



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

18th SEPTEMBER 2023

PRE-SCRUTINY – LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND COMMUNICATION

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide the feedback and comments of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee following its pre scrutiny of the Local Toilet Strategy Review at its meeting on the [10th July 2023](#).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Members:

- 2.1 Note the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee as advised within section 5 of the report; and
- 2.2 Subject to any further comment by Cabinet Members, approve the reviewed Local Toilet Strategy 2023 – 2028 as attached to the report as Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The need for Members to be aware of the comments and observations of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee prior to their consideration of the Local Toilet Strategy Review.

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. PRE-SCRUTINY OF THE LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY REVIEW.

- 5.1 The Community Services Scrutiny Committee met on the 10th July 2023, to consider the Local Toilet Strategy Review.
- 5.2 At the meeting Members discussed the provision available and acknowledged the position in comparison to other Local Authorities where budget constraints have resulted in the withdrawal of facilities.
- 5.3 Members discussed the facilities available in Rhondda Cynon Taf and the importance of residents and visitors being able to easily identify where public toilets are located and the opening hours. Members discussed the benefits of mapping facilities, clear signage and having a dedicated app which would display up to date information.
- 5.4 Some Members expressed concern regarding the night-time provision of public toilets and discussed the impact this has on town centres in particular. Members also acknowledged the balance between the need to provide facilities with also monitoring and deterring anti-social behaviour.

- 5.5 Members discussed the impact that reduced hours or closure of facilities could have on other Council departments such as Environmental Cleansing, noting that public toilets are an important facility to maintain and keep available.
- 5.6 Members also discussed the benefits that engaging with and encouraging private sector business to make their facilities accessible would bring. Members felt this aspect would be beneficial in ensuring that residents and visitors were able to easily access facilities when needed but noted the increased costs to businesses as being a barrier. Members felt incentivising businesses would encourage more willingness from businesses to work with the Council on this matter but again acknowledged the financial constraints being faced. Members with experience of supporting community projects also discussed the options to utilise community grants for volunteer organisations to provide public toilets.
- 5.7 Members engaged in further discussion around engaging with the Council's Town Centre's department to discuss ways to encourage businesses to make facilities available as a way of ensuring Town Centres are welcoming spaces encouraging residents to visit, noting that it is important to have facilities available to help town centres thrive.
- 5.8 In conclusion, Committee acknowledged the challenge to provide facilities at a time when budgets are challenged and were pleased that in comparison to other Local Authorities there is still a provision in RCT. However, Members felt that there would be room for improvement if work is done to identify any grants or external funding options available to support the programme.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken as part of the strategy, which is advised upon in Appendix A.

7. CONSULTATION/INVOLVEMENT

- 7.1 The involvement of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in the pre-scrutiny exercise will contribute to the quality and robustness of Cabinet decision-making.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 8.1 Any financial implications aligned to the strategy are identified within Appendix A

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

- 9.1 The report has been prepared in accordance with paragraph Part 4 of the Constitution (Overview & Scrutiny Procedure)

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 It is recognised that scrutiny is a vital component of good governance and improves Councils' decision making, service provision and cost effectiveness.

10.2 The undertaking of pre-scrutiny by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee in this area will strengthen accountability and assist Cabinet Members in taking any future decisions on these matters.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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Background Papers

[Minutes to Meeting on 10th July](#)