Gwynedd Council

Local Toilet Strategy

May 2025

1. Background

The Welsh Government agreed the adoption of the Public Health (Wales) Bill in May 2017. This Act brings together a range of practical actions for improving and protecting health. Part 8 of the Act introduces provision of toilets and specifically local toilet strategies. In terms of public conveniences, the overall aim of the legislation is to ensure that all local authorities assess the needs of its community in relation to the provision of public conveniences and that it takes a strategic and transparent approach to best meet that need.

The intended effect of Part 8 is not to prevent local authorities from taking decisions which they need to take during the course of their activities, which may include decisions to close a traditional public toilet or building when appropriate to do so. Instead, the intended effect is to improve the planning of provision so that any such decisions are taken within the overall context of meeting their communities' identified needs. A strategic approach will also help to mitigate any negative impacts of changes to provision.

Local authorities in Wales now 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 the strategy, update and publicise revisions.

Gwynedd Council as such in line with these recommendations will set out to address the needs of the community and improving the standards of public conveniences under the local authority's control.

2. Introduction

Our objective in this strategy is to ensure that we continue to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd despite the fact that the Council's resources are becoming scarcer. The emphasis in this strategy will be to ensure that Gwynedd has adequate provision for the future and we are able to work closely with our stakeholders to provide alternative delivery models in order to achieve this.

This strategy is also being prepared in a period of financial hardship therefore, that context has to be considered. The provision of public conveniences provides infrastructure necessary to facilitate the enjoyment of areas within Gwynedd by residents and visitors. They can make a significant impact upon the comfort of individuals and families who visit public spaces within the area and their perception of Gwynedd as a desirable place to visit.

Access to toilet facilities is important to all part of our population and not just older people. Lack of public toilets is commonly given as a reason that older people become socially isolated and loneliness can set it. However, many people (including younger people, families and people of all ages who are disabled or have a health condition) require access to toilet facilities and a lack of provision can often lead to them also limiting their social contact with others.

Although the Public Health (Wales) Bill focuses on the 'Provision of Toilets', currently a local authority provision of public conveniences is not a statutory duty.

Increasingly the Council faces challenges to maintain standards of toilet provision, maintenance and cleaning due to limited funding and pressure on resources and yet Gwynedd still has the second highest number of council maintained toilets in Wales.

3. The aims of this strategy

The aim of this strategy is to meet the needs of the residents and visitors to Gwynedd by providing:-

- Provision of clean, safe, appropriately maintained facilities;
- Maximise availability of toilets through Council partnership and other provision;
- 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;
- Assess the availability and distribution of facilities based upon demand;
- Sustainable provision within the budget available;

This strategy outlines an Action Plan to indicate how Cyngor Gwynedd will work towards meeting the needs of the local population within its current budget for public conveniences.

4. How has this strategy been developed?

This strategy links into other Council priorities and services and contributes to our vision as a Council to support all the people of Gwynedd to thrive and live full lives in their community, in a county which is one of the best counties to live in.

In developing this strategy, the Council must fully consider the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. The aim of the Act is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales. It makes local authorities think more about the long term, work better with people and communities and each other, look to prevent problems and take a more joined-up approach. The Act also puts in place a 'sustainable development principle' which tells organisations how to go about meeting their duty under the Act, this means that Gwynedd Council have to act in a more sustainable way.

The Local Toilet Strategy incorporates the five ways of working which Gwynedd Council must follow in order to ensure we develop a sustainable strategy:

- Consider the importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet long-term needs;
- Taking an integrated approach;
- Working with others in order to find sustainable solutions;
- Involving people in decisions that will affect them; and
- Acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse.

5. Reviewing the Strategy

The Act requires constant reviews and progress reports to be submitted.

6. Gwynedd Council Provision

Gwynedd has a mixture of toilet provision. We currently provide 60 traditional public toilets operated by the Council, as well as 41 community toilet facilities. A large part of the county is also part of the Snowdonia National Park which also provides toilet facilities.

Attached in Appendix A is a list of current provision within Gwynedd.

7. What is Gwynedd currently doing?

The Town and Community Council Partnership Scheme

Following the Gwynedd Challenge Engagement Exercise in 2016, the Cabinet revised its decision to achieve cuts by agreeing to implement a proposed Partnership Scheme with Town and Community Councils, in order to keep the majority of the County's existing toilets open for the future.

This scheme was developed as an alternative to the decision taken to close up to 50 toilets as part of the regime of cuts. We consulted with all the Town and Community Councils within Gwynedd to ascertain whether or not there would be sufficient interest in working in partnership in order to keep the toilets open. The Partnership Scheme works by the Town and Community Councils contributing towards the running costs of the toilets on an annual or seasonal basis.

Up to 60 toilets have now been kept open with the assistance of the local Town and Community Councils and others.

Working with Others

Where it has not been possible for the Town and Community Councils to contribute financially in order to keep the facilities open within their areas, the Council has sought to work with others, i.e. third sector partners, private businesses and local community groups in order to keep the provision open within their local areas. There are now several examples of this in operation.

Community toilet grant scheme

The Public Toilets Grant Scheme is funded and managed by Gwynedd Council. This Scheme allows members of the general public to use toilet facilities in a range of approved local establishments during their opening hours. The facilities are made available free of charge and without any expectation that users will purchase goods or services whilst on the premises. Participating premises will be required to keep their toilets safe, clean, accessible and well-stocked. The maximum grant is £500 per location per year. We have currently 41 premises across Gwynedd participating in the scheme.

The service provider must display at least one sign provided by Gwynedd Council on their window(s) or door(s) to show that there are members of the scheme in order to inform the public of their right to use their toilets.

Improving Facilities through Grant Funding

Since 2019, we have managed to attract grants equivalent to over £500k. This money has been used to upgrade 5 of the County's toilets.

Changing Places

Standard accessible toilets do not meet the needs of all people with a disability. People with profound and multiple learning disabilities, as well people with other physical impairments such as spinal injuries, muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis often need extra equipment and space to allow them to use the toilets safely and comfortably. These needs are met by Changing Places toilets. There are now 3 sites with 'changing places' provision within the County (Ffestiniog and Eryri Railway Station in Caernarfon, Pontio in Bangor and Corris Craft Centre).

9. What will we be doing for the coming period?

It must be recognised that we are facing financial pressure, but the Council commits to the following Action Plan:

Action Plan 2025 - 2029

Number	Purpose	Target
1	Revise the charging structure on some of the County's toilets by installing new payment doors which will include the option of paying by card or cash.	October, 2025
2	Review the provision of toilets within Council buildings, including libraries etc, to ensure maximising the use for the public where it is possible.	January, 2026
3	Continue to promote and inform the Community Grant Scheme to local businesses, as a way to obtain additional provision in areas where the greatest need has been identified.	Continuous
4	Review existing provision of public toilets and monitor the cleaning regime to ensure the most effective and efficient provision.	April, 2026
5	Engage in seeking further grant opportunities as they arise to develop further and collaborate with Council Departments and partnerships in order, to increase provision of 'Changing Places' facilities available in Gwynedd.	Continuous
6	Review the Partnership with Community and Town Councils.	Continious
7	Continue to attract opportunities for grants to upgrade the existing public toilets stock.	Continuous
8	Explore enhancement options for environmental and sustainable energy developments.	Financial Year 2025/26

9	The Council will continue to engage with Police, Community Safety and residents, community groups and others to ensure that the facilities are as safe as possible.	Continuous

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