



ACCESS TO TOILETS

Headline report



REVIEW PURPOSE

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

CONTEXT - LONDON AND NATIONAL LOO CAMPAIGNS

- i. The review took place during a resurgence of campaigns over the last few year for more loos, driven largely by older people and older people's campaign groups, led in part by Age UK London.
- ii. The GLA health select committee wrote a report: The Toilet Paper in November 2021. In May 2023 London Councils held an event focusing on Toilet Strategies, Community Toilet Schemes and more.
- iii. Age UK London have produced several resources on producing Toilet Strategies, Community Toilet schemes and using planning and public information.
- iv. Age UK London have supported local Southwark residents to campaign.

CONTEXT - CHANGING PLACES

- i. There is growing awareness of the access needs of people with higher access needs – people who are most disabled.
- ii. The government has provided funding for more Changing Places loos and Southwark has made good use of this.
- iii. Government guidance / regulations are expected on this (details to be sourced)



OUTCOMES

The primary outcome the review aims to achieve is that the council develops a Southwark Toilet Strategy with local stakeholders.

BACKGROUND –SOME HISTORY

The council has reviewed its approach to toilets twice formally in the last twenty years :

- i. In 2005 Cabinet agreed a mini review and decided to open up more toilets in its estate, work with stakeholders including local supermarkets to increase provision, improve signage and close toilets not DDA compliant
- ii. In 2018 the Council Plan refresh undertook to create a network of accessible toilets and baby changing facilities

HOW THE COUNCIL DELIVERS TOILETS

The council delivers toilets through:

- i. Public Conveniences it maintains on the street and in parks.
- ii. Opening up toilets in buildings owned by the councils to the public, for example the office at Tooley Street and libraries.
- iii. Working with partners to increase publicly available provision, for example in Leisure Centre, Network Rail owned stations and by encouraging more provision through regeneration and planning.
- iv. Supporting Community Toilets whereby the council works with business to open up toilets in café, pubs, supermarkets etc to local people.
- v. Provision of information on the council website and through AssessAble.

TOILETS ARE AN EQUALITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

- i. Lack of toilets disproportionately impacts on old and disabled people, who will often not leave the home unless they can be sure of adequate provision.
- ii. Parents with young children also particularly need toilets.
- iii. Women need more toilets than men.
- iv. Race is a barrier to accessing public provision in café and pubs.
- v. Men with prostate cancer need bins.
- vi. Poor provision is an environmental health issue and negatively impact on the health and wellbeing.

TOILETS ARE AN EQUALITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE - RECOMMENDATION

Recognise that a lack of toilets disproportionately impacts on people with a Protected Characteristic, including old and disabled people in particular. A Toilet Strategy ought to conduct an Equality Impact Assessment. Poor provision is also a Public Health and environmental health issue and negatively impacts on the health and wellbeing of residents.

TOILET COLD SPOTS

- i. Provision is particularly poor in Peckham and Camberwell
- ii. Peckham Rye Station is due to have a toilet – however it unclear if this will only be a Changing Places Toilet and if other toilets will be provided in addition and if they will be located behind a barrier.
- iii. Concerns about anti-social behaviour are thought to be a concern here. These can and mitigated through engagement and good planning.
- iv. The council is a partner in the regeneration of the station led by Network Rail and such can use its influence to ensure provision meets the public's needs.
- v. Camberwell Green toilet provision is poor . The automatic toilet is frequently out of action and the library toilet is not cleaned frequently enough. There is potentially an opportunity in nearby supermarkets and fast food places.

TOILET COLD SPOTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

Improve provision in Peckham Rye Station by prioritising this in the Toilet Strategy and Regeneration plans. Together the council and Network Rail ought to provide more transparency on the plan, and options for toilets at Peckham Rye Station, and consult with local residents and stakeholders to bring clarity by 2025.

Improve Camberwell Green toilet provision by a) ensuring the library toilet is cleaned frequently enough b) engage nearby supermarkets and fast food places through a Community Toilet Scheme.

COMMUNITY TOILETS

- I. Southwark had until recently a Community Toilet scheme whereby it would work with businesses to promote use of toilets , however this has fallen into disuse over the last few years and is no longer actively supported.
- II. The Local Economy team are willing to liaise with businesses through their fora to promote such a scheme.
- III. There are a variety of good Community Toilet schemes, including ones in Richmond and Lewisham.
- IV. Community Toilet schemes enable the opening up or more toilets, particularly during business hours, in a resource effective way. They do require some consistent investment from the council and cannot be the only solution.

COMMUNITY TOILETS - RECOMMENDATION

1. Invest in a refreshed Community Toilet scheme using London boroughs, such as , Richmond and Lewisham as examples .

OPENING UP SOUTHWARK ESTATE TOILETS

- I. Since 2005 Southwark has open up toilets in the council's control to increase public access.
- II. There is now an accommodation review looking at over 200 toilets in building in the council's control as well as local partners. It is anticipated that around 100 can be opened up to the public.

SOUTHWARK ESTATE TOILETS - RECOMMENDATION

1. The Commission supports the accommodation review and recommends this is incorporated into a Toilet Strategy to maximise engagement and information.

INFORMATION AND SIGN POSTING

- i. Southwark maps out toilet provision on the council website but the map is not always accurate.
- ii. Southwark uses AccessAble, which is a well used resource.

INFORMATION AND SIGN POSTING - RECOMMENDATION

The Commission supports the use of AccessAble, which is a well used resource . It recommends that the website is kept updated in the short term and over the longer term more work is done as part of a Toilet Strategy to provide accurate information to residents and visitors .

TOILET STRATEGY

Strategies are important as lots of different parts of the council have responsibility for different aspects of toilet provision. A plan will bring these together:

Age UK say a good toilet strategy should include:

- i. Meaningful ongoing community engagement with residents. This should be a diverse group, including older residents, representative of the wider community. It is important that meaningful consultation is inclusive and that people without the internet are included.
- ii. A needs assessment based on mapping existing toilets available for public use, identifying gaps by working with communities and other partners to identify solutions.
- iii. An action plan to review and improve public information about provision. Consideration should be given to the quality of signage, maps, website information, and the use of newsletters, media, posters and leaflets to raise awareness about toilet locations.
- iv. Aim to mainstream public toilet provision into strategic policy such as urban planning policy.

TOILET STRATEGY - RECOMMENDATION

Develop a Toilet Strategy through engagement with a range of local people, mapping needs and gaps, co-creating solutions and provision of an action plan that interfaces with planning and regeneration.

NEXT STEPS

- i. Request information on upcoming Changing Places regulations/ guidance
- ii. Request on update on provision in parks and leisure facilities
- iii. Request an update on the accommodation review
- iv. Any thing else?