



monmouthshire  
sir fynwy

# Monmouthshire County Council



## Local Toilets Strategy

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Public toilets are essential to equitable access to public outdoor spaces. They allow for the space to become a destination for extended periods of socialising, exercise, commuting and accessing community and commercial services.
- 1.2 This Council continues to play a key role in providing safe, accessible and clean public toilets, together with its' Town and Community Council partners that also own and manage public toilet facilities across the county.
- 1.3 A substantial review of public conveniences was undertaken by a working group of the Strong Communities Select committee in 2009. Their findings were reported to Cabinet in July 2010, with recommendations for Town and Community Councils (T & CC's) to take over the management and funding of most of the public toilets at that time. The response from those Councils was generally favourable, with the consequence of sustaining toilets in the county, (that would have otherwise been closed), and reducing the County Council's costs.
- 1.4 The strategy, in draft forms, was discussed and further developed through Strong Communities Select committees in February and May 2019. Noting the previous work, Members wanted assurances that there is a mechanism to ensure recommendations are implemented.
- 1.5 The public survey conducted during December 2018 to January 2019 showed a mixed picture of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the current publicly available toilet provision. For example, 46% were satisfied with cleanliness, 41% disagreed. Strong messages included people stating there were too few facilities (80%); they wanted more information on location (69%); believed they should be free to use (79%) and they were not comfortable using private toilets where they weren't also a customer (78%).
- 1.6 The strategy also identifies negative aspects of providing public toilets over longer periods, as reported by Gwent Police. Drug taking has increased in recent times, and so closure times need consideration with our Town & Community Council colleagues.
- 1.7 The public reported they would like better information on opening times and locations. This will be assisted by promoting the Wales Public Toilet Map, helping people to find a public toilet where and when they need it. **This will be linked to Monmouthshire CC's website, so anyone can find a public toilet spatially and see times of opening and facilities provided.**
- 1.8 The strategy recognises the contribution of the private sector, and indeed many major retailers recognise their public service role,

including larger supermarkets and public houses. Further encouragement of private providers will be taken forward.

- 1.9 This Authority will continue to provide specialist advice and support to event organisers, to ensure adequate toilet provision at our regular large events, such as the Abergavenny Food Festival, agricultural, music and sporting events.
- 1.10 This Authority welcomes, and was successful in securing, a one off Welsh Government grant of £17,200 'in partial recompense for the additional work required to develop and publish local toilet strategies'. **This grant was transferred to Landlord Services 23/24.**
- 1.11 The strategy was available for public consultation between 22<sup>nd</sup> February and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. Some points of accuracy were picked up, eg. opening hours, and recommendations generally supported.
- 1.12 **The strategy has been reviewed annually, with the exception of 2020 due to the pandemic, by Scrutiny Committees. Reviews have assessed progress against the recommendations in the 2019 published strategy.**
- 1.13 **The actions detailed in Section 15 of this strategy were largely implemented and reviewed with progress reported in Section 15. There have since been other identified actions since the original strategy was produced. The main additional actions are as follows -**
- **More emphasis needed on 'Changing Places' provision, for use of more profoundly disabled persons. All four MCC Leisure Centres now have 'Changing Places' status and there are two others in the county – Bridges Centre, Monmouth and Mencap, Chepstow.**
  - **MCC to work towards 'stoma-friendly' status in the public toilets it owns and manages and encourage other providers to do the same.**
  - **This Authority supports the national 'Bins for Boys' campaign and through 2024/25 will review current provision in our public toilets. Other providers, eg. Town & Community Councils, have been contacted to also support this initiative.**
  - **Unisex provision will be considered as and when alterations are made to existing facilities, in full consultation with stakeholders.**
- 1.14 **Annual hygiene inspections are now conducted by MCC Environmental Health with findings fed back to providers – MCC and Town & Community Councils.**

## **2. Introduction**

2.1 The provision of publicly available toilets improves local amenity and supports activity in public open spaces throughout the county. There are 18 dedicated public toilets in Monmouthshire, 9 owned by this Authority and 9 owned by Town and Community Councils. This is supplemented by a number of toilets on Council property, such as Leisure Centres, that the public can access. The public also utilise toilets on private property, for example at supermarkets and public houses. Although most of the public provision is now run by Community and Town Councils, (of the 9 MCC owned, 5 are T&CC managed), it is a duty on Monmouthshire County Council to prepare and publish a local toilet strategy.

2.2 A public toilet can be defined as a toilet that is freely available for the general public to use. They can also be temporary facilities provided for a specific one-off purpose, for example a music festival. Public toilets can be provided on private property as long as they are freely available for general use. The importance of public provision is more important to certain groups in society, including older people, those with disabilities and parents/carers with young children.

2.3 The key outcomes of the strategy are to:-

- Provide direction on the appropriate location of public toilets throughout the county
- Ensure the maintenance and cleaning of public toilets, including those managed by others, occurs to an appropriate standard
- Ensure the community, including visitors, has good information on the public toilet availability and location
- Provide direction on where the Council should focus advocacy and encouragement of other organisations to provide public toilet facilities
- Provide an action plan for the improvement of public toilets throughout the county

## **3. Need for a strategy for providing toilet facilities**

3.1 Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, 'Provision of Toilets' came into force on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 and places a duty on each local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilet strategy for its area. Monmouthshire has the responsibility to –

- Assess the need for toilet provision for their communities
- Plan to meet those needs
- Produce a local toilet strategy, and
- Review the strategy, update and publicise revisions

3.2 This Authority, under the Act, must prepare and publish their strategy by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2019. **Monmouthshire County Council published their first Local Toilet Strategy in June 2019.** It should be noted that the duty to prepare a local toilet strategy does not require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets directly. The Local Authority must take a strategic view on how facilities can be provided and accessed by their local population. Upon review of the strategy, Monmouthshire CC is required to publish a statement of progress. **It is intended to republish an updated Local Toilet Strategy after latest Member comments in March 2024 are incorporated, prior to approval by the Cabinet Member for Equalities and Engagement.**

3.3 The Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which advises public bodies how to go about meeting their duty under that Act. The principle is made up of five ways of working that public bodies should follow when carrying out sustainable development. These are:-

- Looking to the long term so we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- Taking an integrated approach
- Working with others in a collaborative way to find shared sustainable solutions
- Involving a diversity of the population in the decisions affecting them
- Acting to prevent problems from occurring or getting worse.

These five ways of working were utilised during the preparation, review, consultation and publication of the strategy.

#### **4. Aims of the Strategy**

4.1 The overall aim of this strategy is to review the quality and quantity of local toilets throughout the county. The public toilet provision is typically not directly via the Council, but the Authority seeks to ensure the provision of clean, safe, accessible and sustainable toilets. This is important for residents whilst out and about, visitors and businesses who will want attractive local environments in which to successfully operate. To achieve this aim, the Authority has –

- Identified the current level of public toilet provision.
- Analysed the findings of (i) the questionnaire sent to gauge opinion, (ii) the public consultation, (iii) Abergavenny Town Council's own survey.
- Considered the requirements of the general population and particular user groups.
- Surveyed the condition and usage of existing facilities.
- Identified any gaps in current provision.

- Increased awareness of local toilet locations, including use of new technologies and communications
- Advised organisers on the provision of adequate temporary toilets for events in the county.
- Reported progress to a scrutiny committee every year, and included new actions not previously raised.

## **5. Reviewing the strategy**

- 5.1 Monmouthshire CC will prepare a progress report setting out the steps taken as a consequence of this strategy every two years. **This Authority's Place Scrutiny Committee receive a progress report annually. This year (2024) the updated strategy will go for Cabinet Member approval and be shared with Welsh Government.**
- 5.2 The Authority may review its strategy at any time, for example where there is a change in local provision through a partner organisation and will consult and publish any reviews accordingly. **After MCC approval, the revised March 2024 strategy will be published and shared bilingually on our website.**

## **6. Development of the strategy**

- 6.1 Noting the role of Town and Community Councils managing the majority of public toilets in the county, they continue to be engaged for their input into current provision and adequacy. Abergavenny Town Council carried out their own review of provision in their town, and their input is reflected accordingly. From the Council's perspective Facilities Management (Cleansing), Public Protection, Landlord Services and MonLife were engaged, together with colleagues in Policy & Partnerships, Communications and GIS mapping, (Shared Resources Service).
- 6.2 Engagement with national retailers was undertaken once across the Welsh Local Authorities, to avoid them needing to answer similar questions 22 times.
- 6.3 A public consultation was undertaken from 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018 to 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019 to assess the needs of residents, visitors and workers within the county. Key engagement mechanisms included:-
- Press release to local papers 19<sup>th</sup> December, providing information on how to complete the survey.
  - Provided to all Town and Community Councillors, and County Councillors.
  - social media, including Facebook and Twitter.
  - Via our FB and Twitter feeds, 'Access to All' forums notified, together with Monmouthshire Local Service Board Engagement Group, including the voluntary sector, housing associations and Police & Crime Commissioner.

- Paper questionnaires, when requested. So, for example, 40 hard copy versions were provided to the Abergavenny 50+ group.

6.4 Although the response to the survey was quite low, it highlighted certain concerns from those that completed it. These are summarised in Section 14.1.

6.5 This Authority undertook a comprehensive review of public toilet provision in 2009. That previous work is referenced in this 2019 strategy and three Members also revisited all the tradition 'public toilet blocks', both those provided by MCC and Town & Community Councils. This is referenced in Section 14.2.

6.6 A public consultation exercise, seeking views on the draft Local Toilet Strategy, was conducted between 22<sup>nd</sup> February and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019. Points of accuracy were picked up – since corrected – with overall support for the recommendations. Comments are summarised in Section 14.3.

6.7 Abergavenny Town Council conducted their own survey and reported their findings in September 2018. Their findings are summarised in Section 14.5.

## **7. Linkage to other priorities – national and local**

### **MCC Community and Corporate Plan 2022/2028**

7.1.1 Our overarching strategic plan for MCC refers to supporting well-being, health and dignity for all. The provision of suitable public toilets supports well-being and health by encouraging people to be out and about in our towns and villages. It also provides dignity to older persons as they are never far away from a public facility in our main towns.

7.1.2 Keeping populations healthy, using open spaces, etc. is supported by suitable public toilet provision. The latest plan refers to our objective of providing 'a fair place to live', including 'all residents have access to the services and support they need to live a healthy life'. There is also reference to 'a thriving and ambitious place' and 'connected place'. Suitable public toilet provision contributes to these Council priorities by supporting socialisation and encouraging visitors where there are vibrant town centres.

7.2 **Older People's Commissioner for Wales (OPCW)** - the OPCW has previously reported that Council decisions to close public toilets were 'short sighted'. An OPCW telephone survey was conducted in 2023 of persons aged 60+ and one observation was 'Older people regularly tell me that a lack of public toilets in their area can discourage or even prevent them from getting out and about and doing the things that matter to them, leaving people feeling excluded and 'trapped' in their

homes'. This emphasises the importance of retaining traditional public toilets.

### 7.3 **Age Friendly Communities (World Health Organisation status)**

7.3.1 This Council has the ambition to achieve 'Age Friendly Communities' status, as defined by the WHO. A consultation is currently taking place to gauge opinions. One of the criteria that must be considered refers to 'outdoor spaces and buildings' and states – Accessible communities enable people to stay connected, participate in social activities and access local services and facilities. Well-maintained and well-lit streets, clear signposting, green spaces and public toilets all support older people to stay active and lead independent lives.

### 7.4 Council's **Local Development Plan**

7.4.1 There is reference to 'community facilities' in the adopted LDP -

Policy S5 – Community and Recreation Facilities  
Development proposals that provide and/or enhance community and recreation facilities will be permitted within or adjoining town and village development boundaries subject to detailed planning considerations. Development proposals that result in the unjustified loss of community and recreation facilities will not be permitted.

7.4.2 A toilet block in Linda Vista Gardens, Abergavenny, was refurbished with S.106 funding. The proprietor of the adjoining café opens and cleans the toilets which are free for public use.

## 8. **Provision of local public toilets**

8.1. Noting the earlier work of the 'Public Convenience Working Group', including of three County Councillors in 2009, it is useful to reflect on the current provision compared to 15 years ago.

8.2 The total MCC expenditure in 2009/10 was £306,038 compared to £119,258 in 2017/18, a drop of 61%. This does not correlate with a 61% drop in the number of public toilets provided, as majority are now financed and managed by Town & Community Councils. The total MCC expenditure in 2021/22 was £65,803. This was significantly less than a typical year due to (a) business rates not currently being charged, and (b) public toilets were shut for periods during 21/22 due to national Covid restrictions. This resulted in less maintenance costs, electric and water usage. The MCC 23/24 spend on public toilets (cleaning, water, electric, reactive maintenance) was £67,140.

8.3 The 2009 review recommended certain closures. Seven were closed, namely Raglan; Main Road, Tintern; Mathern Road, Bulwark; Healthmatic Unit, Bulwark; Linda Vista, Abergavenny; Llandegfedd reservoir and Llanthony Abbey car park.

8.4 Current provision (2024) is listed at the end of this document –



- MCC owned public toilets – entries 1 to 10, though 1 to 5 are managed and part funded by Abergavenny Town Council. Only 4 public toilet blocks are both owned and managed by MCC outright. **Whitehorse Lane (WHL) has been closed since mid-2020 and would have significant costs to reopen. One block is added, Linda Vista Gardens. So the overall number of blocks in Abergavenny (and the county), assuming WHL continues to be closed or repurposed, remains the same.**
- Town & Community Council public toilets – entries 11 to 20 (nine in total), wholly owned, as a direct consequence of the 2009 review work, and managed by T&CC's.
- Public toilets in other MCC buildings – entries 20 to 35 (16 in total), includes provision in leisure centres, libraries, etc.
- Other publicly accessible toilets – entries 36 to 38 (3 in total). These are provided by others, namely CADW, a chapel group, and a 'Changing Place' in a community centre. **The A40 block, near Mitchel Troy, has been closed by Welsh Government.**
- **Linda Vista Gardens block in Abergavenny has since reopened. Section 106 Planning funding was used to fully refurbish the facility and are now maintained by the nearby tearooms. The block is opened and closed by the proprietors of the café, to coincide with their hours of opening, and are available for anyone to use.**

- 8.5 This Authority considers it hugely positive that the Town and Community Councils have typically taken up responsibility for local public toilet provision in our towns and villages. The harsh reality is, noting financial pressures on the County Council (in 2009 and ever since), that the majority of our public toilets would have been closed had our T&CC's not stepped in and taken responsibility.
- 8.6 An innovative solution was found to retain the public toilets provided at Usk Island, as part of the earlier Working Group review. Responsibility for managing the toilets was incorporated into the MCC contract issued to the hot food outlet at this location. This has proved a successful arrangement and has ensured the public facility remains open. **This arrangement is replicated for the Linda Vista toilet block, (as stated in 8.4).**
- 8.7 Public toilets, by arrangement with event organisers, will often be open for longer periods when required. So, for example, public toilets in Abergavenny will remain open throughout the weekend of the Abergavenny Food Festival. This demonstrates a willingness, by both the Town and County Council, to work with the private sector to make the visitor experience more enjoyable.
- 8.8 **Reviews on social media, etc. can be helpful in identifying good and poorer facilities. MCC can act on any feedback accordingly and/or provide praise when appropriate. One example of positive feedback -**

*Abergavenny Bus Station - Dec 22 – “As a disabled person these toilets are a godsend when we are travelling in the area. We sometimes go to the West of England and Abergavenny makes a great resting point for a cup of tea etc. The toilets are clean and tidy and well maintained”.*

## **9. Changing Places**

- 9.1 Persons with limited mobility may need specific equipment, eg. a hoist and changing bed and be aided by carers. This Authority recognises the need to cater for those with more profound disabilities and therefore has four ‘Changing Places’ (CP) facilities, one in each of our Leisure Centres, (LC’s). As at March 2024, Monmouth LC is fully CP compliant and will be entered onto the national Changing Places website. When nationally approved, a Press release will announce its’ availability. Chepstow LC has works being undertaken March 2024 to also make it fully CP compliant, (8m2 etc.). Abergavenny and Caldicot LC’s have good CP provision but cannot currently fully comply. They are categorised as ‘Other Facility’ on the CP national website. Pictures and more details are to be provided to update their website in 2024.
- 9.2 There are two other CP facilities in the county, at Bridges Centre in Monmouth and Mencap in Chepstow.

## **10. Stoma-friendly public toilets**

- 10.1 This was raised as an important issue at Place Scrutiny in January 2023. As a consequence Landlord Services in 23/24 have ensured (where previously missing) mirrors, hooks and shelving is provided in 12 disabled toilet blocks in the county. A few have no separate disabled toilets, so these have been put into male and female toilets. To be ‘stoma-friendly’ a toilet needs a mirror, hooks, shelving, disposal bins and signage. Sanitary bin provision is being reviewed in 24/25 to establish where these are needed, and stickers have been obtained from Colostomy UK. Stickers will be put up as and when toilets are deemed stoma-friendly.
- 10.2 Guidance provided here –  
[www.colostomyuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Stoma-Friendly-Toilets-Guidelines.pdf](http://www.colostomyuk.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Stoma-Friendly-Toilets-Guidelines.pdf)

## **11. Sanitary bins for male use**

- 11.1 At Full Council in December 2023, a motion was put forward to support the national ‘Boys Need Bins’ campaign. Guidance provided here -  
[Working with parliament | Prostate Cancer UK](https://www.prostatecancer.org.uk/working-with-parliament/)
- 11.2 This seeks to provide sanitary bins in male toilets and this Authority will progress this ambition in 24/25, noting initially MCC agrees the principles and then starts the journey of improving facilities for men

with health issues that require such disposal facilities. This will be a new action to be monitored via scrutiny of this updated 2024 strategy.

## **12. Provision of toilets in private sector**

- 12.1 **15** years ago, during the time of the Working Group review, there was Welsh Government funding comprising an annual grant of up to £17,500. Only two premises took up the offer of making their toilets available to the public, ie. people could use without being paying customers, for which they received £500 p.a. However, WG funding was subsequently withdrawn and therefore the grant payment was also withdrawn to the two participating businesses.
- 12.2 Whether there is an appetite to revisit seeking local businesses to open their toilet facilities to public use will depend, in a large part, to whether any funding is re-established. Public Protection staff regularly visit all local public houses, retail providers, restaurants, etc. and would be ideally placed to promote any future scheme.
- 12.3 Large national retailers were contacted once for a response in relation to their premises throughout Wales, to avoid duplication and effort. They recognised that the general public did use their toilet facilities when not necessarily making a purchase. This was accepted, noting many will be regular or future customers to their store or eating/entertainment venue. The retailers contacted did not wish to have the national toilet logo on display at their entrances.
- 12.4 Environmental Health Officers will conduct checks of toilets provided for the public as part of their inspection regime. Members of the public can complain to them, **or via our local Hubs**, should they have any concerns regarding cleaning, facilities and overall hygiene.
- 12.5 Monmouthshire is fortunate to host a number of highly successful events throughout the county, including food and music festivals, sporting events, agricultural shows, etc. Monmouthshire Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG) provides advice and guidance on toilet provision, including numbers, types of facilities, access and overall suitability.

## **13. Mapping locations of publicly accessible toilets**

- 13.1 One element of the strategy is to accurately map information on location of public toilets, together with facilities available and opening times. Locations will be promoted via a 'mapping app' specifically designed for mobile technology. Participating premises will display a nationally agreed sticker in a prominent place. The design, stipulated by Welsh Government, is as follows –



# Toiled Toilet

- 13.2 The Monmouthshire public toilet information has been shared with Welsh Government to enable a national spatial map of public toilets throughout Wales to be created. **The link to the national site is as follows –**

[New map | DataMapWales \(gov.wales\)](#)

- 13.3 The dataset is available in both English and Welsh. The public are able to search the data as it appears on this site, to see the whole of Wales or focus on particular areas. Monmouthshire CC will embed the locally configured map onto its website, and provide a link to the national toilet map, assisting anyone searching data for other areas they might be visiting. The map is also available here –

[Public access to toilets in Monmouthshire - Monmouthshire](#)

- 13.4 **This Authority will soon be able to input and edit data ourselves and, in so doing, be able to keep all information up-to-date, ie. locations, opening hours and facilities provided at each site.**

## **14. FINDINGS of public survey/other**

### **14.1 MCC survey – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018 to 11<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

- 14.1.1. The survey to gauge public opinion ran between 19th December and 11th January 2019. The low response rate, at 132 completed surveys, could be in part due to no announcement of any public toilet closures.

- 14.1.2 The majority of the responses were from people from Abergavenny, at 61% of the total. Responses by area were as follows –

Abergavenny – 61%

Monmouth - 12%

Chepstow - 8%

Caldicot - 5%

Other - 14%

- 14.1.3 People were asked what they thought about the current provision, in the area they most frequent, in terms of adequacy, accessibility, cleanliness, etc. and responses are provided below –

**Table One**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Don't Know</b>
There are too few facilities	39 (32%)	41(34%)	21 (17%)	2 (2%)	19 (15%)
The location of facilities is not convenient	27(21%)	40(31%)	36(28%)	1(1%)	25 (19%)
The location of the facilities does not feel safe	4 (4%)	32 (37%)	45 (47%)	3 (3%)	11 (9%)
There is not enough information on where facilities are located	37 (32%)	43 (37%)	13 (11%)	1 (1%)	22 (19%)
The lack of facilities has stopped me from visiting certain locations	14 (9%)	33 (22%)	38 (26%)	37 (25%)	26 (18%)
Facilities are not open at the times I need them	12 (10%)	32 (27%)	39 (33%)	4 (4%)	31 (26%)
The cleanliness of facilities is generally good	4 (2%)	52 (44%)	31 (26%)	18 (15%)	16 (13%)
Toilets should be free to use	61 (51%)	34 (28%)	8 (7%)	1 (1%)	16 (13%)
I don't like using toilets in shops or restaurants because I feel like I need to buy something	59 (50%)	33 (28%)	11 (8%)	1 (1%)	15 (13%)

14.1.4 In summary, of those responding –

- 80% thought there were too few facilities
- 52% stated locations not convenient
- 41% not feeling safe, (50% safe)
- 69% wanted more information on location
- 31% lack of adequate facilities, (51% satisfied)
- 37% believed not open at times needed, (36% satisfied)
- 46% satisfied with cleanliness, (41% disagreed)
- 79% believed toilets should be free to use, (only 8% disagreed)

- 78% weren't comfortable using private toilets where they weren't a customer

14.1.5 Further pertinent points captured were as follows –

- 55% reporting using Council public toilets, 39% private, 6% those in other MCC property, such as Leisure Centres
- 73% thought provision adequate between 9am and 6pm
- Baby changing facilities, across public and private toilets, inadequate 48%, adequate 42%, with people reporting private provision better (81%) than public (21%)
- 67% considered disabled provision in public and private toilets inadequate
- When asked about good facilities, Brewery Yard, Abergavenny got some praise, and many in private sector, notably major supermarkets
- When asked about poor facilities, Whitehorse Lane, Abergavenny came in for most criticism. **Shut since March 2020 and decision needed (Landlord Services) as to its' future.**
- Some thought there was no toilet in Bailey Park, although there is with limited opening times.
- 64% would like to see a sticker or poster to show where public toilet facilities are available, with 27% saying an App would be helpful.

14.1.6 Most frequent comments referred to –

- Cleanliness
- Lack of information on opening hours
- Ideally there is investment to improve existing public blocks
- Not enough baby changing facilities
- More toilets desirable

14.1.7 When asked for thoughts for the future, 40% suggested private providers should encourage non-customers to use their toilets; 36% suggested closing certain public blocks to utilise funding to better maintain those that continue; and 23% suggested MCC seek further investment to improve existing provision across the county.

14.1.8 The information gathered can be utilised in forthcoming conversations with T&CC's, Gwent Police and others when planning future provision.

## **14.2 Member comments, February 2019**

14.2.1 Three Councillors, together with our Facilities Supervisor, undertook a survey of the public toilet blocks on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2019. 18 were visited, both those owned by this Authority and those owned and managed by Town & Community Councils. Their overall summation referred to (1) standards of cleaning generally satisfactory when MCC providing the service, (2) condition of fabric requires attention in a number of blocks,

both MCC and T&CC managed, (3) emergency alarms in disabled toilets not working in 17 of the 18 visited, (4) signage often missing or inadequate. Members asked for a full 'condition survey' of all toilet blocks by the Council's Property Services section. This was undertaken in April 2019, see 14.4 below.

#### 14.2.2

The initial draft strategy was presented to a Special Strong Communities Select committee on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019. As well as Members confirming the poor condition of some of the blocks, (eg. Caldicot Country Park), other comments were made as follows –

- Both reactive (broken panels, etc.) and proactive spending needed to provide facilities of a suitable and safe standard. Property Services to prioritise maintenance work in MCC toilet blocks
- Like to see the £17,200 one-off WG grant put towards repair costs
- Need to research the effectiveness of 'blue lights' in public toilets, eg. drug users could revert to using mobile phone lighting to locate veins
- Helpful if, on receipt of all the Welsh toilet strategies, Welsh Government gave guidance on recommended numbers relating to average footfall in towns and other areas of public use
- Further to this, could some 'grading system' be introduced to ensure suitable standards are maintained? If nothing nationally, potentially MCC could introduce their own rating system.
- Strategy needs to be brought to attention of other organisations, namely **Bannau Brycheiniog** National Park and Welsh Government, (WG). WG have a vested interest as providers of trunk roads, including the heads of the valleys A465, and their historic environment service, CADW. The Road Haulers Association have raised the difficulty of inadequate toilet provision across the trunk road network, which should be an important issue for WG.
- Noting drug paraphernalia (14.6.3), concerns expressed re MCC cleaning staff exposed to this, plus issue that staff work on their own increasing risk.
- A strategy to 'audit progress' over time helpful, particularly noting Monmouthshire is a major tourist destination.
- Pre-decision scrutiny on 21<sup>st</sup> May reaffirmed these points. Of particular note was the desire to ensure the recommendations of this strategy are effectively implemented. The Officer/Member group – two Members were nominated by the Strong Communities Select committee – will be charged in overseeing the recommendations. **Noting our new Administration, since May 2022, Members to consider whether they want to form a small Officer/Member working group.**

#### 14.2.3

A Member of the Committee asked 'Access for All', local disability group, for their view on emergency alarms in disabled toilets. This request was made further to deficiencies noted during site visits on 7<sup>th</sup> February. A representative commented on common faults concerning emergency alarms, (pull cords too high, incorrect location of cords, missing toggles), and installations not checked regularly. Reference

was also made to Approved Document M, Section 5 'Sanitary accommodation in buildings other than dwellings', which providers need to have regard to when providing disabled accessible public toilets.

14.2.4 The Chair of the Committee and Head of Public Protection met with the 'Access For All' representative on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019 to capture their observations. Two visits to public toilets were undertaken to use a proforma used for disabled facilities. This proved very useful and will be taken forward when regular, routine inspections are undertaken by MCC.

### **14.3 Public consultation comments**

14.3.1 Further to the public survey, another opportunity to comment was afforded via public consultation. This ran from 22 February to 3 May 2019. The Cabinet Member for Public Protection was informed of progress of the draft strategy, noting it going to Individual Cabinet Member Decision for approval prior to adoption.

14.3.2 Most comments, from Town and Community Councils, related to points of accuracy, eg. opening times, and a couple being unclear on the £1,200 annual grant from MCC towards running costs. These were referred to **Communities & Place** Finance section. It is assumed most satisfied with the recommendations noting no adverse comments recorded.

14.3.3 Abergavenny Town Council provided the most detailed comments, including –

- MCC will need to determine a mechanism to ensure improvements to those public blocks owned by Town & Community Councils or others
- Further regard is needed towards families and those with more profound disabilities
- Noting problems with anti-social behaviour in Abergavenny, Town Council happy to assist in seeking solutions with partners
- The strategy is light on coping with future demand, noting aging population
- Supports some form of grading system for the county

### **14.4 MCC Property Services condition survey, April 2019 & subsequent surveys by Environmental Health**

14.4.1 At Strong Communities Select Committee on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2019, Members asked for a condition survey to be undertaken. The Authority's Property Services section was notified accordingly and a survey of 18 public toilet blocks was undertaken in April 2019.

14.4.2 A 77 page report was received on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019, outlining their findings. Going forward, the recommended small Officer/Member working group



can analyse the detail and share specific findings with the owners of these facilities, noting many are owned by Town and Community Councils or other bodies.

- 14.4.3 A summary of the Property Services assessment in 2019 is provided in **Table Two**, column 1. **The financial year when the toilets were refurbished by Property Services is provided in column 2.** **Environmental Health subsequently visited the blocks again in 2020, 2022 and 2023, columns 3, 4 and 5 -**

**Table Two**

	<b>Apr '19 Property Services</b>	<b>Property Services Refurbishment Year</b>	<b>Feb '20 Environmental Health</b>	<b>Aug '22 Env Health</b>	<b>Sept '23 Env Health</b>
<b>A. MCC owned public toilets</b>					
1. Abergavenny Bus Station	C	20/21	Good	Fair	Good
2. Abergavenny – Castle Street	B	22/23	Good	Good	Excellent
3. Abergavenny – Brewery Yard	A	23/24	Excellent	Good	Excellent
4. Abergavenny – Bailey Park	B	23/24	CLOSED	CLOSED	CLOSED
5. Abergavenny- Linda Vista Gardens	/		/	/	Excellent
6. Caldicot – Caldicot Country Park	C	19/20	Excellent	Excellent	Good
7. Monmouth – Cattle Market	B	17/18	Good	Good	Fair
8. Usk – Maryport Street	B	21/22	Good	Good	Excellent
9. Usk – Usk Island	C	22/23	Good	Excellent	Good
<b>B T &amp; CC owned public toilets</b>					
10. Caerwent	C		Excellent	Good	Excellent
11. Caldicot – Jubilee Way	B		Excellent	Good	Fair
12. Chepstow – Welsh Street	B		Excellent	Fair	Good
13. Chepstow – Castle Dell/TIC	B	23/24	Excellent	Excellent	Good

14. Chepstow – Riverside	C	23/24	Good	Fair	<b>CLOSED (refurb)</b>
15. Gilwern	B		Good	Good	Excellent
16. Goytre	B		Good	Good	Good
17. Monmouth – Agincourt Street	C	21/22	Good	Good	Good
18. Tintern	C	23/24	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

14.4.4 Table Two can be summarised –

At the last inspections, MCC facilities were rated as 4 excellent, 3 good and 1 fair. 4 went up, 3 went down.

T&CC facilities were rated as 3 excellent, 4 good and 1 fair. 3 went up, 3 the same, one down.

Of the 16 surveyed September 2023, 14 of the 16 were judged good or excellent, 88% of total. Only 2 were deemed 'fair', so a slight improvement on the previous year, (81% good or excellent).

14.4.5 All T&CC's were notified of the survey results together with requesting their support, as public toilet providers, for the 'Boys Need Bins' campaign.

#### 14.5 Abergavenny Town Council (ATC) survey, 2018

14.5.1 The Projects committee of ATC conducted their own assessment of public toilet provision in Abergavenny, and reported their findings in September 2018. Their public survey generated 355 responses.

14.5.2 The survey identified Brewery Yard as the most frequently used, followed by White Horse Lane, the bus station and Castle Street. Castle Street and the Bus Station facilities were judged the best for cleanliness, White Horse Lane the worst. Overall, over 50% considered the Abergavenny toilets well presented, generally clean although basic.

14.5.3 Regarding potential improvements, 31% thought ATC should increase the precept to fund improvements, 18% selected 'close one of the blocks and invest saved money to improve the remaining', 16% suggested charging.

14.5.4 When asked for further comments, most referred to Abergavenny being a tourist town so should have decent toilets, anti-social behaviour stemming from toilets, a need for upgrading and the importance of adequate provision for those with different medical conditions.

14.5.5 A Town Councillor inspected the four toilet blocks in August 2018 and commented "The cleaners have an unenviable task ... Graffiti and mess has to be removed from surfaces, needles retrieved from the

floor, basins, toilets and bins, and all sorts of strewn around detritus cleared up.”

- 14.5.6 Three recommendations were put to ATC, in readiness for 19/20, being (i) retain the status quo, (ii) close one block (White Horse Lane being preferred), (iii) introduce a small charge for usage, and consider whether toilets remain in MCC ownership or transfer to ATC.
- 14.5.7 Noting MCC retains ownership of the toilet blocks, together with the joint priority of promoting tourism, having thriving town centres, etc. dialogue will continue between ATC and MCC on the best options going forward.

#### **14.6 Gwent Police comments**

- 14.6.1 Police colleagues reported anti-social behaviour, notably drug taking, in public toilets in Abergavenny and Monmouth. They have made representation to the Town Councils affected, to request closure of public toilets, including disabled facilities, by early evening (17.00 was suggested) to prevent anyone seeking to sell or take drugs doing so from public conveniences.
- 14.6.2 Specifically drug activity was reported at Whitehorse Lane, Abergavenny, Agincourt Street, Monmouth and Cattle market (Blestium Street), Monmouth. Police have included these sites in their regular PCSO patrols. Two prosecutions were taken before Christmas 2018 for possession of Class A drugs in Abergavenny.
- 14.6.3 Cleaning crews, since December 2018, have started recording the number of syringes and other drug paraphernalia, to establish the extent of the problem. Both Gwent Police and MCC Cleansing report a steady increase in recent years.
- 14.6.4 Solutions will be discussed through ‘Problem Solving Groups’ between MCC Officers, Emergency Services and any others with an interest. Another aid might be to ‘blue light’ public toilets, whereby drug users cannot see veins thereby making conveniences less attractive.
- 14.6.5 There are also health and safety considerations to consider, both for Police and MCC Cleaning personnel, visiting toilets with drug paraphernalia.
- 14.6.6 Gwent Police would wish to be included in any conversations about future provision in our towns, noting their involvement in crime and anti-social behaviour reduction. In the meantime they will continue to seek to arrest for any illegal drug use. They recognise most toilets are now provided by T&CC’s so will continue dialogue with facility providers.

15.

## Actions

### **Monmouthshire CC will –**

1. Continue to work closely with Town & Community Councils on options for maintaining and improving public toilet provision in the county. **On-going, regular dialogue with T&C colleagues, eg. suggested improvements and associated costs.**
2. Give particular focus on ensuring public toilets provided for disabled persons are suitable and safe. **Six 'Changing Places' facilities now available across the county. Our 4 Leisure Centres can be listed on the national 'Changing Places' website, to direct more profoundly disabled persons to suitable facilities. Improvements made to disabled toilets 23/24 and working towards 'stoma-friendly' status.**
3. Work with partners on how to best utilise the £17,200 Welsh Government grant. **£17,200 vired to Landlord Services in 2023/24.**
4. Work with the private sector to seek to provide more publicly available toilets where most needed. **On-going, no unmet need currently identified.**
5. Display the national 'toilet/toiled' national logo (see 13.1) in all participating toilet facilities, including Leisure Centres, libraries, etc. **Undertake in 2024/25, though noting limitations on suitable areas to display the logo.**
6. Improve awareness and information available on publicly accessible toilets by updating information on the Monmouthshire CC website and open access data held by Welsh Government, together with App development. **Data Map Wales has provided all public toilet provision across Wales. This provides information on location, opening times and facilities available.**
7. Regularly review cleaning and maintenance standards, together with T&CC's who typically manage the public toilets in our towns and villages. **MCC Landlord Services have an annual repair schedule agreed every March. Cleaning reviewed by MCC Facilities and MCC Environmental Health.**
8. Environmental Health Officers to inspect both public and privately provided toilets as part of their inspection regime. Provide a grading of public toilet blocks to determine progress over time. **Done, Table Two.**
9. Work closely with Gwent Police to find solutions to reduce anti-social behaviour associated with public toilets. **On-going, to revisit noting changes to Gwent Police personnel.**
10. Work with other agencies with an interest in suitable and hygienic provision, including Welsh Government, CADW and **Bannau Brycheiniog** National Park Authority. **On-going.**
11. Provide proactive advice to all event organisers in the county on the suitability of their toilet provision. **On-going. All organised events in county receive information on suitable toilet provision, noting numbers attending, type of clientele, etc.**
12. Respond to any Welsh Government recommendations on public toilet provision and seek out notable practice adopted in other

counties. A 'rating scheme' would be welcomed. Any WG guidance awaited. MCC have introduced their own rating scheme in the interim.

13. Ensure Changing Places facilities in MCC Leisure Centres entered onto the national database, together with photographs and details of provision, (MonLife).
14. Review sanitary bins in all publicly available toilets to ensure adequate provision – for availability to ladies, men and disabled persons – and support the 'Bins for Boys' campaign.
15. Provide stickers to advise of 'stoma-friendly' toilets where standards achieved.
16. Landlord Services to revisit Service Level Agreements with Town & Community Council public toilet providers, to ensure both parties clear on responsibilities.

## CURRENT PROVISION of publicly accessible toilets -

Area	Address	Postcode
<b><u>1. MCC owned public toilets</u></b>		
1. Abergavenny	Bus station, Swan Meadow, Abergavenny,	NP7 5HL
2. Abergavenny	Castle Street, Abergavenny	NP7 5EE
3. Abergavenny	Whitehorse Lane, Abergavenny* Closed since April 2020	NP7 5AS
4. Abergavenny	Brewery Yard, Abergavenny	NP7 5SD
5. Abergavenny	Bailey Park, Abergavenny Open weekends & summer holidays	NP7 5PW
6. Abergavenny	Linda Vista Gardens	NP7 5DL
7. Caldicot	Caldicot Country Park, Caldicot	NP26 4HU
8. Monmouth	Cattle Market, Monnow Street, Monmouth	NP25 3EG
9. Usk	Maryport, Maryport Street, Usk	NP15 1RW
10. Usk	Usk Island, Pontypool Rd, Usk	NP15 1SY
<b><u>2. Town &amp; Community Council public toilets</u></b>		
11. Caerwent	Main Road, Caerwent	NP26 5BA

12. Caldicot	Jubilee Way Car Park, Caldicot	NP26 4BG
13. Chepstow	Welsh Street, Chepstow	NP16 5JA
14. Chepstow	Castle Dell Car Park, (TIC), Chepstow	NP16 5EY
15. Chepstow	Riverside, Upper Church Street	NP16 5HU
16. Gilwern	Crickhowell Road, Gilwern	NP7 0DE
17. Goytre	School Lane, Goytre	NP4 0BL
18. Grosmont	Rear of Town Hall, Grosmont	NP15 2AU
19. Monmouth	Agincourt Street, Monmouth	NP25 3DZ

**3. Public Toilets in other MCC buildings**

20. Abergavenny	Leisure Centre, Old Hereford Road, Abergavenny	NP7 6EP
21. Abergavenny	Museum, Castle Street, Abergavenny	NP7 5EE
22. Abergavenny	Hub/library, Town Hall, Abergavenny	NP7 5HD
23. Caldicot	Leisure Centre, Green Lane, Caldicot	NP26 4BN
24. Caldicot	Caldicot Castle, (April 1 - Oct 31st only)	NP26 4HU
25. Caldicot	Community Hub, Caldicot	NP26 5DB
26. Chepstow	Leisure Centre, Welsh Street, Chepstow	NP16 5LR
27. Chepstow	Community Hub, Bank Street, Chepstow	NP16 5HZ
28. Chepstow	Museum, Bridge Street, Chepstow	NP16 5EZ
29. Gilwern	Library, Upper Common, Gilwern	NP7 0DS
30. Monmouth	Shire Hall, Agincourt Square, Monmouth	NP25 3DY
31. Monmouth	Leisure Centre, Old Dixton Road, Monmouth	NP25 3DP
32. Monmouth	Museum, Priory Street, Monmouth	NP25 3XA
33. Monmouth	Community Hub, The Rolls Hall, Monmouth	NP25 3BY

34. Tintern	Old Station, Tintern (April 1 - Oct 31st only)	NP16 7NX
35. Usk	Community Hub, 35 Maryport Street, Usk	NP15 1AE

**4. Other publicly accessible toilets**

36. Tintern	Tintern Abbey, Tintern – CADW owned, (leased to MCC)	NP16 6SE
37. Llanfoist	Friends of Llanfoist Chapel, New Cemetery, Llanfoist Refurbished 22/23	NP7 9LF
38. Monmouth	Bridges Centre, Drybridge Park, Monmouth	NP25 5AS

**Note** – Unique Property Reference Numbers (UPRN's) submitted to WG 1/2/19, together with Welsh version. Above list detailed with opening hours and facilities available at each facility. Full details on opening hours for each site available here –

[Public access to toilets in Monmouthshire - Monmouthshire](#)

**Informing this revised strategy -**

Original Local Toilet Strategy published June 2019

Local Toilet Strategy Review January 2023, scrutiny via Place Committee 12.1.23, and earlier scrutiny by the former Strong Communities Committee.

**March 2024**