



## Public Toilet Strategy 2025 -2035

# Foreword



As human beings we have five fundamental requirements of life; to eat, drink, sleep, breathe, and go to the toilet.

Today more than ever there is a need for Local Authorities to make strategic investment in high quality, clean, accessible, and safe public toilets. In this way, we can meet societal needs and encourage social inclusion whilst recognising the pivotal role of public toilets in promoting better health and protecting the environment. Provision of public toilets encourage physical activity and fitness by supporting people to move with ease when outwith the comfort of their home.

We also understand the necessity and importance of providing clean public toilets with suitable sanitary provision for women and girls. Moreover, there is an evident correlation between health conditions and the need for access to public toilets. The decision of where to visit, and how long to stay in that area, can very often depend on the ability to find a public toilet when relief is needed.

Public toilets are, however, not only key to health; they also play a pivotal role within the local economy by providing important facilities for tourists, visitors, workers, and residents. As high streets recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and face increasing pressures arising from the cost of living crisis and the increase of online retail, an effective public toilet service can stimulate activity within the local economy.

It has been estimated that a well maintained public toilet can generate between five and eight times its running costs every year by encouraging spend in the local area.

Glasgow City Council recognise the strategic importance of public toilet services and committed to the development of this first Public Toilet Strategy at Full Council of 26 October 2023.

Working in partnership with the British Toilet Association and key stakeholders, we are proud to present this Strategy setting out the council’s strategic objectives, commitments, and associated action plan which will collectively deliver improved public toilet services in Glasgow over the years to come.

Councillor Laura Doherty  
City Convener for Neighbourhood Services and Assets, Glasgow City Council  
March 2025

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## Introduction

### Background

We take tremendous pride in promoting Glasgow as a clean, welcoming and healthy environment to live, work, relax and shop.

On 26 October 2023, Full Council formally recognised that access to clean, accessible public toilets, which meet the needs of people of all genders and abilities is a basic requirement of health, hygiene and personal safety.

Access to a toilet is necessary for social inclusion, being part of a community, and being able to move around the city barrier free.

Recognising the vital importance of this service, Full Council instructed the development of Glasgow's first Public Toilet Strategy.

### Strategic review of public toilet services

We appointed the British Toilet Association (BTA) in mid 2024 to work in partnership with key stakeholders and undertake a strategic review of how public toilet services are provided in Glasgow and highlight opportunities to improve.

The review concluded in January 2025 with the publication of a formal report detailing key findings, ideas, and recommendations which have collectively helped shape this ten year Public Toilet Strategy.

### Public Consultation

On 27 November 2024, we launched a consultation into public toilet services. The public consultation was primarily available online and posed a series of questions aimed at assessing the diverse needs of our customers and gaining vital feedback to improve public toilet services in Glasgow.

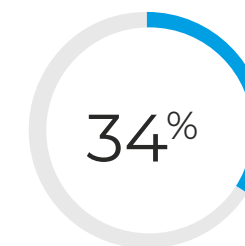
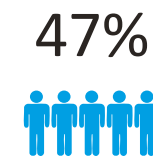
The consultation was an overwhelming success with 1,988 responses received by the closing date of 22 January 2025.

## What you told us

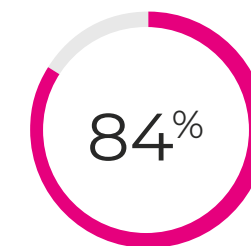
Our public consultation was key to developing this Public Toilet Strategy and has helped shape our vision, strategic objectives and commitments.

Responses were weighted to more accurately reflect the specific demographics of Glasgow; a summary of key findings is provided below.

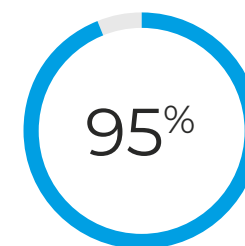
**A broad demographic of respondents participated in the consultation, which was split by approximately 47% male, 50% female, and 2% identifying in some other way**



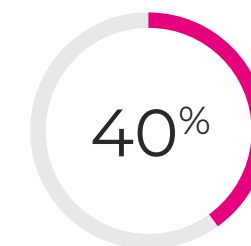
A majority of 34% of respondents were aged between 16 – 34 years old, reflecting that Glasgow has a higher proportion of young people than the rest of Scotland.



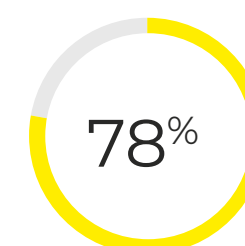
84% of respondents were Glasgow residents, highlighting the strength of feeling within our local communities.



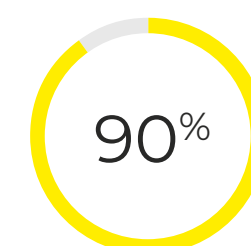
Approximately 95% of respondents felt there were insufficient public toilets in Glasgow, also noting concerns with a lack of provision in the evening



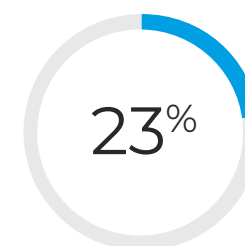
40% of respondents had difficulty using public toilet facilities for physical and mental related reasons



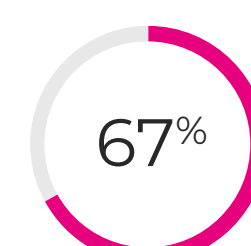
Public toilets play an important part in our daily lives, with 78% of respondents using these facilities a few times a month or more



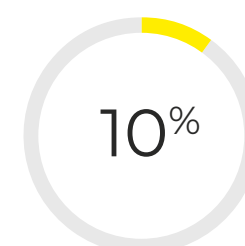
“Around 90% of respondents reported issues when trying to locate a public toilet, highlighting a need for better signposting.”



“23% of respondents felt unsafe using the public toilet facilities during the day. This rose significantly to around 50% of respondents feeling unsafe in the evening



67% of respondents felt that public toilets are a core public service and should be provided free of charge



The responses highlighted that 10% of respondents encountered gender-related problems when using the facilities

**The main factors discouraging the use of public toilets were lack of provision, insufficient signposting of public toilet locations and cleanliness.**



## Our Vision

Our public consultation was key to developing this Public Toilet Strategy and has helped shape our vision, strategic objectives and commitments.

Responses were weighted to more accurately reflect the specific demographics of Glasgow; a summary of key findings is provided below.

We recognise that having access to public toilets is a basic human right. These vital facilities are not just a convenience, they are a necessity.

## Vision Statement

Our vision is to provide sustainable, clean, safe and accessible public toilets which meet the diverse needs of our communities and promote social inclusion.



## Themes

We believe that an effective public toilet service can provide a range of benefits which align with the Council's broader Strategic Objectives.

In recognition of this fact, we have made commitments under six Themes. While these aims have distinctive purposes, they also interlink and collectively contribute towards a comprehensive public toilet service.



### Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the health and wellbeing of our communities through an effective public toilet service. We acknowledge that health plays a large role in shaping our public toilet strategy as access to a public toilet is a fundamental human right.



### Sustainability

Delivering on Glasgow's ambition to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2035 by providing a sustainable service which makes responsible use of resources and protects the environment.



### Inclusivity and Equality

Providing a fair and inclusive service which meets the needs of people of all genders and abilities and encourages cohesive communities.



### Accessibility

Responding to the needs of users and providing a service which takes into consideration physical and mental health conditions to ensure a welcoming public toilet service for everyone.



### Safety and Security

Recognising that the safety and security of users is a key factor in the success of a public toilet service. We understand that safety and security correlate with location, accessibility and inclusivity



### Supporting the Glasgow Economy

Contributing to the growth of the local economy and providing equitable access to public toilet services irrespective of the ability to pay.



## Health and Wellbeing

We believe that access to public toilets is a fundamental human right which is necessary to provide basic dignity.

An effective service can bring significant benefits to improve the overall health and wellbeing of Glasgow's communities and encourage good personal hygiene.

We understand the significance of providing sanitary bins to those who require it, to ensure the cleanliness and hygiene of public toilets is maintained. Providing this sanitary provision creates a dignified and secure space and improves environmental conditions.

Moreover, providing sanitary disposal bins can also mitigate the risk of items being incorrectly flushed in the toilet, which can be problematic during wastewater treatment, and overall functionality of the toilet.



### WE WILL

1. Provide public toilets that are well maintained, clean, hygienic and safe to use at all times.
2. Create sufficient space and facilities for the dignified and safe disposal of sanitary products, including period products, ostomy bags, and other such items.
3. Promote the safe disposal of any sharp items by providing a discrete, segregated and hygienic method of collection.

## Sustainability

Embedding sustainability within all aspects of our public toilet service directly aligns with our objective to achieve Net Zero carbon emissions by 2030 whilst protecting the environment.

This can include the use of recycled material during construction, the installation of ecofriendly and low energy infrastructure to limit the use of consumables, and the provision of disposal facilities to discourage inappropriate items from entering the wastewater treatment network or causing environmental damage.



### WE WILL

1. Promote sustainability at all stages of design, construction, and operation to reduce the consumption of energy.
2. Provide disposal facilities for items which can cause damage to the wastewater treatment network or environment, such as period products.

# Inclusivity and Equality

Public toilets should provide a welcoming and dignified experience which is affordable and open to everyone.

We must act to meet the Council’s ambition to become a Feminist City and ensure that the needs of women, girls, trans, and non-binary people are achieved, recognising that these users can feel impacted more acutely by matters of privacy and dignity.

Going forward, we will ensure that through the development and design of public toilets, we will prioritise inclusion and equality through consulting with the Feminist Urbanism Working Group.



## WE WILL

1. Provide public toilets which are welcoming to everyone regardless of their gender identity and sexual orientation and offer a private, safe and dignified environment.
2. Respond to the needs of women by providing access to period products and the space needed to comfortably use and dispose of used items.
3. Ensure that all public toilets operated by or on behalf of the council family are free to use.
4. Consult with the council’s Feminist Urbanism Working Group and leading academics when designing any new or refurbished public toilet facilities.



# Accessibility

Public toilet services must be open and physically accessible to all people and should be designed to assist those with underlying physical or mental health issues.

We also know the decision of where to visit, and how long to stay in that area, can depend on the ability to find a public toilet when relief is needed.

Therefore, an adequate level of public toilet provision with suitable opening hours can remove barriers to entry and provide an accessible public toilet service.



## WE WILL

1. Provide a sufficient number of strategically located public toilets throughout Glasgow which are open at appropriate times to provide a comprehensive service and a dignified and safe space for everyone.
2. Ensure that all public toilet locations meet the needs of users with physical health conditions, pregnant people, and those who have recently given birth; complying with all applicable regulations and industry guidance.
3. Recognise that not all health conditions are visible and reflect this fact in the service we provide.
4. Signpost the location of public toilets in an effective and accessible way.
5. Explore increasing public toilets in development proposals through the City Development Plan.





# Safety and Security

It is vital that public toilet services provide an environment which feels safe and secure and prevents vandalism and other forms of anti-social behaviour.

The most effective interventions will include a combination of physical works to public toilet locations and a new approach to how these services are designed and managed.

When determining the location of our new public toilet provision, we will consult with appropriate counterparts to ensure these locations are safe and secure. The design and planning of these public toilets will also be consulted with the Feminist Urbanism Working Group.



## WE WILL

1. Put the safety and security of users at the forefront of the public toilet service by providing facilities which are designed and operated effectively.
2. Provide a physical presence in close proximity to oversee public toilet locations during normal operating hours.
3. Avoid the creation of spaces where people can congregate and loiter in the vicinity of toilet cubicles.
4. Control the access to public toilet facilities to discourage vandalism and other types of anti-social behaviour.

# Supporting the Glasgow Economy

Public toilet services play an important role in the Glasgow economy.

A comprehensive service can contribute to the Council's tourism objectives by encouraging more day visitors to our communities and meeting increased seasonal and event demand. In addition to promoting economic activity, there is an opportunity to help shape the overall opinion of Glasgow as a premier tourist destination.

The adoption of mixed use buildings encompassing a public toilet and retail, or hospitality space can also help stimulate investment in our communities.

Opportunities for disposal of old public toilet locations can also help generate a new source of revenue to the council.



## WE WILL

1. Support tourism by establishing a dedicated visitor centre incorporating a flagship public toilet facility and Changing Places unit at a prominent City Centre location.
2. Provide suitable and sufficient public toilets to meet increased seasonal and event demand.
3. Promote the adoption of mixed use public toilet buildings to provide business opportunities which contribute to the local economy.
4. Develop a marketing strategy for old underground public toilets and progress their disposal via sale or long term lease wherever possible.

## Action Plan

The actions outlined in the table below will allow the council to meet our commitments detailed under each theme.

Table of Actions –

#	Theme	Description	Delivery Timescale
1	Health and wellbeing	Review the maintenance and cleaning arrangements across all public toilet and address any shortfalls.	By March 2026
1	Health and wellbeing	Procure and install disposal facilities and arrangements for period products, ostomy bags, and other such items across suitable public toilet locations.	By March 2028
1	Health and wellbeing	Procure and install disposal facilities and arrangements for sharps across suitable public toilet locations.	By March 2028
2	Sustainability	Ensure that the construction of any new or refurbishment of existing facilities utilise recycled or reusable materials where practicable, promoting the principle of reduce, re-use, recycle.	Ongoing to March 2035
2	Sustainability	Review the energy performance of all public toilet facilities and introduce low-energy infrastructure where practicable.	Ongoing to March 2035
2	Sustainability	Consult with Scottish Water to develop and implement solutions which reduce the consumption of water and mitigate damage to the wastewater treatment network.	Ongoing to March 2035
3	Inclusivity and Equality	Review the look-and-feel of all existing public toilet locations, develop a 10-year lifecycle investment plan for these facilities and implement improvements to these facilities over the duration of the strategy.	Ongoing to March 2035
3	Inclusivity and Equality	Remove all usage charges associated with council family operated public toilets.	By March 2026
3	Inclusivity and Equality	Provide all staff involved in the provision of public toilet services with annual equality and diversity training.	By March 2026
3	Inclusivity and Equality	Procure a contract for the provision of period products across all suitable public toilet locations.	By March 2027
3	Inclusivity and Equality	Undertake consultation with the council's Feminist Urbanism Working Group and relevant academic groups when designing new or refurbished public toilet facilities.	By March 2025
4	Accessibility	Review the number, location and opening hours of all public toilet facilities in the context of the findings of the strategic review of public toilet services by the BTA. Introduce new facilities as needed over the duration of the strategy to address capacity issues and generate a net increase in public toilet locations.	Ongoing to March 2035

#	Theme	Description	Delivery Timescale
4	Accessibility	Review the arrangements for provision of public toilets during events and in response to increased seasonal demand. Introduce an improved service model.	Ongoing to March 2035
4	Accessibility	Review all public toilets against the requirements of The Building Regulations, Approved Document M 2004, British Standards BS 8300-2009, the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019 and reference to Section 26 in the provision of Changing Places toilet facilities within certain large developments, the council's accessibility guidelines and other relevant guidance, with respect to access for those with physical conditions, those who are pregnant and those who have recently given birth.	By March 2026
4	Accessibility	Investigate and introduce where practicable low-volume hand dryers across all public toilet locations to reduce stress and promote a sense of calm.	By March 2026
4	Accessibility	Review all physical public toilet signposting in the context of responses from the public toilets consultation and key stakeholder groups. Improve physical signposting as needed to maximise the accessibility of these facilities.	By March 2027
4	Accessibility	Develop a new web portal / application for all public toilets operated by the council family, providing detailed up-to-date information regarding locations, opening times and key facilities available.	By March 2027
4	Accessibility	Refer to the City Development Plan 2 to explore opportunities to develop public toilets and appropriate funding.	By March 2027
5	Safety and security	Review the access arrangements across all public toilet locations and introduce new physical control systems as necessary to reduce vandalism and anti-social behaviour.	By March 2027
6	Supporting the Glasgow economy	Work in partnership with City Property to develop a marketing plan for old underground public toilet locations and progress opportunities for sale or long-term lease disposal where possible.	Ongoing to March 2035
6	Supporting the Glasgow economy	Develop a dedicated visitor centre in a prominent City Centre location which incorporates a flagship public toilet facility and Changing Places unit.	By March 2027
6	Supporting the Glasgow economy	Review and implement opportunities to introduce mixed-use public toilet buildings across the property estate.	Ongoing to March 2035



