

Scrutiny review scoping proposal

1 What is the review?

Access to Toilets.

The review is driven by members concerns that limited toilet provision is impacting on mobility for disadvantaged groups, particularly older people, disabled people, pregnant people and parents and carers of young children.

2 What outcomes could realistically be achieved? Which agency does the review seek to influence?

A Southwark Toilet Strategy

3 When should the review be carried out/completed? i.e. does the review need to take place before/after a certain time?

Completed by 2024

4 What format would suit this review? (eg full investigation, q&a with executive member/partners, public meeting, one-off session)

Full investigation

5 What are some of the key issues that you would like the review to look at?

Understanding the impact limited provision is having on older people's mobility and other groups, such as disabled people, pregnant people, and parents and carers of young children.

Best practice in toilet provision.

Developing a council toilet strategy.

- 6 Who would you like to receive evidence and advice from during the review?

GLA

<https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/assembly/the-toilet-paper-improving-londons-loos>

Age UK London Loos

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/bp-assets/globalassets/london/campaigns/out-and-about/london-loos-in-focus---local-authority-toilet-strategies.pdf>

Tinkle: The Toilet Manifesto for London Group:

<https://tinkle.rca.ac.uk/resource/1179/>

- 7 Any suggestions for background information? Are you aware of any best practice on this topic?

Council:

Background

On 13 December 2005 the executive agreed the following approach to improving toilet provision:

<https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/Data/Executive/20051213/Agenda/Item%2009%20-%20Public%20Toilets-%20Mini%20Review.pdf>

As part of the Council Plan 2018 – 2022 refresh, Cabinet (8 September 2020) there was a commitment, under Tackling health inequalities, on: 'Creating a network of Toilets and baby changing facilities' see <https://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s90466/Appendix%201%20Council%20Plan%202018-2022%20refresh%20updated.pdf>

Current provision:

Southwark Community Toilet scheme

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/business/join-the-community-toilet-scheme>

Map of Toilets

<https://www.southwark.gov.uk/environment/public-toilets>

AccessAble

The council also participates in AccessAble, which provides information on accessible toilets to enable residents and visitors to plan journeys and work out where accessible toilet facilities are located:

<https://www.accessable.co.uk/london-borough-of-southwark>

July Council Assembly Question:

**“QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM
COUNCILLOR MARIA LINFORTH-HALL**

According to the Southwark council's website, the council currently maintains around 30 public toilets across the borough, but the map is not up to date, with some appearing on it having since closed. Groups such as Age UK, the Royal Society for Public Health, and the Campaign for Public Infrastructure have highlighted the crucial need for these facilities both for vulnerable groups and the wider public benefit.

Better provision of public toilets provides convenience to all, but significantly helps to provide dignity for those with chronic illnesses, as well as the elderly and pregnant people. By providing greater access to public spaces, this also serves to boost local businesses and markets, as more people will have confidence to leave the house for extended periods of time without worrying about such basic needs as toilet access.

1. In which team, in which department, does the responsibility for toilets sit within the council?
2. Will the council commit to increasing the number of public toilets?
3. Why has the programme to proactively approach businesses for the community toilet scheme not been re-started after covid?

RESPONSE

Within the council there are several teams that have responsibility for different elements of public toilet provision. These include waste and cleansing, the Local Economy Team and parks and leisure. The council does provide public access to toilets, but the greatest number of toilets are in commercial buildings and businesses. We

therefore work with business owners to maximise the number of toilets that are made available for public use, and will continue to do so. We particularly support the increase in toilets which are fully accessible under the accredited Changing Places scheme. These provide larger than average facilities for adults and children where privacy and dignity can be maintained for individuals (and their carers if relevant). In addition to the Changing Places provision that was installed for public use in the Castle Leisure Centre, a Changing Places toilet has just been installed in Peckham Pulse Leisure Centre. The new Canada Water Leisure Centre will also have a Changing Places facility, and installation of a further Changing Places facility is in progress in Dulwich Park. Toilets are an essential feature of our streets, public buildings and parks, making life comfortable for our residents when travelling and working across the borough. We continue to review public toilet provision and consider new areas where there is need.”

Best Practice

Community Toilet provision:

[London Loos in-focus:](#)

[Local authorities. Community Toilet Schemes](#)

This information sheet has been produced by Age UK London as part of the London Loos campaign for better public toilet provision in London. Along with other information sheets produced by Age UK London it has been written for anyone interested in actions London’s local authorities can take to improve the provision of public toilets in their borough. It is recommended in particular for council officers and council directors, as well as councillors.

London Council May 2023 event bringing LA’s together, covering Community Toilet provision:

[Age UK blog on the event](#)

Presentations from the event on Community Toilets:

[Cardiff Council Presentation \(ppt\)](#)

[Cardiff Council Toilet Guide \(pdf\)](#)

[Cardiff Council Community Toilet Scheme Leaflet \(pdf\)](#)

[Cardiff Council Community Toilet Scheme Sticker \(png\)](#)

[Tower Hamlets - Community Toilet Scheme Presentation \(ppt\)](#)

[Tower Hamlets Community Toilet Scheme Leaflet A5 \(pdf\)](#)

[Tower Hamlets Community Toilet Scheme Sticker \(pdf\)](#)

[Tower Hamlets Toilet Poster \(pdf\)](#)

[Tower Hamlets Community Toilet Scheme Welcome Leaflet A5 \(pdf\)](#)

[Lewisham Community Toilets Map \(pdf\)](#)

Developing a Toilet strategy:

[London Loos in-focus:](#)

[Local authorities and toilet strategies](#)

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8 What approaches could be useful for gathering evidence? What can be done outside committee meetings?

e.g. verbal or written submissions, site visits, mystery-shopping, service observation, meeting with stakeholders, survey, consultation event

Evidence from Age UK , older peoples campaigning groups and officers.