

SUBJECT:	MONMOUTHSHIRE LOCAL TOILETS STRATEGY – progress report
MEETING:	Strong Communities Select Committee
DATE:	29th April 2021
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To scrutinise progress on implementing the actions identified in Monmouthshire County Council's Local Toilets Strategy, prior to updating the Cabinet Member and Welsh Government.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To comment on progress against actions identified in this Authority's Local Toilets Strategy, agreed in June 2019, and listed in Appendix One.
- 2.2 Any Member comments or amendments are incorporated into the final update report prior to Individual Cabinet Member Decision on 26th May 2021. After receipt of Cabinet Member approval, the report author advises Welsh Government accordingly.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 'Provision of Toilets' came into force on 31st May 2018. It placed a duty on each local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilet strategy for its area by 31st May 2019. Welsh Government (WG) also required a 'progress update' report to be submitted to them two years later, (May 2021), to ensure actions were progressed. So this Authority needs to advise WG of actions taken, any outstanding matters and report any future planning on local toilet provision.
- 3.2 Local authorities in Wales have the responsibility to –
- Assess the need for toilet provision for their communities
 - Plan to meet those needs
 - Produce a local toilets strategy, and
 - Review, update and publicise revisions to the strategy.
- 3.3 Local authorities were required to prepare and publish their strategies by 31st May 2019. The duty to prepare a local toilets strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. Indeed, further to the work of the 'Public Convenience Working Group' in 2009 (a sub-group of this committee), many public toilet blocks were

successfully transferred to Town and Community Councils to manage. It is for the County Council to take a strategic view on how publicly accessible toilets can be provided and accessed across the county.

- 3.4 The draft strategy came to this Committee on 21st May 2019 for pre-decision scrutiny. The final draft incorporated opinions expressed via (1) a public survey, that ran between 19th December 2018 and 11th January 2019, and (2) a public consultation open from 22nd February to 3rd May 2019. Also referenced were comments from Gwent Police and Abergavenny Town Council's own survey from the summer of 2018.
- 3.5 The statutory guidance (August 2018) from Welsh Government was followed in preparing the local strategy. One key undertaking was to 'map out' all existing publicly accessible toilets in the county. This comprehensive map – showing locations, opening times, etc. – has been shared with Welsh Government to be provided on an all-Wales basis. The map was also provided via our own website for open access.
- 3.6 Monmouthshire's Local Toilet Strategy was approved by Individual Cabinet Member Decision on 12th June 2019, and is attached as Appendix Two. This lists the 18 public toilet blocks (Table 3), half of which are owned by Town and Community Councils, with the other half still owned by this Authority. This provision is supplemented by publicly accessible toilets in other buildings, (listed in Appendix A), including leisure centres, libraries and museums.
- 3.7 The key actions identified in the strategy are listed below. The coronavirus pandemic curtailed progressing certain issues, which is referenced within Appendix One.
1. Continue to work closely with Town & Community Councils on options for maintaining and improving public toilet provision in the county.
 2. Work with partners on how to best utilise the £17,200 Welsh Government grant.
 3. Work with the private sector to seek to provide more publicly available toilets were most needed.
 4. Display the national 'toilet/toiled' national logo (see 10.1 in strategy) in all participating toilet facilities, including Leisure Centres, libraries, etc.
 5. Improve awareness and information available on publicly accessible toilets by updating information on the Monmouthshire CC website and 'Lle' open access data held by Welsh Government, together with mobile App development.
 6. Regularly review cleaning and maintenance standards, together with T&CC's who manage many of the public toilets in our towns and villages.
 7. Environmental Health Officers to inspect privately provided toilets as part of their inspection regime, and respond to any complaints.
 8. Work closely with Gwent Police to find solutions to reduce anti-social behaviour associated with public toilets.
 9. Provide proactive advice to all event organisers in the county on the suitability of their toilet provision.
 10. Respond to any Welsh Government recommendations on public toilet provision, and seek out notable practice adopted in other counties.
- 3.8 Appendix One covers progress against each action. It is recognised that Property Services have undertaken some notable improvements to Monmouthshire CC's public toilets, and our Cleaning staff have continued to provide clean facilities, notably now WG national

restrictions are being eased. This will mean more footfall in our towns, parks and villages and a greater need for safe, clean, publicly accessible facilities.

3.9 Property Services, in last two years, have undertaken the following works in (1) Caldicot Country Park and (2) Bus Station, Abergavenny toilet blocks –

- Repaired or renewed roof areas
- Realigned and repaired gutters and downpipes
- External redecoration
- Repaired/renewed damaged floor and wall tiles
- Re-grouted floor and wall tiles
- Overhauled and upgraded electrical items
- Replaced missing signage
- Repaired and decorated handrails
- Repaired/renewed brick/slabbed pathways

The same works are scheduled for Maryport Street, Usk and Castle Street, Abergavenny in 2021/22 financial year.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION, (includes social justice, safeguarding and corporate parenting):

- 4.1 The completed 'Equalities & Future Generations Evaluation' form was provided when the strategy was completed two years ago, and provided to both this Committee and the Cabinet Member. As an update report, a further assessment has not been warranted.
- 4.2 The final Local Toilet Strategy provided an assessment of the current toilet provision, and had regard to the input from the public survey and Gwent Police. Key actions will continue to be monitored and reviewed with partners. Overall, with actions implemented, the strategy will have a very positive impact. Public provision will be maintained or improved, access information enhanced, encouraging people to take exercise and stay more physically active.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL:

- 5.1 Producing a Local Toilet Strategy is a statutory duty, as required under Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017. This Authority must advise WG of progress against actions highlighted in its' local toilet strategy by 31st May 2021.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

- 6.1 A progress report setting out the steps taken as a consequence of the strategy will be produced every two years, as per Welsh Government statutory guidance. An evaluation of cleanliness, overall provision, any increase/decrease in levels of anti-social behaviour, etc. will be regularly carried out with facility providers, notably Town and Community Councils.

6.2 The key actions are provided in Section 12 of the strategy, and are listed in 3.7 above. Progress will be monitored against the actions specified to ensure the strategy is effective.

7. REASONS:

7.1 The preparation and publication of a Local Toilet Strategy is a legal requirement, as outlined in Section 3 of the strategy.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 The resource implications of providing the strategy has involved significant Officer time. As per 6.1 of the strategy – Appendix One – Officers from Public Protection, Operations, Finance, Tourism, Leisure & Culture, Policy & Development, Communications and Shared Resources Service all contributed. Added to this, three Members of this committee undertook their own inspection of current public toilet blocks, both those provided by Monmouthshire CC and Town & Community Councils.

8.2 Welsh Government has recognised the additional work required in developing public toilet strategies and Monmouthshire has been successful in securing a one-off £17,200 grant payment. How best utilise that funding, noting costs in 8.1 were met internally, (Officer and Member time), is one of the continuing actions going forward.

9. CONSULTEES:

Head of Strategic Projects
Facilities Supervisor

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Monmouthshire County Council's Local Toilet Strategy, June 2019

9. AUTHOR:

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10. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Appendices

Appendix One – 10 actions with associated progress listed (below)

Appendix Two – Monmouthshire CC's Local Toilets Strategy, June 2019

ACTION	PROGRESS
1. Continue to work closely with Town & Community Councils on options for maintaining and improving public toilet provision in the county	A continuing action. Abergavenny public toilet provision under negotiation with Abergavenny Town Council – being pursued by Head of Strategic Projects 2021. Delayed by prioritisation of MCC’s pandemic response and emergency closure of many facilities to reduce Covid-19 spread in Spring/summer 2020.
2. Work with partners on how to best utilise the £17,200 Welsh Government grant.	Many T&CC’s undertook their own improvements in last 2 years – Environmental Health to revisit and review standards in both MCC and T&CC provided facilities by September 2021
3. Work with the private sector to seek to provide more publicly available toilets were most needed.	Grant money rolled forward into 21/22 year. Member views on using this one-off funding welcomed. Decision by July 2021, to allow spend by end of 21/22 financial year
4. Display the national ‘toilet/toiled’ national logo (see 10.1 in strategy) in all participating toilet facilities, including Leisure Centres, libraries, etc.	Majority of likely venues, eg. licensed premises, have been closed for large part of 20/21. One premises in Abergavenny has expressed interest. Environmental Health to encourage participation when inspections resumed, May 2021 on
5. Improve awareness and information available on publicly accessible toilets by updating information on the Monmouthshire CC website and ‘Lle’ open access data held by Welsh Government, together with mobile App development.	National logo signs received from WG. To be distributed when premises re-open, eg. leisure centres and libraries from May 2021 on
6. Regularly review cleaning and maintenance standards, together with T&CC’s who manage many of the public toilets in our towns and villages.	Completed , awaiting further WG guidance on mobile app development
7. Environmental Health Officers to inspect privately provided toilets as part of their inspection regime, and respond to any complaints.	Agreed to grade each facility to gauge improvements (or otherwise) over time. Environmental Health will inspect again, (now toilets have re-opened) and liaise with owners to secure improvements, annually
	As premises reopen, Environmental Health Officers will inspect all privately provided toilets, eg. in restaurants, supermarkets and public houses. By March 2022

<p>8. Work closely with Gwent Police to find solutions to reduce anti-social behaviour associated with public toilets.</p> <p>9. Provide proactive advice to all event organisers in the county on the suitability of their toilet provision.</p> <p>10. Respond to any Welsh Government recommendations on public toilet provision, and seek out notable practice adopted in other counties.</p>	<p>Whitehorse Lane block in Abergavenny recommended for closure, in part due to anti-social behaviour (when facility open) reported by Gwent Police. Other options, eg. lighting detracting drug use, to be explored with Police by July 2021</p> <p>Completed- actioned by Monmouthshire Event Safety Advisory Group</p> <p>Noted WG will be in receipt of all Welsh LA's progress reports by June 2021. Head of Public Protection to liaise with WG to determine any notable practice and share within MCC by August 2021</p>
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