

RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL
MUNICIPAL YEAR 2023/24

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE

10TH JULY 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC
HEALTH, PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Agenda Item No. 5

Local Toilet Strategy Review

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report has been prepared to provide the Community Services Scrutiny Committee with an update on the review of the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Toilets Strategy from 2019-2023 to 2023-2028.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Scrutiny Committee:

- 2.1 acknowledges the information provided in the report; and
- 2.2 scrutinise the strategy and determine any comments, observations or recommendations in respect of these proposals.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To provide the Community Services Scrutiny Committee with an update on the revised Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The Act received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.
- 4.2 The local authority has responsibility to:

- assess the community's need for toilets, including changing facilities for babies and changing places facilities for people with disabilities;
 - provide details of how to meet the identified need;
 - produce a Local Toilets Strategy; and
 - review the strategy, update and publicise revisions.
- 4.3 Local authorities had to prepare and publish their initial strategies by 31 May 2019, taking a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of this strategy, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council is required to publish a statement of progress. The first Local Toilets Strategy for Rhondda Cynon Taf was published in 2019.
- 4.4 The provision of local toilets for public use is not a statutory requirement of local authorities in Wales. At a challenging time for local authorities, this strategy aims to mitigate potential impacts by making toilets in more Council facilities available for public use and to work with the private sector to help promote their facilities.
- 4.5 The strategy aims to review the quality and quantity of local toilets throughout the county borough, and to provide or facilitate the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets for residents and visitors to the area at locations where the need for such facilities has been identified.
- 4.6 The following have been considered in reviewing the initial strategy, with any relevant updates and changes made to the revised strategy for 2023-2028:
- identifying the current level of provision of public toilets;
 - analysing the findings of the completed assessment of need activities for toilets available for use by the public in their area;
 - consideration to the requirements of the general population;
 - identifying the needs for particular user groups;
 - identifying any gaps in current provision;
 - supporting Welsh Government initiatives to improve information available on toilet facilities;
 - providing information setting out the steps which the local authority proposes to take to meet this need, and any other information which the council considers appropriate.

5. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 5.1 The Council has continued the level of investment to maintain the current provision. The Council does not charge for use of its public toilets. A list of public conveniences provided by the Council is [here](#).
- 5.2 Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council has continued to invest in facilities since the 2019 Local Toilets Strategy with an extensive enhancement and refurbishments programme, totalling in excess of circa £315,000.

- 5.3 In addition to the enhancements to Council owned and managed facilities, three further developments have taken place working with key community partners.
- 5.4 A number of changing places are available across the borough. Changing places are facilities for individuals with a range of disabilities and limited mobility who are unable to access standard disabled toilets. These facilities feature specialist equipment including hoists and changing benches to enable these individuals to access public toilets in their communities. For full details of available facilities please see: changing-places.org/find.
- 5.5 Mapping locations has commenced and is an important part of the strategy ensuring that people who need to use toilet facilities can easily access information about the location, opening times, accessibility, and type of facilities available.

6. OBJECTIVES AND ACTION PLAN

6.1 Two objectives have been developed with supporting actions:

6.1.1 To enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities by:

- Promoting equal opportunities to provide appropriate, accessible and effective facilities to all sections of the community, including changing facilities for babies and changing places for disabled persons. Looking for opportunities to include these provisions in any new (Council owned) developments where possible and publicising more widely the already available facilities.
- Exploring the option of displaying the toilet logo sticker at the entrances of appropriate publicly accessible Council buildings, community venues and private businesses that agree to participate.
- Working with Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board and health care providers to encourage them to make facilities available to the public, to participate in the mapping scheme, and to display the toilet logo sticker in appropriate premises.
- Improving awareness and information available on toilet provision in the borough by updating information on the Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council website and regularly update the “Lle” open access data repository with Welsh Government.
- Exploring the provision of improved physical signage to existing facilities, in particular to consider new accessible signage to tackle discrimination.
- Reviewing cleansing operations and standards periodically to ensure effective provision within allocated resources.

- Reviewing opening hours of existing facilities with a view to exploring alternative opening hours where practicable.
- Working with the Police, members of the public, community groups and other interested parties, to ensure that facilities are as safe as possible.

6.1.2 Promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities by:

- Exploring all available options, including working with the private sector, community and voluntary groups and Town and Community Councils, to make more local toilets and changing facilities available where they are most needed. Working with our local Neighbourhood Network partners and consider any opportunities for community asset transfers where available.
- Working with partners to improve toilet provision close to key night-time gathering points, including taxi ranks, car parks, railway stations, bus stations and stops.
- Ensuring that the Events Safety Advisory Group continues to provide advice and guidance on appropriate and accessible temporary toilet facilities to be provided at organised events to meet the diverse needs of the community.
- Considering dementia-friendly improvements such as increasing colour contrast in Council owned toilet facilities.
- Considering ratio of male to female facilities, whereby 1:2 is the ideal ratio as outlined by WG.
- Considering toilet provision for the LGBTQI+ community.
- In line with the Council's Tourism Strategy, considering the required toilet facilities to serve the needs of visitors.
- Considering allowing members of the public free access to additional toilet facilities in publicly accessible Council buildings and promote this using the toilet logo stickers.
- Promoting all available facilities using the toilet logo sticker with associated public awareness raising campaign, so community members recognise the logo and have an understanding that premises that display it allow the public access to their toilet facilities.

7. **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS / SOCIO-ECONOMIC DUTY**

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity or socio-economic implications arising directly from this report. However, an Equality Impact Assessment will be completed prior to a decision on adoption of the revised strategy being made and publication of the Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028.

8. WELSH LANGUAGE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no Welsh Language implications arising directly from this report. However, a Welsh Language Impact Assessment will be completed and prior to a decision on adoption of the revised strategy being made and publication of the Local Toilets Strategy 2023-2028,

9. CONSULTATION / INVOLVEMENT

- 9.1 In preparation of the 2019 Local Toilet Strategy, for a four-week period starting in October 2018, an Assessment of Need public consultation was conducted across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This involved engaging with communities and a wide range of interested parties to consider the requirements of the general population, to consider the needs for particular user groups, to review existing toilet facilities, and to identify any gaps in current provision.
- 9.2 The engagement was conducted via a range of approaches including feedback from the public, social media, online content and emails, surveys and questionnaires, attendance at community venues.
- 9.3 Respondents were asked a wide variety of questions relating to areas most visited within Rhondda Cynon Taf; times of visiting; details of toilet and changing facility provision; attractions and parks most visited; followed by a series of statements relating to facilities which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with.
- 9.4 Furthermore, a 12-week period of public consultation starting in February 2019 was conducted across Rhondda Cynon Taf. This involved engaging with communities and a wide range of interested parties to consult on the draft Local Toilets Strategy, which had been produced following the Assessment of Need public consultation.
- 9.5 The 12-week public consultation asked a number of questions, including if respondents felt that the strategy provides clear information to help understand why the actions proposed in the strategy are necessary; if they agree with the actions under Objective 1: to enhance and maximise the use of existing facilities; and if they agree with the actions under Objective 2: to promote additional, appropriate and accessible facilities and to provide further information if they felt that there was anything missing from the proposed objectives and supporting actions.
- 9.6 During the 12-week public consultation, feedback on the draft strategy was provided by the Community Liaison Committee and the Authority's Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
- 9.7 As part of the review of the RCTCBC Local Toilets Strategy, local community consultation took place during the period July 2022 – October 2022. 130 people participated who agreed that the key points to come from the original public needs assessment remain valid. These key points are outlined below:

- Facilities in the towns and villages visited most often as primarily inadequate, as opposed to the other options available, during early morning, between 9am and 6pm, during evenings, Sundays and Bank Holidays.
- Toilet provision was adequate during the day but inadequate early morning and evenings at the attractions and parks visited most frequently. Both changing facilities for young children and people with disabilities were deemed to be inadequate during the day with none available early morning and evenings.
- Concerns about feeling unsafe using public toilets in relation to facilities being used for anti-social behaviour and drug activity.
- Lack of changing facilities for individuals with disabilities was highlighted with specific mention in relation to both children and adults.
- Too few public toilet facilities available and that the location of facilities is not convenient.
- Indication that there is not enough information on where facilities are located.
- Lack of facilities deterring visitors to certain locations.
- Indication that facilities are not open at the times that they are needed.
- A feeling that toilets should be free to use.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 10.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

11. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 11.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.
- 11.2 The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires local authorities to publish a Local Toilets Strategy for its area. The Act received Royal Assent in July 2017 and brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically Local Toilet Strategies.

12. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES AND THE WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS ACT

- 12.1 The Council's Corporate Plan, "Making a Difference" sets out a clear vision to make Rhondda Cynon Taf 'the best place in Wales to live, work and play, where people and businesses are independent, healthy and prosperous'. The Council is committed to delivering three main priorities under this plan, as follows: ensuring people are independent, healthy and successful; creating places where people are proud to live, work and play;

and enabling prosperity by creating the opportunity for people and businesses to be innovative, entrepreneurial, and to fulfil their potential and prosper. The Local Toilets Strategy can contribute to these, supporting a number of the objectives within the Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 to make the vision a reality.

- 12.2 The draft Cwm Taf Morgannwg Wellbeing Plan 2023-2028: 'A More Equal Cwm Taf Morgannwg', contains two objectives: Healthy Local Neighbourhoods – where our communities are inclusive and feel cohesive and people feel safe, supported, and valued; and, Sustainable and resilient local neighbourhoods – where we understand and respond to the risk of climate change to our communities, valuing, managing and enjoying our green and blue spaces responsibly.
- 12.3 These plans set the strategic direction at a regional and local level. The Local Toilets Strategy cuts across a number of these objectives and aims to support them. Publicly accessible toilets are needed by every one of us at some point where we live, work or visit and so the provision touches on all areas of the Council in some way.
- 12.4 The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. Due regard has been made to the above five ways of working when revising this strategy.