

Report for: Cabinet – 10 February 2026

Item number: 17

Title: Haringey's Toilet Strategy and Action Plan 2025-30

Report authorised by : Dr Will Maimaris, Director of Public Health

Lead Officer: Rick Geer, Public Health Intelligence Specialist

Ward(s) affected: All

**Report for Key/
Non Key Decision:** Key

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. This report relates to the development of a new Toilet Strategy and Action Plan for Haringey which aims to improve toilet provision in the borough. Adequate provision of toilets that are accessible to the public is of importance to public health, enabling community participation and preventing isolation, particularly for older and disabled residents. Having a toilet strategy commits the council to improving access to safe, clean and accessible toilet facilities.
- 1.2. This report provides an overview of the consultation findings which was held over a three-month period between January and April 2024 with residents, visitors and businesses. A number of concerns were raised in response to the consultation relating to accessibility, safety, cleanliness, and a lack of Changing Places facilities. Many of these issues were highlighted in the east of the borough, particularly around Tottenham. The consultation was used to inform the toilet strategy and action plan.
- 1.3. The toilet strategy was developed in line with the Haringey Deal principles, being informed by engagement with residents and co-designed with residents from the Loos for Haringey group.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1. Access to toilet facilities whilst people are out and about, as campaign group Loos for Haringey have rightly highlighted, is vital to enable people to be active through their lives, participate in the community, and maintain their wellbeing. Yet we know as councils, businesses and other organisations have come under financial pressures, we have found it hard to maintain and adapt facilities, and also keep them clean and safe and free of ASB.

- 2.2. We know the need is important for all sorts of residents - those with health conditions and disabilities, and those without, those who are older, but also women at different life stages, families and all of the community.
- 2.3. We also know that many people in our community find it harder to access facilities, that going into a local coffee shop isn't an option for everyone, and the worry of not having access to adequate facilities creates embarrassment and anxiety.
- 2.4. I'm pleased to present this strategy, which sets out the start of a roadmap towards changing this for residents in Haringey. Loos for Haringey have played a central role in its co-production, supporting the survey we undertook with our communities and helping us engage with a range of different community groups to hear their voices.
- 2.5. This strategy is very much the start of a journey which sees us working with the NHS, local businesses, and our own Council teams to increase access and build consensus around access to better toilet facilities in Haringey, and across London.

3. Recommendations

Cabinet to:

- 3.1. Note the findings from the consultation and stakeholder engagement work and that these have informed the development of the strategy and actions.
- 3.2. Approve the development and publication of the Haringey Toilet Strategy and action plan (Appendix 1).
- 3.3. Note and thank the contributions of residents from the Loos for Haringey group in helping identify the need for the strategy and support its development.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1. The strategy sets out twenty actions to support the continued improvement and management of toilet facilities in the borough. All actions have been reviewed and agreed by the Toilet Strategy Delivery Group, which is a group of cross council officers supported by residents from Loos for Haringey. Best practice guidance was sought from other teams including equalities and diversity to ensure that the recommendations are evidence based.
- 4.2. Recommendations were developed around the five strategic priorities in the strategy to address key cross cutting issues. These are:
 - i) **Location of public toilets and gaps in provision**
 - ii) **Planning and transport**
 - iii) **Safety and hygiene**
 - iv) **Inclusive access**
 - v) **Communication and signage**

4.3. By approving the Haringey toilet strategy we aim to:

- i) Improve the overall standard of existing and planned toilets in Haringey particularly in Tottenham and the east of the borough where “loo deserts” exist.
- ii) Address gaps in toilet provision to ensure that future toilet developments are suitably located in areas of greatest need such as in green spaces/parks and shopping centres.
- iii) Ensure integration of toilet provision into the council’s wider planning and transport agenda, for example through the new Local Plan for Haringey and by building links with key organisations such as Transport for London and NHS.
- iv) Provide more inclusive access for user groups who have diverse needs including older people, people with long term conditions and parents/families.
- v) Improve the provision of Changing Places facilities for people with multiple and complex disabilities.
- vi) Help to tackle wider public health issues such as loneliness and social isolation where some people are unable to leave their home due to a lack of adequate facilities.
- vii) Improve safety and tackle anti-social behaviour including graffiti and street urination where these have been identified as a concern.
- viii) Support objectives set out in key plans and strategies such as Haringey 2035- Our Vision to create a thriving place and tackle inequalities in health and wellbeing.

5. Alternative options considered

5.1. Do nothing: leaving toilet facilities as they currently are. This was not considered a feasible option due to the following reasons:

- i) A lack of accessible and clean facilities presents other public health related issues such as loneliness/social isolation as some residents may decide not to leave their homes due to a lack of suitable facilities.
- ii) Clean and accessible toilet facilities are crucial for economically successful and inclusive High Streets across Haringey.

6. Background information

6.1. Age UK have campaigned to improve public toilet provision in the city, highlighting its importance for all Londoners, particularly older people and those with certain health conditions. Age UK reports a “worrying decline” in access to public toilets in London over the past decade and recommends that local authorities in London develop and implement a toilet strategy for their borough.

6.2. A public toilet or publicly accessible toilet for the purposes of this work could be a dedicated public toilet or a toilet in a public setting such as a library or sports

centre or in a private setting such as a shop, café or private museum. The toilet must be open to the public and not just to dedicated customers of that facility.

- 6.3. The Loos for Haringey group, which includes membership from Haringey Over 50s forum identified a need for more public toilets to be provided throughout the borough to meet current and future demand. Loos for Haringey took a deputation to Haringey's Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting in March 2023. Despite current and ongoing financial constraints to the council's budget, the panel agreed that a strategy and action plan were needed to:

- i) Deliver improvements to toilet access in the borough and address gaps with a focus on the east of the borough in and around Tottenham, considered "loo deserts".
- ii) Raise awareness of existing publicly accessible toilets in Haringey including in parks, transport terminals etc.
- iii) Raise awareness of the benefits of having a community toilet scheme in cafes, restaurants, pubs etc.

- 6.4. As part of the Haringey toilet strategy development process, a survey of local residents was carried out to understand local issues. **A total of 371 consultation responses were received: 346 online and twenty-five paper copies.** A multi-disciplinary toilet strategy delivery group was established to analyse the findings of the public consultation. The group included representation from:

- **Haringey Public Health**
- **Planning**
- **Placemaking**
- **Corporate Landlord**
- **NHS North Central London Integrated Care Board**
- **Loos for Haringey**

- 6.5. Some of the key findings were:

- Forty-two percent of respondents felt that current toilet provision in Haringey is bad.
- Forty-one percent of respondents disagreed that the location of facilities was convenient followed by 31% of respondents who strongly disagreed.
- Forty percent of respondents felt that a lack of public toilets would prevent them from spending time in parks or green space.
- Thirty-four percent of respondents disagreed that toilets are clean and well maintained, followed by 29% of respondents who strongly disagreed.
- Forty-four percent of respondents would be prepared to pay to use a public toilet.
- Forty-nine percent of respondents would feel comfortable using a public toilet access card in shops, cafes, restaurants etc.

- 6.6. The strategy and action plan are developed within the context of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), a legal obligation for public bodies in the UK to support inclusivity and diversity. Creating a more inclusive built environments is a key element of the planning agenda in Haringey. To help achieve inclusivity and accessibility, the following user groups were engaged with:
- i) The Severe Complex Autism Learning Disability Group
 - ii) Tottenham Pensioners Group
 - iii) Carers Group
 - iv) Period Dignity Group
 - v) Wheelchair User Group
- 6.7. The findings of the engagement work highlighted a number of key risk groups with additional need. The delivery/implementation of the strategy and actions would help to address these needs. These groups are:
- i) Older adults
 - ii) People with medical conditions
 - iii) Women and girls
 - iv) Pregnant mothers
 - v) Children and young people
 - vi) Carers
 - vii) People with disabilities
- 6.8. The suitability around the location of facilities is another key consideration which needs further work. In some parts of the borough, there is a mismatch relating to the location of public toilets and the actual demand of local residents and communities who need to access them.

7. Contribution to the Corporate Delivery Plan 2024-2026 High level Strategic outcomes'

- 7.1. The work is aligned to the following priorities set out in the Haringey 2035 – Our Vision:
- Thriving places. Priorities include maximising the use of existing assets and creatively sharing spaces and strengthening networks.
 - Tackling inequalities in health and wellbeing. Priorities include reducing inequalities in health outcomes.
- 7.2. Furthermore, the strategy aligns closely with the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, 2024-29, which includes the theme of Healthier High Streets and Healthy Place Shaping. An underlying priority of this theme is to develop a Toilet Strategy reporting into the Health and Wellbeing Board. The Health and Wellbeing

Strategy includes mental health as a priority and tackling issues including social isolation and loneliness. Improving toilet availability would help more residents to connect with one another where they currently feel unable to leave their home due to a fear of being unable to access a toilet.

8. Carbon and Climate Change

- 8.1. The relationship between the actions proposed in the strategy and the impact on carbon emissions and climate change will be considered as the actions are delivered/ implemented.

9. Statutory Officers comments

9.1. Finance comments

- 9.1.1. Whilst the strategy and action plan does set out the need for investment to realise the priorities contained therein, any investment will be met by bids for s107 or CIL, or to seek to attract external funding and as a result have no impact on the general fund.

9.2. Procurement

- 9.2.1. Strategic Procurement note the contents of this report and confirm there are no procurement related matters preventing Cabinet approving the Recommendations stated in paragraph 3 above

9.3. Director of Legal & Governance

- 9.3.1. The Director of Legal & Governance has been consulted in the preparation of this report.
- 9.3.2. The creation of the new toilet strategy and action plan to be implemented across the Council is a key decision. This is therefore a function which must be taken by cabinet as set out in Part 3, Section C of the Constitution.
- 9.3.3. Whilst the Public Health Act 1936 gives local authorities a power to provide public toilets, it imposes no duty to do so. Therefore, the provision of public conveniences is not a statutory service which Local Authorities are required to provide. Implementation of the proposed strategy and action plan is purely discretionary. Notwithstanding, the Council can seek to rely on section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (general power of competence) to implement the strategy. The general powers allow the Council to do anything that an individual can do but such powers is subject to the 'commercial purpose' limitations contained in section 4 of the 2011 Act.
- 9.3.4. The Council must ensure that it complies with any grant funding conditions for any grants received that are utilised in bringing into existence public toilets across

the borough. Consideration should also be given to the wider public sector equality duty as is more particularised in paragraph 9.4 below.

9.4. Equalities

9.4.1. The council has a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under the Equality Act (2010) to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share protected characteristics and people who do not
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

9.4.2. The three parts of the duty apply to the following protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/faith, sex and sexual orientation. Marriage and civil partnership status applies to the first part of the duty.

9.4.3. Although it is not enforced in legislation as a protected characteristic, Haringey Council treats socioeconomic status as a local protected characteristic.

9.4.4. The decision in question relates to the approval of a new Toilet Strategy and Action Plan for Haringey which aims to improve toilet provision in the borough.

9.4.5. The approval of a new Toilet Strategy and Action Plan for Haringey will have a positive impact on equalities, particularly for residents with protected characteristics such as age and disability. Accessible, well-maintained public toilets are essential for older people, disabled individuals, and those with health conditions, as they enable greater independence and confidence when moving around the borough. Improved provision reduces barriers to participation in community life, supports social inclusion, and helps tackle isolation. By prioritizing accessibility and inclusivity, the strategy ensures that everyone regardless of age or ability can enjoy public spaces with dignity.

10. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Haringey toilet strategy and action plan 2025-2030

11. Background papers

- a. Age UK webpage: [Out and About](#)
- b. Age UK London (report published in January 2025), Lifting the lid: looking for a better understanding of local authorities and public toilet provision in London. [ageuk lifting-the-lid final-17march-25--.pdf](#)

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