into Welsh	April / May 2025
Publish (bilingual) interim progress report on website	By 22 nd May 2025
Repeat this review process and production of interim progress statements every 2 years or within one year of a local authority election	

NEXT STEPS

We will consult on this draft strategy for 12 weeks (from 15th November 2018 to 7th February 2019). During the 12 week consultation period, we will update the content in respect of progress being made with the national mapping and any further information on local toilet facilities. We will take account of recommendations made by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and responses to the public consultation to inform final content.

The Cabinet will be presented with the final strategy in April 2019.

The document will be formatted for publication; an easy read version will be developed; both documents will be translated into Welsh.

The Strategy documents and the Torfaen Toilets Needs Assessment will be published on the Council's web site on 30th May 2019.

You can respond to the consultation:

Online at <https://getinvolved.torfaen.gov.uk/pssu/localtoiletsstrategy2018>

Through consultation events.

By hard copy and questionnaires, available from:

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The closing date is 7th February 2019.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Torfaen Toilet Needs Assessment

Appendix 2: Mapping Data (so far) – Torfaen toilets identified

REFERENCES

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- ¹ Holt-Lunstad, 2015 / Hawkey et al, 2010
<https://www.ahsw.org.uk/userfiles/Research/Perspectives%20on%20Psychological%20Science-2015-Holt-Lunstad-227-37.pdf>
- ² Public Health Wales Act – Part 8
<https://gov.wales/topics/health/nhswales/act/publictoilets/?lang=en>
- ³ Torfaen Public Services Board Assessment of Well-being 2017
<http://www.torfaenpublicservicesboard.co.uk/en/Documents/Assessment-of-Well-being/Part-1-Torfaen-Well-being-Assessment.pdf>
- ⁴ Gwent Regional Partnership Board Population Needs Assessment 2017
<http://www.gwentrbp.wales/population-needs-assessment>
- ⁵ Bladder and Bowel Community research <https://psnc.org.uk/south-staffordshire-lpc/wp-content/uploads/sites/95/2015/02/BowelProblems.pdf>
- ⁶ Cognitive Function and Ageing Study - Wales <http://www.cfas.ac.uk/cfas-wales/>