

Carmarthenshire Local Toilet Strategy

September 2024

Produced in accordance with Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 (Part 8)



CARMARTHENSHIRE LOCAL TOILET STRATEGY

<u>Introduction</u>	2
<u>Aims of the Strategy</u>	3
<u>Reviewing the Strategy</u>	4
<u>Current Local Toilet Provision</u>	5
<u>What are the key issues?</u>	9
<u>Council Budget</u>	9
<u>Health and Well-being & Social inclusion</u>	9
<u>Meeting our statutory duties</u>	9
<u>Disabled Facilities and Changing Places</u>	10
<u>Charging</u>	10
<u>Community Toilet Scheme</u>	11
<u>Local Management</u>	12
<u>Better Information and Signage</u>	12
<u>How can we improve provision?</u>	13
<u>Stakeholder Engagement</u>	13
<u>Recent Improvements</u>	14
<u>Key Priorities and Action</u>	15



Introduction

Part 8 of the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017: Provision of Toilets came into force on 31 May 2018 and places a duty on each local authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy for its area.

Local authorities in Wales now have the responsibility to:

1. Assess the need for toilet provision for their communities.
2. Plan to meet those needs.
3. Produce a local toilets strategy; and
4. Review the strategy, update, and publicise revisions.

There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public toilets and the duty to prepare a strategy does not in itself require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets themselves.

Local authorities are however required to take a strategic view across their area on how these facilities can be provided and accessed by the local population. In doing so it is envisaged that local authorities will consider a full range of options for making facilities available to the public.

Having adequate public toilet provision is important to both older people and young families. Toilet provision can also affect the commercial business activity and in particular the shopper's experience. Not enough toilets and the shopper will become uncomfortable and may leave the area taking their spending budget with them.

The Aims of the Strategy

The toilets used by the public are provided and run by a range of organisations Council Departments, businesses, Community Councils, and other community organisations. The aim of this strategy will be to review and inform on the toilet provision within the county by bringing together the range of these interested organisations.

Financial constraints which impact on all local authorities in Wales will be a challenge. This will not be limited to local authorities, but businesses and other organisations have also been affected by the current economic climate. With this in mind we will look at changing the way we provide certain services as we seek to utilise more creative ways of providing public toilet facilities.

Key objectives of the strategy are therefore:

1. To identify potential partnerships with other Council Department, Local Businesses & Community Town Councils.
2. To ensure where possible there is adequate provision in right location in collaboration with third parties and other organisations.
3. To develop a strategic plan for the toilet provision in Carmarthenshire moving forward in the medium term.
4. To ensure that we promote public awareness of all available facilities.
5. To identify future opportunities for the provision of Changing Places toilets.
6. To ensure that stakeholders are further engaged, and key actions are delivered.

Reviewing the Strategy

Carmarthenshire County Council will prepare an interim progress report setting out the steps taken in line with their strategy every two years, commencing from the date of the last published strategy. The interim progress report will be published within six months of the end date of the two-year period.

Carmarthenshire County Council may review its strategy at any time following which it must publish a statement of the steps which it has taken in accordance with the strategy. If following a review, Carmarthenshire County Council decides to revise the strategy it will publish the revised strategy and then prepare an interim progress report covering the two-year period commencing from the date of publication.



Current Local Toilet Provision

Where are the Existing Toilet Facilities?

The map shown below is taken directly from our corporate website and gives a broad indication of where public toilets can be located across the county. Information on opening times is displayed by clicking on the individual pins via our electronic map which is available on the Carmarthenshire County Council website:

www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/toilets



The Community Toilet Scheme is a program aimed at increasing access to clean and safe toilet facilities for the public. Under this scheme, local businesses and organisations volunteer to make their restroom facilities available to the public free of charge. We will also consider the addition of new pins to show the locations of all participating members of the proposed Community Toilet Scheme, once recruited, verified and recorded. More information on the Community Toilet Scheme can be found below.

Table 1 lists the location of current public toilet facilities.

Table 1

Location	Charge	Responsibility
A48 Bristol House Lay-by	Free	South Wales Trunk Road Agent
Abergorlech, Village Centre	Free	Community Council
Alltwalis, Village Centre	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Ammanford, Carregamman Car Park	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Ammanford, Central Park	Free	Town Council
Ammanford, Co-op Car Park	Free	Town Council
Ammanford, Library	Free	CCC Communities
Ammanford, Amman Valley Leisure Centre	Free	CCC Leisure
Brechfa, Village Centre	Free	Village Trust
Burry Port Harbour (East)	Free	Town Council
Burry Port Harbour (West), Crazy Crepes Café (outdoor toilets)	Free	Private Contract
Burry Port, Library	Free	CCC Communities
Burry Port, Railway Station Car Park	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development / Town Council
Carmarthen, John Street Car Park	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Carmarthen, Leisure Centre	Free	CCC Leisure
Carmarthen, Library	Free	CCC Communities
Carmarthen, Lyric Theatre	Free	CCC Communities
Carmarthen, Park	Free	Town Council
Carmarthen, Provision Market	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Carmarthen, St Peters Car Park	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Cenarth, Heol Y Gelli	Free	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Cynwyl Elfed, adjacent to park	Free	Community Council
Drefach Felindre, Parc Puw	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development



Location	Charge	Responsibility
Ferryside, beach entrance	Free	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Ffaldybrenin	Free	Community Council
Ffarmers	Free	Community Council
Glanamman, Cwmamman Square	Free	Town Council
Gorslas, adjacent to Park	Free	Community Council
Kidwelly, Town Centre Square	Free	Town Council
Laugharne, adjacent to Castle	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llanboidy, Village Centre	Free	Community Council
Llanddowror, Tenby Road	Free	Community Council
Llandeilo Car Park (Crescent Road)	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llandeilo, Municipal Buildings, Crescent Road	Free	CCC Chief Executives
Llandovery Castle Car Park	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llandovery, Library	Free	CCC Communities
Llandovery, Leisure Centre	Free	CCC Communities
Llandybie	Free	Community Council
Llanelli, adjacent to Town Hall	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llanelli, East Gate Bus Station	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llanelli, Ffwrnes Theatre	Free	CCC Communities
Llanelli, Leisure Centre	Free	CCC Leisure
Llanelli, Library	Free	CCC Communities
Llanelli, North Dock	Free	Private Agreement
Llanelli, Provision Market	Free	CCC Chief Executives
Llanelli, Park Howard	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llansawel	Free	Recreation Field and Hall Trust
Llansteffan, Beach Car Park	Free	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Llanybydder, The Square	Free	Community Council
Llyn Llech Owain	Free	CCC Communities



Location	Charge	Responsibility
Meidrim Car Park	Free	Community Council
Meinciau, adjacent to Community Hall	Free	Community Council
Newcastle Emlyn, adjacent to Mart	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Newcastle Emlyn, Leisure Centre	Free	CCC Leisure
Newcastle Emlyn, Market Hall	Free	Town Council
Pembrey, Cefn Sidan Beach	Free	CCC Communities
Pembrey, Country Park	Free	CCC Communities
Pembrey, Library	Free	CCC Communities
Pembrey, Ski Centre	Free	CCC Communities
Pembrey, Yr Osaf Café (outdoor toilets)	Free	CCC Communities
Pendine, Caban	Free	CCC Communities
Pendine, Parry Thomas Centre	Free	CCC Communities
Pendine, Spring Well	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Pencader	Free	CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
Penygroes, opposite Surgery	Free	Community Council
Pontweli, Llandysul, Wilkes Head	Free	Powerhouse Community & Arts Centre
St Clears Car Park	20p	Danfo / CCC Place, Infrastructure & Economic Development
St Clears, Leisure Centre	Free	CCC Leisure
Whitland, West Street	Free	Town Council

What are the key issues?

There are a range of issues which need to be considered when developing this strategy:

Council Budget

Due to the budget pressures on the Council the current provision is no longer viable, and a range of options are being considered. These financial constraints stem from a combination of reduced funding from central government, rising costs, and increased

demand for essential services. As a result, the Council is forced to reassess its expenditure and consider various options to manage its limited resources effectively. One of the options considered is the closure of public toilets. In response to concerns expressed during budget consultations by the public and council members, the Council is actively exploring transferring assets.

There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public toilets and the duty to prepare a strategy does not in itself require local authorities to provide and maintain public toilets themselves. Local authorities are however required to take a strategic view on how these facilities can be provided and accessed by the local population. In doing so it is envisaged that local authorities will consider a full range of options for making facilities available to the public.

Health Well-being & Social Inclusion

The extent to which people have access to good quality toilets will affect their general health and well-being of the whole community.

A lack of clean, accessible and safe toilets impacts on some individuals more than others. Some people may feel unable or reluctant to leave their homes and visit areas where they fear they will not be able to find a public toilet. Older people (a growing section of the population in our ageing society), mothers, fathers and carers with young children, disabled people and people with chronic health problems – all need easy access to suitably equipped public toilet facilities.

In working with businesses, Town and Community Councils, we will endeavour to identify suitable provision of public toilet facilities.

Statutory Duties

Public Health Act 1936, Section 87

The provision and maintenance of toilets in public places is at the discretion of local authorities who have a power, under section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936 (“PHA 1936”), to provide public conveniences, but no duty to do so. Whether or not they choose to provide these facilities is at their discretion, and any expenditure has to be weighed in the balance against other local service demands. Under section 87(3)(c) of the PHA 1936, local authorities were allowed to charge for use of all public conveniences.

Public Health Act 2017

The new Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 seeks to place a duty on all councils to develop a strategy for the provision of publicly accessible toilets and Changing Places.

Discretionary services like public toilet provision will therefore require the investigation of new solutions so a adequate standard of toilet provision is sustained.

Disabled Facilities and Changing Places

The Changing Places campaign aims to increase the provision for people with individual and/or multiple disabilities who need special equipment and support from carers.

Each Changing Places toilet is designed for people who cannot use standard accessible toilets. It provides accommodation for people who experience multiple and complex disabilities and have one or two carers with them.

As part of this strategy Carmarthenshire County Council will engage with Council Departments and/or private sector to encourage the implementation of public toilets that meet requirements of changing places within future developments.

Charging

Currently there are nine public toilets that are chargeable at a cost of 20p. Expanding / increasing charging is an option to subsidise the maintenance and the improvement in toilet provision. However, any revenue generated from charging for the use of public conveniences will still fall significantly short of covering the full operational costs of our county wide provision. Despite the fees collected, the expenses associated with maintaining and operating these facilities far exceed the income generated.

The stakeholder engagement exercise suggests there is some respondents are happy to pay for clean and safe public toilets. Typical charges are between 20-50p. We currently have nine units that are controlled by a 20p pay to enter system and this could potentially be extended to some other units in future. These units can be accessed by those needing to use a RADAR key and this entry is FREE of charge.

The future installation of card readers and the appropriate systems for contactless payment will be explored for public toilets where charges apply. However, adaptation to card reading and/or increased cash payment facility will incur a significant outlay cost where grant funding is not available.

Community Toilet Scheme

The British Toilet Association have reported a significant drive from the larger town and city councils to entice major retailers and business holders to enter into a range of managed schemes, known as the local Community Toilet Scheme (CTS).

The Community Toilet Scheme is a program aimed at increasing access to clean and safe toilet facilities for the public. Under this scheme, local businesses and

organisations, such as cafes, restaurants, and shops, volunteer to make their restroom facilities available to the public free of charge. Participating establishments display a recognisable logo or sign indicating their involvement in the scheme. This initiative helps address the shortage of public toilets in certain areas while also benefiting local businesses by potentially increasing foot traffic. The Community Toilet Scheme promotes community engagement and cooperation while enhancing the overall convenience and well-being of residents and visitors alike.

The challenge is to tap into this additional, already available provision on a more formal basis. Understandably, the scheme is not appropriate everywhere and struggles with large groups of visitors arriving at the same time, as well as servicing the night time economy, when most businesses are shut.

This type of scheme has the potential to increase supply and type of publicly accessible toilets. Consideration also needs to be given to any financial assistance that might/could be granted to participants. These initial schemes set out to support the members by giving a payment to help off-set cost of additional consumables and cleaning products. This supplement was variable from council to council which could range from £250 - £500.

Local Management

Town and Community Councils and other community organisations are critical to developing a strategic approach to public toilet provision.

There are public toilets in our libraries and leisure centres. We aim to raise awareness among residents and visitors about the availability of these facilities.

Carmarthenshire is a rural county making it sometimes difficult to ensure basic management tasks like opening/closing and cleaning public toilets are undertaken efficiently. Our experience is that in some locations public toilets are vandalised and require regular repair which is costly.

Transfer of assets to town & community councils has had a beneficial effect on retaining some facilities and promoting local management where affordable. This allows local councils to run their own facilities and also permits local people who live close to facilities to make local decisions regarding opening times and flexibility of use.

Better Information and Signage

Promoting public access to toilets is not simply about increasing provision, it could also be about improving the signage and other information about what is available. This is important for local people and visitors alike.

A number of visitor information boards are currently provided by Carmarthenshire County Council in addition to other similar apparatus provided by some town and community councils. Consideration will therefore be given to review these existing information boards with a view to incorporate more detailed information on toilet locations.

An upgraded version of this information including any other toilet provision which the public could use would be helpful for residents and visitors to the county.

How can we improve provision?

Stakeholder Engagement

When developing a strategy of this nature it is important that the public, businesses, and other interested parties have been consulted in a meaningful way to inform our approach. We have therefore undertaken a stakeholder consultation exercise with the aim of gathering information on the key themes and issues.

The purpose of opinions and ideas in particular is to help improve public toilet provision in Carmarthenshire.

Key questions asked were around:

- Safety and cleanliness of facilities
- Location of facilities
- Quality of the service currently provided
- Baby changing facilities
- Disability access

The stakeholder engagement exercise took place over a six-week period and ended on the 10th of October 2023. One thousand, one hundred and fifteen (1115) questionnaires were completed online, in person at our Hwbs or by telephone by our Contact Centre.

To help develop priorities for the new strategy, some of the main issues and themes are outlined below, but it is emphasised this only gives a flavour of the responses.

- **Locating a Public Toilet-** *88% respondents indicated they thought it wasn't easy to find a public toilet in Carmarthenshire.*
- **Impact on Tourism and Business-** *84% thought the availability of public toilets prevented people visiting a shopping area or other location of interest.*

- **Availability** -There are a range of locations identified where respondents thought facilities could be enhanced. Outside Llanelli and Carmarthen, three locations in particular were mentioned Pensarn, Crosshands and Burryport.
- **Condition** - Visitors to public toilets were asked to rate their experience 1 (lowest)-10 (highest) Disappointedly only 15% of respondents gave a score of greater than 8 highlighting condition and cleanliness as the main issue.
- **Meeting Needs**-77% of visitors to public toilets indicated they met their needs (baby changing/ accessibility).
- **Charging**-There was a mixed response to the question of charging for the use of public toilets 48% of indicated they were willing to pay a small charge.

Recent Improvements

We have completed two projects to better our public toilet facilities for the residents and visitors of Carmarthenshire.

Bins for Boys

Carmarthenshire County Council in partnership with The West Wales Prostate Cancer Support Group have made some changes together. There are now sanitary bins available for men who need them in multiple of our public conveniences. This is to support the men that experience bowel incontinence.

Prostate Cancer UK launched their campaign 'Lifting the lid on male incontinence' and have asked for the removal of gender so that provisions is available in all toilets. The amendment will allow men access to male sanitary bins in toilets, allowing them to enjoy their lives without the anxiety and stress when thinking about how they'll dispose of their products.

We currently have nine unisex facilities where sanitary bins are available for both male and female. In addition, all out disabled toilet facilities are unisex and sanitary bins are provided.

All facilities will be sign posted.

Free drinking water project

Carmarthenshire County Council has joined City to Sea's campaign to reduce the consumption of single-use plastic water bottles by making it easy, convenient and cheap to refill personal reusable water bottles. We have provided a greater availability of reliable, free, and safe drinking water facilities that residents and visitors can rely on when out and about. This project was funded by the Welsh Government's Local Places for Nature grant scheme.

These refillable stations can be found at the following six locations:

- Public Convenience located at Llandovery Car Park
- Public Convenience located at Llandeilo Car Park
- Public Convenience located at John Street Car Park, Carmarthen
- Public Convenience located at Laugharne
- Public Convenience located at Parc Howard, Llanelli
- Public Convenience located at Llansteffan Car Park

These locations have been selected as they have the most footfall across Carmarthenshire. All units will be sign posted.

Key Priorities & Actions

Based on guidance from the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017, key issues, and feedback from stakeholders the following key priorities and actions are proposed moving forward:

Key Priority 1:

To identify potential partnerships with other Council Department, Local Businesses & Community Town Councils.

Actions

1. To continue to support Town and Community Councils and other organisations through asset transfer, advice and financial incentive to improve or develop provision.
2. Identify and approach all in-house facilities, for example Libraries and Leisure Centres with the aim to include relevant and appropriate sites in future toilet mapping and website publicity.
3. Establish partnership links with private companies and other organisations in areas where we want to encourage higher footfall.
4. Investigate the opportunity to engage with local shop owners and other businesses trading across the county to develop a formal basis for the inception of a Community Toilet Scheme.

Key Priority 2:

To ensure where possible there is adequate provision in right location in collaboration with third parties and other organisations.

Actions

1. Undertake a programme of surveys of existing facilities against the guidelines and standards advocated by the British Toilet Association

Key Priority 3:

To develop a strategic plan for the toilet provision in Carmarthenshire moving forward in the medium term.

Actions

1. Review existing revenue and capital budget provision to identify opportunities it enhances and improve existing provision.
2. Investigate opportunities to increase income through charging including the possibility of using contactless payment.
3. Investigate and apply for external funding linked to developing tourism and regeneration.
4. Investigate potential opportunities for diversification of our current asset stock.

Key Priority 4:

To ensure that we promote public awareness of all available facilities.

Actions

1. Update the website to provide clear details of where all our public toilets and any additional facilities involving other public buildings and businesses which can be identified as part of our drive to develop a Community Toilet Scheme.
2. Review all our signage applicable to existing public toilets to ensure they are clearly identifiable. Consideration being given to street boards at appropriate locations.

Key Priority 5:

To identify future opportunities for the provision of Changing Places toilets.

Action

1. Ensure that consideration is given to incorporate Changing Places facilities within appropriate future Council or private developments.

Key Priority 6:

To ensure that stakeholders are further engaged, and key actions are delivered.

Actions

1. Identify a dedicated officer within Place, Infrastructure and Economic Development to oversee and report on the delivery of the key actions.
2. When next updating the report, internal and external stakeholders will be engaged as part of the review.