Assessing the Impact on the Characteristics of Equality, the Welsh language and Socio-Economic Disadvantage

See the leaflet *How to make an Equality Impact Assessment* for help to complete this form. You are also welcome to contact Delyth Williams, Policy and Equality Officer on ext. 32708 or DelythGadlysWilliams@gwynedd.llyw.cymru, for further assistance.

The Council is required (under the Equality Act 2010) to consider the impact any changes in any policy or procedures (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on people with protected equality characteristics. The Council also has additional general duties to ensure fairness and to foster good relationships. Therefore, a timely Equality Impact Assessment should be made before any decision is taken on any relevant change (i.e. that affects people with protected equality characteristics).

The Council is also required, under the requirements of Welsh Language Standards (Section 44 of the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011) to consider the impact that a change in any policy or procedure (or the creation of a new policy or procedure) will have on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English. This document therefore ensures that these decisions protect and promote the use of the Welsh language.

From 1st April 2021 the Council has a duty to give due regard to addressing socio-economic disadvantage in strategic decisions.

1) Details

1.1 What is the name of the policy/service in question?

Local Toilets Strategy

1.2 What is the purpose of the policy/service being created or amended? What changes are being considered?

Local Toilets Strategy The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 received Royal Assent on 3 July 2017. The Act brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act sets out toilet provision, and local toilet strategies in particular. Part 8 aims to improve the way in which the provision of toilets available for public use is planned, by ensuring that all local authorities in Wales assess their community's toilet needs, and then use a strategic and transparent approach to meet that need in the best possible way.

The process of developing the strategy intends to make it possible for us to consider the wider options available in terms of providing toilets for the public, and getting to grips with the current challenges relating to providing facilities within communities, as well as a serious reduction in the service budget.

In developing a Local Toilets Strategy for Gwynedd we have considered the impact on service users, employees and the wider community. It is likely that the strategy will have more of an impact on some protected characteristics than others, however, we trust that we have given consideration to this, and will try to mitigate the negative impact in our aims.

1.3 Who is responsible for this assessment?

Amanda Murray – Municipal Asset Manager, Highways, Engineering and YGC

1.4 When did you Commence the assessment? Which version is this?

November 2018 - Commencement

Version April 2019 – Original assessment

Version May 2025 – Current assessment

2) Action

2.1 Who are the stakeholders or partners who will have to work with them to make this assessment?

Highway and Municipal Department Officers
The Public
Groups with protected characteristics
Community and Town Councils
Relevant Third Sector Organisations
Tourism organisations
Communities Scrutiny Committee
Analysing and dealing with complaints received

2.2 What steps have you taken to engage with people with protected characteristics, about the Welsh language or with communities (either due to location or need) who live with socio-economic disadvantage?

For updating the strategy in 2025 work has been done to look at the type of complaints received by the public.

This analysis is discussed at the Department's Performance Challenge meetings.

The next full consultation will take place within the next two years in preparation for the publication of the Strategy for the period from 2029 onwards.

2.3 What was the result of the engagement?

The results of the engagement back in 2019 are available.

2.4 On the basis of what other evidence are you acting?

Disability
Charities and organisations which represent older people are of the opinion that cuts to public facilities will have a very damaging impact in terms of them being prevented or being afraid of venturing out of their homes due to the lack of facilities available in the community. Some conditions or impairments could make the impact worse.

According to the Crohn's & Colitis UK charity at least 300,000 people in the UK have Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis, known as 'Inflammatory Bowel Disease (IBD).

According to the Royal Society for Public Health's 2019 "Taking the P***" report, their research has revealed that 56% of people stop drinking in case a public toilet is not available. This can have a detrimental effect on those with medical conditions such as diabetes or a bladder/bowel condition.

Age
The "Public Toilets in Wales" report by the Older People's Commissioner for Wales (August 2023) states that 61% of people who answered their consultation reported that it was difficult to find a toilet in their area.

In a 2023 Research report by Wales Seniors Forum, 59% of respondents said that they would limit their time or distance outside their home due to the lack of provision. 11% said they might have an accident in public if a toilet wasn't available.

Her evidence suggests that the lack of public facilities is a significant contributing factor to the isolation of older people, with more than half of older people feeling that the lack of local public facilities prevents them from going out as often as they wish.

Age Cymru is currently developing a report looking at local authorities' responsibilities around public toilet provision. We will consider the report's findings when it is published.

2.5 Are there any gaps in the evidence that needs to be collected?

There is no Gwynedd specific or lower geographical level information about health conditions such as Crohn's and Colitis, or about trends or visitor demand.

3) Identifying the Impact

3.1 The Council must pay due attention to the impact that any changes will have on people with the characteristics of equality below. What is the impact that the new policy/service or proposed changes will have on people with these characteristics? The impact on socio-economic disadvantage and on the Welsh language also needs to be considered.

Features	What kind of impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Race (including nationality)	None	No effect
Disability	Positive	As part of the Local Toilets Strategy, the Council will: Undertake a review of the cleaning arrangements, opening hours, which are part of the aim to provide 'Provision of clean, safe, appropriately maintained facilities'. This will respond to concerns about hygiene standards and unsuitable opening hours. We will work on maximising the choice of toilet provision and promote under the aim in order to maximise the availability of toilets by working in partnership with an alternative provision. We will advertise the locations and facilities available in the toilets as per our aim to 'Publicise and promote toilet provision information through webpages and other media'. New 'Changing Places' toilets are open at Caernarfon's Welsh Highland Railway Station. The toilets include special equipment such as a Hoist, adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person. For further information about 'Changing Places' Toilets, go to: http://www.changing-places.org/
Sex	None	Something that has happened as the strategy is being written is the supreme court ruling. It states that gender in

		the Equality Act 2010 means only biological sex. Consumers are expected to respect the ruling's finding.
Age	Positive	As part of the Local Toilets Strategy, the Council will: Work on maximising the choice of toilet provision and promote these as per our aim in order to maximise the availability of toilets by working in partnership with an alternative provision. We will advertise the locations and facilities available in the toilets as per our aim to 'Publicise and promote toilet provision information through webpages and other media'. We aim to 'Ensuring public awareness of toilet location, through good direction signage and individual facility information', giving consideration to how we can improve signs and direct people to the toilets and make them easier to find.
Sexual orientation	None	We have not identified any current impact as no major changes will be made to the assets that exist.
Religion or belief (or lack of belief)	Positive	Some religions may be limited when using alternative private facilities in certain establishments (e.g. public houses) - as this may be against their religion or belief. In order to meet this need the Local Toilets Strategy will: Continue to work with Town and Community Councils and groups and organisations to ensure a wide choice of provision and retain as many traditional public toilets open as possible to maximise the availability of toilets by working in partnership with an alternative provision.
Reassignment	Negative	Recently, the supreme court's ruling was issued that gender, within the Equality Act 2010, means only biological sex. We expect consumers to respect that ruling. But we recognise that we do not have suitable provision for transgender and non-binary people in most of our toilets. One option being considered by some organisations in the short term is the use of accessible toilets. That is not possible in our public toilets as they can only be opened with a radar overlay. We hope that the Equality and Human Rights Commission's guidance will provide us with further guidance on this.
Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	Parents and guardians of babies and young children need to be able to use suitable facilities in men and women's

		public facilities when visiting public places and often at short notice. In response to a concern regarding the scarcity of facilities and that their hygiene standards are low, the Council will conduct a review of cleaning arrangements, and undertake an audit of baby changing places for provision of clean, safe, appropriately maintained facilities.
Marriage and civil partnership	None	No effect
The Welsh language	None	No effect
Socio-Economic Disadvantage	Positive	As part of the Local Toilets Strategy, the Council will: working on maximising the choice of toilet provision and promoting them in the objective of 'Maximising the availability of toilets through partnership with the Council and other provision'. We will inform locations and facilities available in the toilets in the objective of 'Informing and promoting information about toilet provision through websites and other media'. The objective of 'Easy to find facilities with good signage and individual facility information signage' will consider how we can improve signs and direct people towards the toilets and make them easier to find.

3.2 The Council has a duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to contribute positively to a fairer society through advancing equality and good relations in its activities in the fields of age, gender, sexual orientation, religion, race, transgender, disability and pregnancy and maternity. The Council must give due attention to the way any change affects these duties.

General Duties of the Equality Act	Does it have an impact?	In what way? What is the evidence?
Abolishing illegal discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No	No

Promoting equal opportunities	Yes	Due to our aims: • Publicise and promote toilet provision information through webpages and other media; • Ensuring public awareness of toilet location, through good direction signage and individual facility information signs
Encouraging good relationships	Yes	The promotional objective is to support and build good relationships while better informing the facilities and their locations and opening hours to enable older people to be more confident of going out.

3.3 How does your proposal ensure that you work in accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011), to ensure that the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than English, and that every opportunity is taken to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and to increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?

The Local Toilet Strategy will have no impact on opportunities for people to use Welsh, and will not treat the Welsh language less favourably than the English language. The Strategy will adhere to Welsh language standards in relation to signage, apps, resources, publications etc.

3.4 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy/practice in order to have a positive impact on people's opportunities to use Welsh, and to reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

Nothing further

3.5 How does the proposal demonstrate that you have given due consideration to the need to tackle inequalities in the cause of socio-economic disadvantage? (Note that this is about closing inequality gaps rather than just improving outcomes for everyone).

Socio-economic data relating to Gwynedd shows that 31% of households have an income below 60% of the Great Britain median, indicating that they live in poverty.

As part of the Local Toilets strategy, Gwynedd Council will work on maximising the choice of toilet provision and promoting them in the objective of 'Maximising the availability of toilets through partnership with the Council and other provision'. This will ensure more toilets are available to the public without an obligation to purchase products or services, which would have a positive impact on inequality.

3.6 What other measures or changes could you include to strengthen or change the policy/practice to show that you have given due regard to the need to reduce disproportionate outcomes as a result of socio-economic disadvantage, in accordance with the Socio-Economic Act?

Nothing further

4) Analysis of the results

4.1 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, positive impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

The Local Toilets Strategy is generally intended to have a positive impact on the characteristics of equality set out in part 3.1. The strategy is intended to seek to improve the provision of toilets available for public use. In developing the strategy, the Council has assessed their community's toilet needs, and used the information to propose 6 objectives in order to try to meet that need in the best possible way within the budget, and where appropriate.

4.2 Is the policy therefore likely to have a significant, negative impact on any of the above? What is the reason for this?

No

4.3 What should be done?

Choose one of the following:

Continue with the policy/service as it is robust	✓
Modify the policy to remove any barriers	
Suspend and remove the policy as the harmful effects are too great	
Continue the policy because any adverse impact can be justified	
No further action at this time, it is premature to decide, or there is not enough evidence	

4.4 If you continue with the plan, what steps will you take to reduce or mitigate any negative impacts?

Not relevant

4.5 If you do not take further action to eliminate or reduce negative effects, explain why here.

Not relevant

5) Monitor

5.1 What steps will you take to monitor the impact and effectiveness of the policy or service (action plan)?

As part of the Strategy the Council will produce and publish an 'interim progress statement' which will monitor the action plan and report on the updated public consultation undertaken within the next two years.