

## **Local Toilet Needs Assessment Consultation**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Are you closing all of the public toilets in Denbighshire?**

No decision has been made about closing any public conveniences at this stage, and any decisions on this will be made by our Cabinet, following a further report to our Communities Scrutiny Committee. Our Local Toilets Strategy will be published soon after it has been consulted and will include an action plan for how we propose to meet the identified need across Denbighshire.

#### **What is the Community Toilet Scheme?**

The Community Toilet Scheme encourages local businesses to open their toilet facilities to the public without them having to buy any goods or services. Participating establishments must keep toilets safe, clean, accessible and well-stocked. The maximum grant payment available for participating businesses is currently £500 per year.

#### **Does the Council have to provide public toilets?**

Whilst there is no legal requirement for the Council to provide public conveniences, the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 requires the local authority to show that it has reviewed the needs of the local population and produce a strategy that shows how it aims to meet those needs.

A Draft Local Toilets Strategy has been produced and will be published for consultation before the end of 2024. No action will be taken until the consultation has closed and the responses have been reviewed. Cabinet will then be asked to make a decision about the future of the council's public conveniences.

The Strategy will include an action plan on how Denbighshire County Council will work towards meeting the needs of the local population, within its current budget for public toilets.

#### **There aren't enough public toilets in Denbighshire. Why are you looking to reduce the number rather than providing more?**

There is no statutory requirement for local authorities to provide public toilets. Denbighshire County Council, like every local authority in the UK, is facing a period of significant and continued budget pressures and it is more important than ever to ensure we are making the best use of local

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resources. We therefore must change the way we provide certain services as we seek to utilise more creative ways of providing some services such as public conveniences.

### **What is a 'Changing Places' toilet?**

'Changing Places' is a Consortium Brand and is the name of a campaign set up by the charity Changing Places Toilets. These toilets can be used by people with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD). These toilets will have more space than a 'standard' disabled toilet and will be fitted with additional equipment such as hoists, adult changing tables, showers, showers and grab rails.

### **Why are your provisions not as good as British Standards?**

The methodology used for assessing the need for public toilets in Denbighshire is based on toilet ratios by the awarding body 'Loo of the Year'. They use information extracted from British standards and other sources for their Toilet Ratios.

### **Why are some toilets free and others we must pay to use?**

Some public toilets are currently free to use, but there is a charge for some. Some toilets cost more to run than others, for example, some are staffed whilst others are not. The income we receive from charging for public conveniences goes towards the cost of running the service, however, this does not cover the full cost. We do not have the budget to allow us to keep on delivering services in the same way we have delivered in the past.

The council will encourage the promotion of the Community Toilet Scheme where there is a need for more toilets and will look to map out the facilities available in towns and villages.

### **How can I use the public toilets that have a charge if I do not have the correct change?**

We are looking to see if we can install contactless card payments at the entrance of those toilets that have a charge to help people when they do not have the correct change.

The Council is also reviewing how it delivers the service and the charging structure.

### **Have you looked at other ways in which public toilets can be provided without the Council running them?**

The Council has approached all Town, City and Community Councils to see if there is any interest in them supporting the service by managing and running our toilets for us and discussions are ongoing.

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### **Have you considered advertising on the back of toilet doors to raise revenue to keep them open?**

Research has been undertaken on Toilet Door advertising, but this has not been viewed as viable due to rural locations and the distance between facilities across the county. However further consideration may be given to determine whether this could be a good way to raise revenue for Denbighshire.

### **Who should provide public toilet facilities?**

Local authorities are not required to provide or maintain public toilets, although they do have the power to provide them. We will explore different ways to provide toilet facilities through public, private and voluntary sectors as well as healthcare providers. We will also encourage the promotion of the Community Toilet Scheme to increase the number of public toilets available.

### **Why can't you use the revenue from car parks or Council Tax to fund the toilets so that they can all stay open?**

The Council already provides essential services from Council Tax and car park funds, which include statutory services such as social care for the elderly and vulnerable, the maintenance of our roads, parks and infrastructure, planning and building control services, waste and recycling services collection, environmental health services, provision of schools and libraries.

### **Why wasn't some of the money spent on the new waste service used to fund the public toilets?**

Councils have a duty to collect household waste. Denbighshire has rolled out the new 'Trolibocs' scheme to make it easier for households to recycle even more at home. Recycling more and reducing waste is better for the environment, reducing our carbon emissions and helping to prevent climate change. As part of Welsh Government's 'Beyond Recycling' Strategy, we are expected to recycle 70% of the waste we collect by 2025. In rolling out our new system we have encountered some issues and temporary measures have been put in place.

### **Will you still be providing toilets for Gypsies and Travellers if you are closing public toilets?**

The Council in line with policy, follows Public Health guidelines by carrying out welfare checks and supplying portable toilets and household waste facilities for temporary encampments.

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**I am concerned about public health and anti-social behaviour if public toilets are closed.**

**Will people start urinating outside?**

While there is no general law in making public urination illegal in the UK, it is unacceptable and there are a number of ways in which a person can be found guilty for doing so. Penalties for public urination are included in the by-laws of individual local authorities under section 235 of the Local Government Act 1972.

**I can't always afford to buy something in a shop or café if I need to use the toilet. Will the Community Toilet Scheme help with this?**

Yes, the Community Toilet Scheme allows the public to use toilet facilities in approved local businesses/establishments during their opening hours free of charge without needing to make a purchase or use their services. The Council will also liaise with other public, private and voluntary sectors to see if existing provision can be made available for public use.

**Will the closure of toilets impact Denbighshire's Blue Flag beach status?**

Blue Flag encourages all local authorities/beach operators to ensure an adequate number of toilet or restroom facilities are provided. The Council will work with the Town, City and Community Councils and partners to ensure provision is available where needed.

**Does the Council need to keep the public toilets open for the homeless community?**

Homeless people are supported by the Council in short-term homelessness accommodation which provides toilet facilities.

**Can the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 be amended to make public toilets statutory?**

Denbighshire County Council is not responsible for the Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 and therefore does not have the power to amend the Act.

**I don't always know where the toilets are when I visit areas in Denbighshire? How can I find out where they are?**

Public toilets are signposted, and a full list is provided on our [website](#). If any facilities are out of service, these are also signposted, and directions are provided to the nearest available facility. The Council will also investigate other mapping schemes to promote the availability of Denbighshire's provision and other provision which is also available for public use.