

## APPENDIX 2

Powys County Council

Local Toilet Strategy



Consultation Report  
22<sup>nd</sup> January – 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019

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## Background

Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 (Provision of Toilets) came into force on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2018 and placed the responsibility on local authorities in Wales 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.

The Powys Local Toilet Strategy has been prepared, reviewed, consulted, and published showing due regard to the five ways of working, as set out in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The strategy has been prepared following the principles of co-production, as a wide range of potential user groups, providers and other stakeholders have been engaged with as part of its creation.

## Early Engagement

Powys County Council conducted a pre-strategy data gathering exercise and consultation in late 2018 to capture data around the current toilet provision across the county and find out about residents needs and views on said current provision. Over 130 responses were received to an online survey and feedback gathered from town and community councils and other community groups who took over responsibility for public toilet provision from the local authority a few years ago. A series of focus groups were also held to capture views from residents who may be more likely to need access to a public toilet e.g. parents with young children, parents of children with disabilities, older people and carers of people with long term health conditions. These sessions meant views from a further 50+ stakeholders were captured. All these views and data fed into the draft strategy.

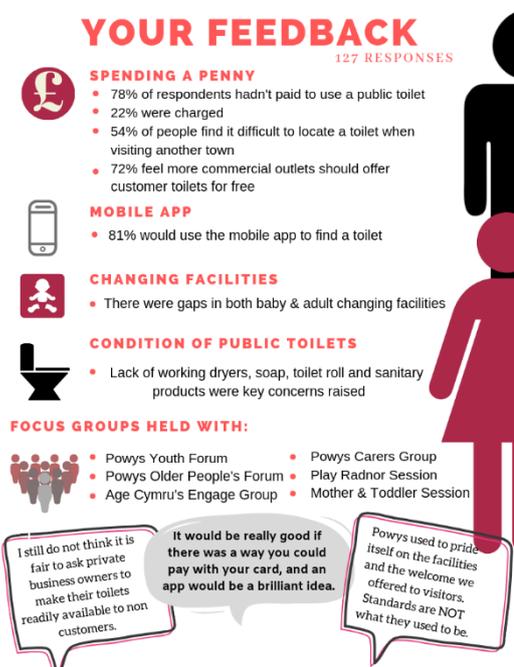


Figure 1: Key findings from the early engagement activities.

## Consultation

The draft strategy was developed and launched for a 12-week statutory public consultation starting on 22 January 2019. The consultation closed on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019 and sought views from interested parties and providers around two key things – the accuracy of the data listed about toilet provision in the county and the 22 actions set out in the strategy to improve provision going forward.

Two press releases were issued to the local media during the period – both received coverage in the majority of the papers and news websites that operate in the county.

In total, the survey only attracted views from 34 respondents. Four of these were from the larger town and community councils in the county.

Alongside this a further eleven responses were received either via email or letter. Four of these were from town and community councils, one from the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority and another from CADW - the Welsh Government's historic environment service working for an

accessible and well-protected historic environment for Wales. The remaining comments were either from residents or from officers working in other parts of the local authority.

The council's Economy, Residents, Communities and Governance Scrutiny Committee also sought to consider the draft strategy. The committee met on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to discuss the draft version with lead officers in attendance to explain the process, clarify any points or concerns and listen to Scrutiny members' feedback. The comments given by members are included in this report.

In publicising the strategy on the council's social media platforms during the 12-week consultation period, over 37 comments were received from residents and the posts were shared 30 times on Facebook. Our Twitter posts had several likes and shares. News agencies also re-tweeted the topic including the Oswestry & Border Chronicle, the County Times, Builth Wells Online and Elgan Hearn – the BBC Local Democracy reporter for the county.

The majority of the comments made via social media were not specific to the actions listed in the strategy per se or correcting information about toilet provision but were more generic.

A few respondents felt the council should run all public toilets rather than seeking others to do so and there were comments about improved signage to help people locate publicly accessible toilets.

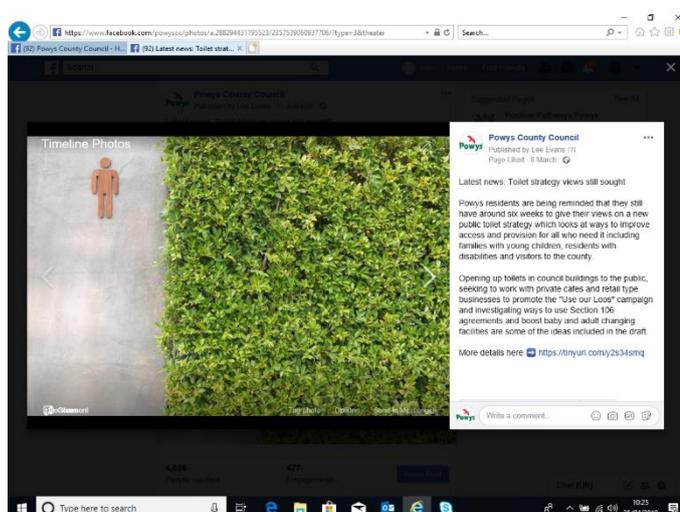


Figure 2: A screenshot from the social media posts.

## Report Format

This report firstly highlights the key findings from the survey.

It then includes a table listing all the key issues arising from all the comments received during the 12-week consultation period and how the council plans to respond to these.

The feedback given will be used to amend and finalise the strategy so it can be published in accordance with the Welsh Government legislation.

## Key Survey Findings

- Five comments were given regarding inaccurate data. These related to toilets in five towns - Welshpool, Llangors, Ystradgynlais, Brecon, and Rhayader.
- There were seven responses supplying additional information about toilets in the county. These related to toilets in Crickhowell, Presteigne, Welshpool, Brecon, Newtown, and Rhayader.
- There was additional information provided about toilets not currently listed. This related to a new Changing Places toilet facility planned for Welshpool.
- Twenty-two actions were listed in the strategy and respondents asked to read them and then comment on six generic statements. Twenty-three respondents felt that the actions listed in the strategy were good overall, with four disagreeing and six stating they had no real opinion or view.

- Twenty-two respondents felt the actions were deliverable and realistic, five did not think so and six had no opinion.
- Eighteen respondents felt that provision would improve because of the actions listed in the strategy; ten did not think this would happen and four had no view.
- Twenty respondents agreed that they could see that views expressed around Changing Places in the earlier consultation exercise had been taken on board within the strategy, eight did not feel this way and six had no opinion on this issue.
- Twenty-three respondents agreed that they could see that views expressed around baby changing facilities given by respondents to the earlier consultation were considered and incorporated into the draft strategy. Four people were not convinced they could see evidence of this and six again had no view.
- Twenty-eight of the thirty-three who answered the final statement agreed that working with other providers should be a key priority for the council. Only one person disagreed with this statement whilst four said they had no view.
- Eighteen respondents went on to give additional views on the strategy. These related to various issues including:
  - Due regard to and consideration of both our ageing population and the need to consider where people with long-term health conditions live in relation to provision of accessible public toilets.
  - Changing Places being recognised as an important requirement and facility for adults with disabilities.
  - Requests for clarification around business rates and the Council's ability to support exemptions for toilet providers and requests to lobby the Welsh Government to ensure those providing toilets were exempt from business rates.
  - A suggestion to develop a paid-for type Radar key for any interested resident so they could access toilets out of hours etc.
  - To install compost/soak away toilets for cyclists and other people travelling through the county using our trunk roads.
- Overall, the strategy was ranked as either excellent or good. 17 out of 32 respondents rated it. However, 11 felt it was average, three stated that it was poor, and one person felt it was very poor.
- Where people had rated it somewhere between average and very poor they were asked to comment further. 14 out of the 15 people did so. Their comments were generally around the strategy being irrelevant if there was no funding to support any of the actions, that Changing Places and baby changing facilities were important for the county but expensive to install and maintain and that more toilets were needed on our main roads into the county.
- There was also a call for town and community councils who are currently operating a large percentage of public toilets in the county to be invited to a meeting with the council going forward to develop the project.
- In terms of who responded to the survey, 12 respondents were male and 18 female. One person had stated that they were gender neutral. The remaining three respondents had not given any details.
- In terms of age profile, seven respondents were under the age of 45; 15 aged between 45 – 64 and eight over the age of 65.
- In terms of the stakeholder profile, nine had a long-term health condition, two were disabled, five were parents of young children, two were peripatetic workers and someone who had no work base and travelled around the county. One person stated that she had a

severely disabled nephew and was responding with a particular view around Changing Places.

The table on the next page sets out all the issues raised by those responding to the consultation whether as respondents to the survey or via email or as a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

Each issue is listed and then the council response is noted in the right hand column.

## Summary Feedback Table and Council Response

Issue	Response
<p><b>Inaccurate data regarding current toilet provision</b></p> <p>i) <b>Rhayader Leisure Centre and Library</b> toilets – not clear if open to public</p> <p>ii) Ystradgynlais toilets in <b>Station Road</b> – listed but no detail given.</p> <p>iii) <b>Langors</b> toilets – being rebuilt.</p> <p>iv) Brecon <b>Market Hall</b> and <b>Promenade</b> toilets – baby-changing facilities in both. Unmapped query re- Market Hall.</p> <p>v) Welshpool – <b>Berriew Street, Church Street and Town Hall</b> – disabled and baby changing in all.</p> <p>vi) Presteigne – Baby-changing facilities are in the Ladies toilets in <b>Hereford Street</b>.</p>	<p>Noted. Addressed in Action 1.2.</p> <p>Contact made with Local Member to clarify details.</p> <p>Noted and data amended.</p> <p>Noted and data amended.</p> <p>Noted and data amended.</p> <p>Noted and data amended.</p>
<p><b>Additional data regarding toilet provision – opening times, other toilets not listed etc</b></p> <p>i) <b>Crickhowell Leisure Centre</b> toilets – not open during school hours</p> <p>ii) Presteigne – <b>Wilson Terrace</b> toilets – only open in summer months.</p> <p>iii) Presteigne – <b>Library and Assembly Rooms</b> – only open when either venue is open.</p> <p>iv) Newtown – <b>Back Lane and The Gravel</b> – independent RADAR key to a unisex PC and baby changing facilities in a separate room at both locations.</p>	<p>Noted and data amended.</p> <p>Listed as such but noted.</p> <p>Noted and data amended.</p> <p>Noted and data amended.</p>

v) Welshpool – A Changing Places toilet is to be installed in the <b>Town Hall</b> during summer 2019.	Noted and data to be updated as appropriate.
vi) Welshpool - <b>Church Street Toilets</b> <i>Male toilets, female toilets, disabled toilets, baby changing facilities, night toilets. Main toilets open 9am until dusk, night toilets open when main ones closed. 24 hour opening 7 days a week all year around.</i>	Noted and data amended.
vii) Welshpool - <b>Berriew Street Toilets</b> <i>Male toilets, female toilets, disabled toilets, baby changing facilities, night toilets. Main toilets open 9am until dusk, night toilets open when main ones closed. 24 hour opening 7 days a week all year around.</i>	Noted, and data checked and updated.
viii) Welshpool - <b>Town Hall Market Toilets.</b> <i>Male toilets, female toilets and disabled toilets. Open 9am to 4pm Monday to Saturdays.</i>	Noted and data updated.
ix) As a predominantly rural Council, we have no public toilets and do not feel we need one ( <b>Bausley &amp; Criggion Community Council</b> ).	Noted.
x) The Scrutiny Committee noted that Changing Place facilities were important and that the National Trust were looking to implement such a facility at <b>Storey Arms</b> .	Noted.
xi) Y Gaer to have a Changing Places facility.	Noted.
<p><b>Cwmdu, Re- opening of closed toilets</b></p> <p>Concerned about the closure of the toilets located on the A479. A children's play area is directly behind this building and people have been seen using the back of the building as an outside toilet thus causing a health hazard. Would welcome advice on how Community Councils can keep these toilets open?</p>	Noted. Addressed as part of Actions 3.1, 7.1 and 8.1.

<p><b>Welshpool, toilet provision in retail premises</b></p> <p>More toilet provision should be made available particularly for disabled persons and baby changing facilities. These facilities are important to enable people to live independently.</p>	<p>Retail providers are able to offer facilities to the public as they see fit. Addressed as part of Actions 1.6, 2.3, 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6.</p>
<p><b>Business Rates Exemptions</b></p> <p>Reassurance and support required for TCCs/community groups providing toilets across the county to continue to be exempt from business rates. Several comments seeking Welsh Government lobbying and continued exemptions to ensure long-term viability of toilet provision.</p>	<p>Additional action (9.1) added to the Powys Local Toilet Strategy, To write to the Welsh Government on this issue to ensure continued and additional support for toilet providers.</p>
<p><b>Changing Places</b></p> <p>Calls for more Changing Places to be established across the county.</p>	<p>Noted. Addressed as part of Actions 2.1 and 2.2.</p>
<p><b>Demographics, long-term health conditions and ageing population</b></p> <p>Use of data held regarding resident population projections, ageing population and long-term health conditions to plan best provision for Powys. E.g., Ystradgynlais has more residents with long-term health conditions than elsewhere in the county. Cross reference data with provision need.</p>	<p>Noted. The Council has a Business Intelligence Team who collate data from a variety of sources, and will be able to do so and provide intelligence of this type to help ensure the strategy and action plan is progressed in accordance with needs.</p> <p>The issue of social isolation for the elderly/infirm due to a lack of public toilets will be raised with the Portfolio Holder for Adults and the Head of Adult Services.</p>
<p><b>Lack of funding and signage</b></p> <p>How can Powys deliver when there are no resources to progress the actions listed in the strategy?</p> <p>How will the Council update the strategy in two years' time when there are no adequate resources identified?</p>	<p>Noted. Addressed as part of Actions 1.1, 1.2, 1.5, 1.6, 2.1, 3.1, 3.2 and 7.2.</p> <p>The strategy was written in addition to officers' regular duties, and it is not clear what resources will be available in two years' time.</p>

<p><b>PCC Position on funding support to Town and Community Councils</b></p> <p>The Council provided a grant for 5 years to Town and Community Councils to keep toilets open. The likelihood was that if the grant ceased then toilets would be closed. Has the Council done anything to review the toilets currently closed which are still in the Council's ownership?</p>	<p>Noted. Five conveniences were closed and 56 transferred (49 to Town and Community Councils).</p> <p>Some facilities, which have been closed, are being used for other purposes, and the Strategic Asset Board are looking at current vacant properties.</p>
<p><b>Removal of grant funding.</b></p> <p>Is the issue of toilets potentially being closed if grants cease included on a risk register? If some individuals are unlikely to go out if they are elderly or infirm due to a lack of toilets, is there a cost for social inclusion / care due to isolation?</p>	<p>The Highways Service will be asked to consider including, the possible closure of public toilets operated by community groups and Town/Community Councils on its service risk register.</p>
<p><b>Partnership working.</b></p> <p>The council has drafted a strategy. To deliver it, input and co-operation of all providers is necessary. Request for a meeting to bring everyone together on this project.</p>	<p>Noted. There is a recognition that the council has a key role to play in co-ordinating and creating an ongoing dialogue with providers so there is genuine involvement of all parties to ensure there is sufficient provision in Powys for residents and visitors. The purpose of the consultation was to seek input and views such as this. A meeting will be established as requested once the strategy is finalised.</p>
<p><b>Trunk Road Toilets</b></p> <p>Our trunk roads have limited toilet facilities. Is there scope to consider composting toilets or soak away toilets for those visiting or travelling through Powys whether cyclists or families in cars.</p> <p>Llanfair Caereinion is on the trunk road. Grants were provided to Town and Community Councils to keep toilets open on the trunk road. Will these grants continue?</p>	<p>The ideas are noted and if resources or grants become available, these types of provision could be considered.</p> <p>The grant comes in via the transport grant to the Council annually. The Portfolio Holder for Highways to write to Welsh Government seeking assurances about the continuation of the grant.</p>
<p><b>RADAR Type Key for all</b></p> <p>Suggestion for development of a RADAR type key that anyone can purchase and use when toilets are closed at night.</p>	<p>The idea is noted. If resources or grants become available, this could be considered or progressed.</p>

<p><b>Finding a toilet and use of a mobile phone application/signage</b></p> <p>Not everyone has a smartphone to access the app; there is also a lack of Wi-Fi in areas. Does the app also show if there is a cost to use the toilet or not? Welsh Government have asked for this information, will they ask for it again?</p>	<p>Noted. Addressed as part of Actions 1.2 and 1.3. The data held by Welsh Government does include information about charges. Welsh Government are likely to ask for this data again and the Council has to review the strategy again in 2 years.</p> <p>How the Council will gather the information without the resource to do so will be an issue.</p>
<p><b>Tourism Links</b></p> <p>Natural links re – tourism/TIC and information around public toilet provision.</p> <p>The need for facilities for tourists and commuters was highlighted. In some areas there is a lack of facilities impacting negatively on residents, visitors and dissuades some potential visitors.</p> <p>There could be potential for PCC, BBNPA and NRW (Natural Resources Wales) to work together to improve the number of toilets available in the southern corner of Powys</p>	<p>Noted. There will be scope to provide links from tourism websites to the mobile app etc. once it goes live to support those planning to visit the county.</p> <p>PCC, BBNPA, and NRW are all members of the Public Service Board. It will be requested that the Powys Local Toilet Strategy is an agenda item for discussion at the PSB.</p>
<p><b>Facilities for transgender residents.</b></p> <p>There is a need for facilities that will meet the needs of transgender residents.</p>	<p>Noted. Action 2.3 amended/strengthened to include the provision of gender-neutral facilities.</p>

## Conclusion

Although small in number, the survey responses provide some useful insights from respondents who have particular needs as listed above.

Alongside the views given in the earlier engagement exercise the strategy has been considered by a fairly small but arguably representative sample of residents who may be more in need to access to a public toilet than the majority. These respondents have given their views and helped to share the strategy further.

Alongside this gaining additional information around toilet, provision from town and community councils and other community groups will help ensure the final strategy is updated and as accurate as possible when published.