

Age UK London

Lifting the lid

Looking for a better understanding
of local authorities and public toilet
provision in London



January 2025

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Introduction

The research outlined in this report aims to increase our understanding about public toilet provision in London. Since 2022, Age UK London has campaigned for improved public toilet provision across the capital. For all Londoners, good availability of public toilets is essential to a civilized and welcoming city.

A lack of toilets is a serious public health concern and it is already disadvantaged groups of Londoners such as those with health conditions requiring more frequent visits to the toilet that are most affected. Insufficient and poor-quality public toilet provision impacts all Londoners but disproportionately affects older and disabled people, those with health conditions, pregnant women, itinerant workers, such as delivery and taxi drivers, as well as families with young children. Poor provision of public toilets can impact someone's quality of life and can cause and exacerbate social isolation.

In 2022 Age UK London published the report, [Public toilets in London – The views of older Londoners](#), which highlighted how poor public toilet provision was impacting people's lives.

Local authorities, regional and national government, transport operators, public bodies and businesses have important roles to play. This report focuses on local authorities and their responses to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request sent in July 2024.

There is no statutory obligation for local authorities to provide public toilets for their residents and visitors to their area, which, combined with tightening council budgets and other financial pressures, can help to explain why public toilet provision has been on the decline.

Our recommendations focus on what can be done by local authorities, regional and central government, as well as Transport for London (TfL). Some of these recommendations were outlined in a conference for local authorities organised by Age UK London and London Councils in 2023.

While there is existing research on the decline of public toilet provision and its implications for public health there is limited research about the current situation for local authorities in London and public toilet provision. This report seeks to help address that gap, analysing data collected through FOI requests. We hope that this report provides a snapshot analysis of what London local authorities are currently providing in the way of public toilets and how the situation can be changed to improve the lives of Londoners.

Methodology

In July 2024, we sent out Freedom of Information (FOI) requests to every London local authority. For the purposes of the request, we defined ‘public toilets’ as ‘a publicly available facility, which someone may use without being a customer. This includes public toilets, as well as publicly available toilets in public buildings managed by the council, like town halls and libraries’. The request explained that we wanted them to provide information on ‘facilities themselves – not the number of individual cubicles/urinals across all facilities’.

The submitted questions were as follows:

1. Across all council departments, what percentage of the council’s budget was spent on public toilets (i.e. cleaning, maintenance, refurbishment, opening) in the last financial year (2023/24) and how has this figure changed compared to 2013/14?
2. As of 16/7/24, how many public toilets does the council currently maintain?
3. How many new public toilets has the council opened since 2013/14?
4. How many public toilets has the council permanently closed since 2013/14?
5. On how many occasions has Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 funding been used to add or improve public toilet provision in your borough since 2013/14?
6. Do you have a Community Toilet Scheme (in which businesses offer their loos to non-paying customers) and, if so, how many businesses are participating as of 16/7/24?
7. Do you have a public toilet strategy or plan that is published internally or available to be viewed by the public?
8. Is there a council employee leading on the delivery of improving public toilet provision and in which department do they sit?

Of the 33 local authorities we submitted FOI requests to, 30 responded.

Limits to research

We used FOI requests as the primary methodology for this report. There are limitations when relying on FOI requests. Three of the 33 local authorities did not respond to the request, so we do not say that this research presents a full picture about the situation across all London local authorities. The same FOI sent to several local authorities can be answered in different ways. Questions may be interpreted in more than one way.

Definitions and their interpretations can make a difference. Although definitions were provided in the FOI request we can see that more than one definition has been used. For some groups of data we have sought to verify the information received in FOI responses using web searches, but this has not been possible for all of the data received.

Key findings

- **At least 97 public toilets maintained by local authorities were closed between the financial years 2013/14 and 2023/24.**
- **Over the last decade, three times as many public toilets have been closed by local authorities as they have been opened.** Just three of the 30 local authorities that participated in the research had opened more public toilets than they had closed.
- **The 30 local authorities participating in the research reported that they maintained an average of 22 public toilets each** (this includes stand-alone public toilets as well as other public toilets in places such as libraries and parks). Seven councils reported having fewer than ten public toilets in their borough.
- **The number of public toilets reported by local authorities matched the information listed on their own website in just two of the 30 local authorities that participated in the research.**
- **Significantly less than half of local authorities ran a Community Toilet Scheme (CTS).** Some schemes have as few as four toilets as part of their CTS but four had more than 50.
- **Just two local authorities had a Public Toilet Strategy.** A further three local authorities are developing or have plans to develop a strategy.
- **Responsibility for public toilet provision is most likely to fall under either the Environment Department or Waste and Street Cleaning.** A wide range of council departments and teams have responsibility for public toilet provision.
- **Some local authorities struggle to report how much money is spent on public toilet provision in a financial year.**

Public toilets opened and closed in the past 10 years



Three times as many public toilets have been closed as have been opened.

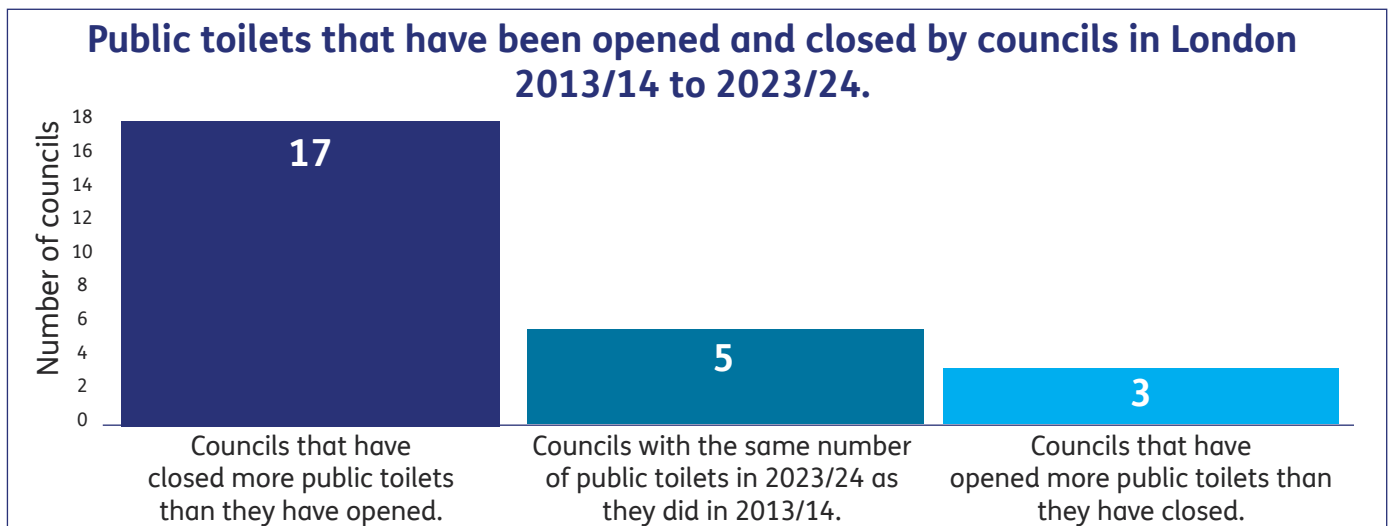
The local authorities that responded to the FOI request (and were able to respond to the specific question) reported that 97 public toilets had been closed since the 2013/14 financial year. This is three times as many closures compared to the number of public toilets reported to have opened. Councils closed an average of five public toilets each and two local authorities closed more than ten public toilets in the past decade. One local authority reported that all of the five public toilets that it had opened, had now been closed.

Some councils were unable to say whether or not they had closed public toilets.

Four local authorities said that they were unable to provide information on the number of public toilets that had been closed.

Councils are six times as likely to have closed more public toilets than they had opened.

25 local authorities supplied sufficient data to be able to ascertain the net change in public toilet numbers as a result of both openings and closures. Of these, 17 had closed more public toilets than they had opened. Three had opened more than they had closed. At five local authorities there had been no net change.



Data source: Responses to a FOI request sent by Age UK London to all 33 London local authorities in July 2024. Data is based on responses from the 30 local authorities that responded to the FOI request and does not represent data from all local authorities in London.

Nearly half of London local authorities have opened no public toilets in the past ten years.

Information from responses to the FOI requests show that nearly half (14) of the responding local authorities (30) have opened no new public toilets between the 2013/14 financial year and the 2023/24 financial year.



32 new public toilets had been opened across 11 local authorities

- 11 councils reported that they had opened a total of 32 public toilets altogether.
- Four councils had opened one public toilet between 2013/14 and 2023/24 and a further four had opened two public toilets.
- Three other councils had opened four, five and eleven respectively.
- Park and library toilets accounted for all of the new public toilets in one local authority.
- One council reported that it had opened 27 toilets, this could not be verified as the figure did not match other information provided by the council.

Some local authorities were unable to report if any new toilets had opened

Four councils responded that they were unable to provide information about the number of public toilets that had opened.

New toilets will not always result in a net increase.

Although 32 public toilets have been opened by councils, more than three times that number (97) have been closed. These changes show that there were 65 fewer public toilets in the 2023/24 financial year compared with the 2013/14 financial year.

A wider picture.

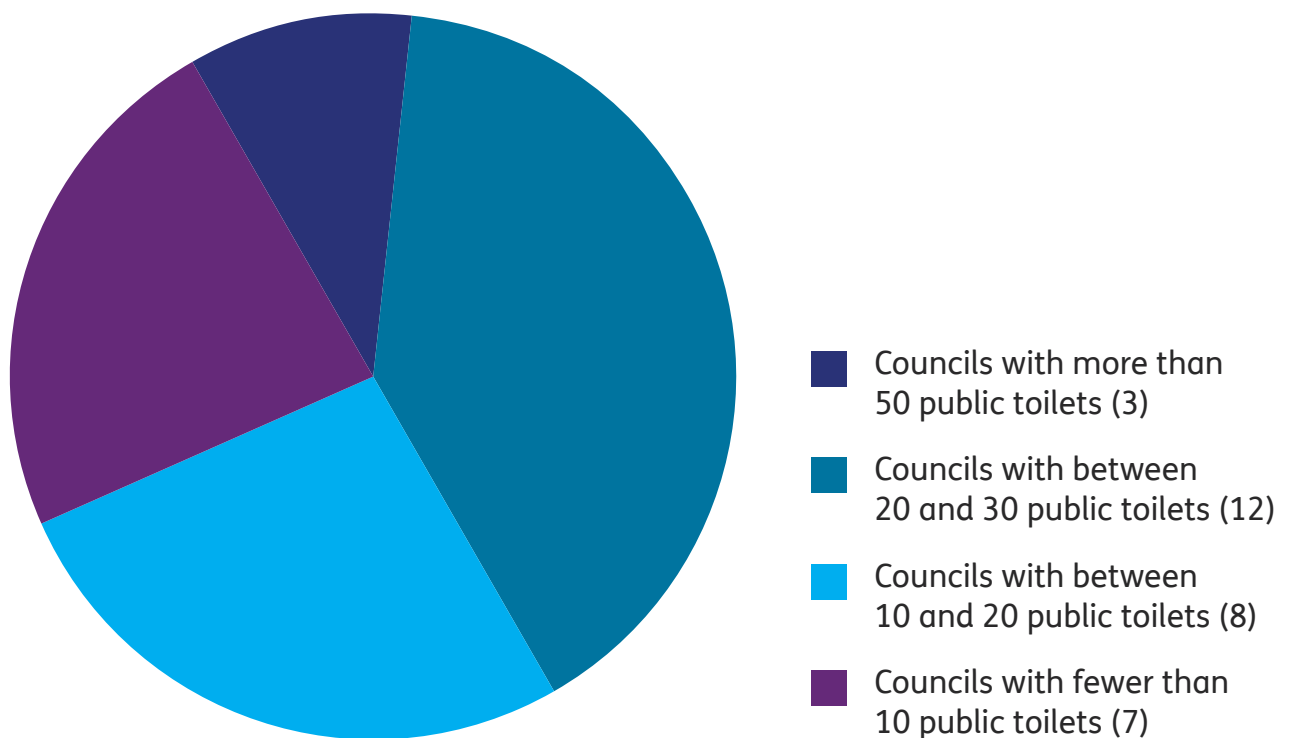
In some council areas, work may have been undertaken to help improve overall provision even if no new public toilets had been opened. One example is an east London council that had not opened any new public toilets but did run a Community Toilet Scheme. Other examples of positive initiatives from councils include, business engagement, new strategies and improvements to public communication about the location of public toilets.

The number of local authority maintained public toilets in London

Councils maintain an average of 22 public toilets but there are huge differences and some councils have just one.

The 30 local authorities that responded to the FOI request responded that they maintained a total of 650 public toilets. This averages out at just under 22 per local authority. The local authority managing the most public toilets had 68 and the local authority managing the least had one. Seven councils managed fewer than ten public toilets and three managed more than 50.

The number of public toilets in London local authorities



Data source: Responses to a FOI request sent by Age UK London to all 33 London local authorities in July 2024. Data is based on responses from the 30 local authorities that responded to the FOI request and does not represent data from all local authorities in London.

Definitions make a big difference when it comes to public toilet provision. The FOI request used in the research asked local authorities to use the following definition of a public toilet:

‘A publicly available facility, which someone may use without being a customer. This includes public toilets, as well as publicly available toilets in public buildings managed by the council, like town halls and libraries.’

We asked councils to exclude ‘toilets managed by private enterprise – such as those in shopping centres or ‘Community Toilet Scheme’ toilets managed by businesses (see the ‘Community Toilet Scheme’ section). We also explained that we wanted them to provide information on ‘facilities themselves – not the number of individual cubicles/urinals across all facilities’. For example, a men’s public toilet with a urinal and two toilet cubicles would be regarded as one public toilet.

There is no centralized data available about the number of public toilets maintained by London local authorities so we cannot say that the figure of 650 is accurate. Not every local authority replied to the FOI request and public toilets open and close very frequently.

Some councils may not have included all of the public toilets they could have.

In their responses, the majority of local authorities included public toilets in libraries, leisure centres, buildings partially open to the public such as town halls and cemeteries. It is likely that those local authorities which reported just a small number of public toilets (for example ten or fewer) did not include all toilets available to the public across a range of property types.

The importance of public information.

Whilst it is reasonable to regard a public toilet in a building such as a library as a public toilet, many members of the public may not consider availability in such buildings when looking for a toilet. This highlights the importance of good signage, public information and staff training.



It should also be noted that the number of public toilets given by the local authority in response to the FOI request was the same as the number listed on council websites for just two of the 30 local authorities. Well over one third of all London local authorities (12) do not list the location of public toilets on their website.

Park toilets.

Most local authorities included park toilets in the numbers they provided. Sometimes these will be managed or by a subcontractor or as part of a franchise agreement with a business e.g. a cafe in the park.

Stand-alone toilets make up a small proportion of the total number of public toilets.

Stand-alone public toilets blocks (including automated public toilet blocks) are likely to make up just a small proportion of the total number. One local authority recorded over 60 public toilets, of which fewer than ten were stand-alone blocks or automated public toilets.

Not all public toilets maintained by councils will be open at any given time.

It should also be noted that local authorities were asked how many they maintained as of 16th July 2024 and in some cases, this will be different to how many were 'open' as of 16th July 2024. Many Londoners will be familiar with public toilets that have been closed for a variety of reasons for weeks, months or even years.

Community Toilet Schemes

What are Community Toilet Schemes?

Community Toilet Schemes (CTS) enable members of the public to use toilet facilities in a range of approved local businesses and other organisations during their opening hours. Participation in a scheme is voluntary and the schemes that currently exist in London operate in different ways.

13 councils in London have a Community Toilet Scheme.

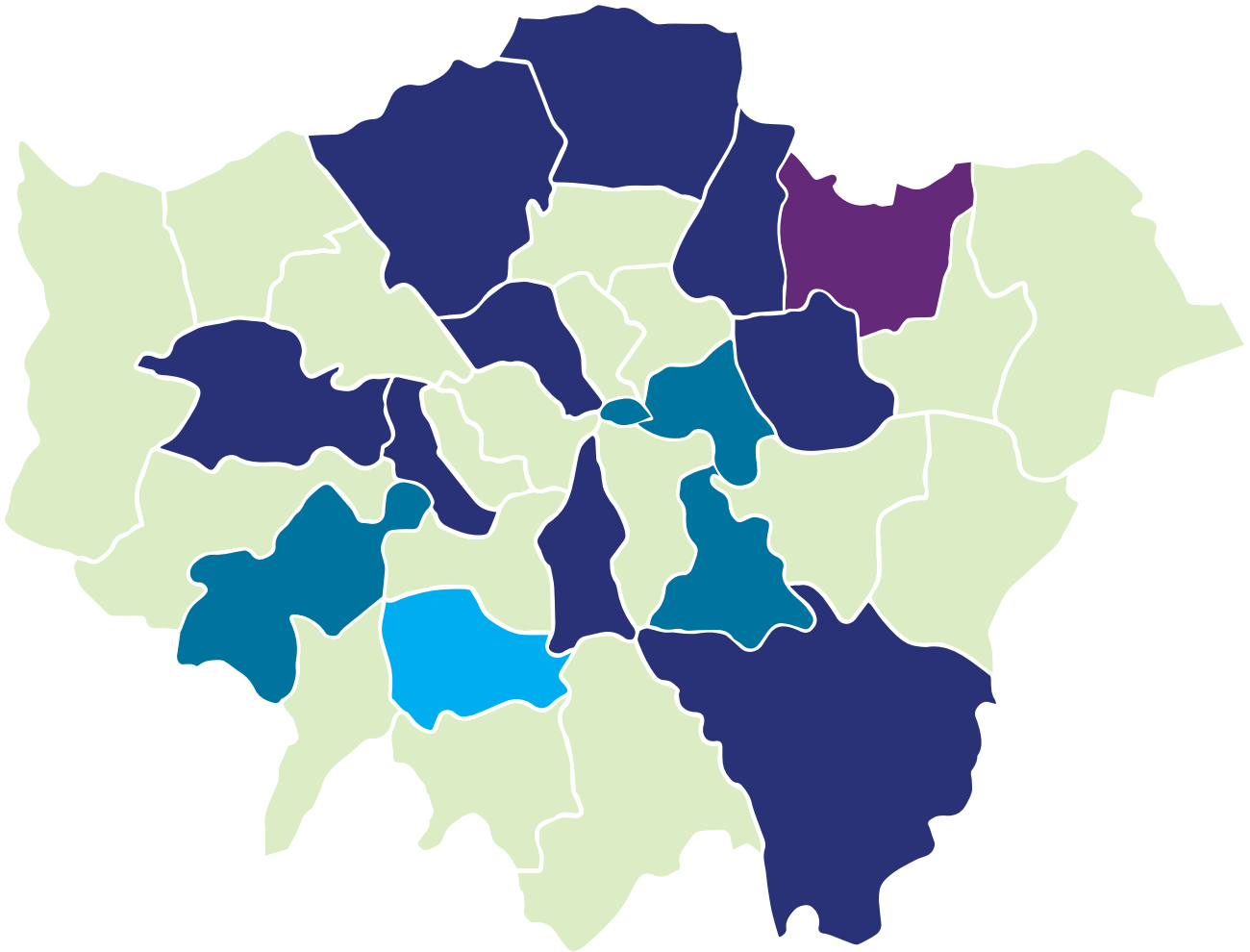
Effective CTS can play an important part of public toilet provision when implemented alongside other projects aimed at improving provision.

13 local authorities reported that they had a CTS (11 of these provided the information in response to the FOI request and the information was independently researched for in two local authorities). In one of the local authority areas the scheme was run by a partner organisation from the voluntary and community sector.

Schemes differ greatly in size.

CTS ranged from having four to 92 toilets in their scheme. Most toilets in the schemes with the highest number of participating businesses were run by cafes, pubs and other businesses including cinemas. In contrast, for some councils, most of the toilets in their CTS were those maintained by the council, such as libraries or parks.

Community Toilet Scheme map



■ Council areas with a Community Toilet Scheme - **Barnet, Bromley, Camden, Ealing, Enfield, Hammersmith & Fulham, Lambeth, Newham, Waltham Forest**

■ Council areas with a Community Toilet Scheme that has more than 50 toilets in the scheme - **City of London, Lewisham, Richmond upon Thames, Tower Hamlets**

■ Councils developing a Community Toilet Scheme (as of December 2024) - **Merton**

■ Councils considering developing a Community Toilet Scheme (as of December 2024) - **Redbridge**

Data source: Responses to a FOI request sent by Age UK London to all 33 London local authorities in July 2024. Data is based on responses from the 30 local authorities that responded to the FOI request as well as additional online research and does not represent data from all local authorities in London.

Some councils are considering developing a new Community Toilet Scheme.

One local authority said that it was actively developing a new scheme whilst another council said that they were considering a scheme.

Over half of all boroughs don't have a Community Toilet Scheme.

18 local authorities do not have a CTS (17 of these responded to the FOI).

Local authority public toilet strategies

Only a small minority of councils have public toilet strategies or plans.

Of the 30 local authorities to respond to the FOI request, just two local authorities reported that they had a public toilet strategy.

Toilet strategies can provide an important framework for local authorities to coordinate the actions needed to improve public toilet provision locally. Public toilet provision can feature in the plans of many different council departments and strategies can offer a more joined-up approach for auditing and evaluating current provision, listening to residents and making decisions based on population needs.

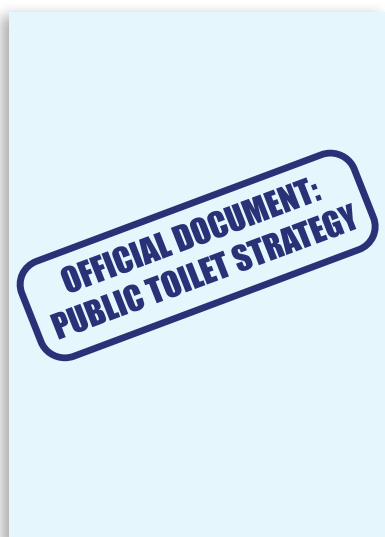
Some councils are developing strategies.

Of the 28 local authorities that reported that they did not have a public strategy, two councils reported that they had one under development and since the research took place one more council has announced plans to develop a strategy.

One council responded that although they did not have a formal public toilet strategy, they had undertaken a Policy and Performance Review of their CTS, which had resulted in a range of good recommendations for improving provision.

Councils can benefit from public toilet strategies.

Age UK London believe that all local authorities in London would benefit from a public toilet strategy to coordinate actions across a number of council departments. Although it is difficult to draw conclusions from the two councils with strategies about how they have benefited from a strategy, we think it reasonable to conclude that the difficulty some councils had in providing information may indicate the potential to benefit from a more strategic-approach.



Council departments: Who has responsibility?



Fewer than half of London local authorities say that they have a specific employee responsible for delivery of public toilet provision.

In the FOI request, local authorities were asked if there was an employee at the council that led on delivery or had oversight for improving public toilet provision. If there was, they were asked which council department or team that person was a member of.

Thirteen of the local authorities responded that there was a specific person with this role, although it was not always clear if they were referring to an individual or a group of staff with degrees of relevant responsibility.

Where there are specific employees they are most likely to belong to either the Environment or Waste departments. However, there are exceptions.

Some councils responded that there was a lead employee and named the department that they sat in, whilst others referred to a group of individuals such as 'facilities management' or a 'project team'. The departments most commonly referred to as having some responsibility were 'Environment' departments, 'Waste' departments, as well as 'property' or 'facilities' management. In one council the CTS delivery was the responsibility of the 'High Streets team'.

In some cases, individual roles were mentioned. These included a 'Head of Waste and Cleaning Services' and a 'Director of Property'. Two councils were recruiting individual posts to specifically cover delivery.

17 councils responded that they did not have a specific employee. This does not mean that there are not any employees with some responsibility for delivery of this service. One of the 17 councils mentioned that they had 'a number of employees working on the CTS', and another local authority replied that there was 'no dedicated employee' but the service was 'managed via the Street Cleaning Team'.

Using planning policy and agreements with developers to improve public toilet provision

Planning policy (and planning tools), and agreements with developers can be used by local authorities to improve public toilet provision.

In smaller developments, and subject to local evidence and Development Plan policy, boroughs may secure access to toilet facilities or secure provision of public toilets through Community Infrastructure Levy or planning obligations such as legally binding ‘Section 106’ agreements between a local planning authority and a property owner.

Around a half of local authorities have used CIL or S106 funding to support the provision of public toilets in the past ten years.

In some developments, and subject to local evidence and Development Plan policy, boroughs may be able to secure provision of public toilets through Community Infrastructure Levy or planning obligations (Section 106 planning obligations) on developers. This potential to unlock additional funding from developers may help some local authorities to improve public toilet provision, especially in an environment of significant pressures on budgets.

Of the 28 local authorities able to respond to the question about ‘how many occasions has Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 funding been used to add or improve public toilet provision in your borough since 2013/14?’, 13 councils had used either CIL or Section 106 funding for toilet provision and 14 had not.

The 13 councils that had used CIL or S106 funding had used the funding on an average of three occasions to provide public toilets. One council had used CIL or S106 on seven occasions.

Policy S6 of the London Plan

The London Plan is the Mayor of London’s Spatial Development Strategy for Greater London. It is part of the statutory development plan for London and policies should inform decisions on planning applications across London. A borough’s Local Plan must be in ‘general conformity’ with the London Plan. Policy S6 (‘Public toilets’) of the London Plan requires that large-scale developments that are open to the public, such as shops, sport, leisure and health care facilities, transport hubs, cultural and civic buildings, provide and secure the future management of public toilets.

Spending on public toilets

Many local authorities unable to provide any information

15 of the 30 local authorities that responded to the FOI request were unable to respond to the question about budget expenditure on public toilet provision and how this had changed over time. Of those local authorities unable to provide any information some replied that it was because they did not hold the information. Some responded that it would take too long to provide the figures, indicating that the information was difficult to find. In some cases, this was because cleaning, maintenance and refurbishment of public toilets was not recorded separately and was part of a broader cleaning and maintenance contract.

Some local authorities responded that they could only provide figures for the amount spent on public toilet provision by some, but not all council departments. Others replied that they couldn't respond to the request because expenditure was part of a commercially sensitive contract.

Some local authorities could provide information for the 2023 to 24 financial year only.

Nine out of the 30 local authorities that responded to the FOI request were able to provide either a financial amount or the percentage for the 2023/24 financial year. Where expenditure amounts were provided, they ranged from £2,964 to £1,740,000. Although such differences are extreme, it is important to note that comparisons between very different local authorities, in this case a borough that is a global tourist destination and an outer London borough, are unlikely to be particularly helpful.

One local authority responded that there had been no expenditure on public toilet provision since the 2015/16 financial year.

Changes over time

Of those local authorities that did provide a figure percentage for the 2023/24 financial year, the overwhelming majority were unable to provide a figure for earlier financial years. However, three local authorities did, and of these two recorded an increase in the amount of budget spent, whilst one recorded a decrease in expenditure. The differences over time were not statistically different enough to conclude that they were for reasons other than increases to costs as opposed to a decision to increase expenditure for other purposes.

Limits of relying on FOI request responses.

One limit of the research methodology is that although local authorities were asked to provide a percentage for 'cleaning, maintenance and refurbishment', some local authorities included costs that others may have allocated under different budgets. An example of this is the local authority that included vehicle costs, where the vehicles were used by the maintenance team, whilst others did not.

Budget changes: Conclusions

The incomplete and limited responses to the question about budgets in the FOI requests make it difficult to make any constructive analysis about how public toilet provision expenditure by London local authorities has changed. However, the very fact that local authorities struggled to provide information about public toilets expenditure suggests that a more strategic approach to provision, for example, as part of a cross-departmental strategy, enabling an overview of expenditure across the council would be beneficial. A staff member at the local authority overseeing a strategic approach is likely to have more resources to establish a complete picture of expenditure and this could greatly assist with decision-making.

Recommendations

These varied recommendations are based upon analysis of the FOI request responses, as well as additional research, such as checking information on council websites. Some recommendations, including the development of public toilet strategies, are partially informed by difficulties that some local authorities appeared to have in finding the information they were asked for. Information about expenditure is one example of this.

Age UK London recognises the very significant financial pressures that local authorities are under, and although all recommendations will come with some cost, there are many that will not entail considerable costs. We also recognise the significant steps taken by many local authorities in London to improve provision.

This report focuses on local authorities, however we have included recommendations for the Greater London Authority (both the Mayor of London and GLA functional bodies such as TfL) and the national Government. They have important roles to play and their actions, such as more toilets on the transport network, can help to alleviate some of the pressures on local authorities.

Recommendations for local authorities

- **Develop a strategy for public toilet provision across the borough as part of the council's public health responsibilities.** Implementation of a strategy could improve coordination of relevant activity across multiple council departments and mainstream public toilet provision into strategic policy such as urban planning.

Key elements of a strategy should include, but are not limited to, a needs assessment based on mapping existing public toilets and identifying gaps by working with communities. An action plan with a timetable for delivery should be part of the strategy and this should be informed by an Equalities Impact Assessment.

- **Identify a named officer responsible for leading on the strategy.**
- **Review what steps can be taken to improve the recording and clarity of financial information about expenditure on public toilet provision across all departmental budgets.**

- **Ensure planning officers are aware of opportunities to improve provision by using planning policy (and planning tools), and agreements with developers** to help secure access to, or provision of, public toilets.

For smaller developments, and subject to local evidence and Development Plan policy, these opportunities should include Section 106 agreements, use of the Community Infrastructure Levy and other planning obligations.

- **Take concrete steps to meet requirements set out in Policy S6 (Public toilets) of the London Plan.** Local Plans should be checked for conformity with Policy S6, which requires that large-scale developments open to the public, such as shops, sport, leisure and health care facilities, transport hubs, cultural and civic buildings and large areas of public realm, provide and secure the future management of:
 - free publicly accessible toilets suitable for a range of users including disabled people, families with young children, people of all gender identities; and free 'Changing Places' toilets designed in accordance with the guidance in British Standard BS8300-2:2018. These should be available during opening hours, or 24 hours a day where accessed from areas of public realm.
- **Undertake a review of local signage and maps and take steps to improve signage,** prioritising local areas most in need.
- **Make paper copies of a map with toilet locations available to members of the public at libraries and other public buildings owned by the council.**
- **Check website information about public toilet locations is accurate and includes important information such as opening times and accessibility.**
- **Make available, on both the council website and in paper copy format, a high standard of information about the locations of public toilets, including maps.** Information should be updated at least twice per year and must include details about accessible public toilets and Changing Places Toilets.
- **Deliver a public campaign to raise awareness of toilet locations.** This should include a review of opportunities to use community newsletters (online and offline) to provide information about public toilet locations.
- **Promote other sources of information about toilet locations,** such as the Great British Toilet Map and the Changing Places Toilet Map.
- **Consider developing an effective Community Toilet Scheme as part of wider initiatives to increase and improve provision.** These should be in places of need and based on meaningful consultation with residents and learning from successful models in other local authorities.

- **Where CTS already exist, work with businesses and the wider community to strengthen provision.** This should include reviewing schemes and incentivising more businesses to join schemes.
- Where a CTS is not developed, encourage businesses that wish to make their toilets available to non-customers, to record their information on websites and apps such as ‘Toilets4London’.

Recommendations for the Greater London Authority

(including Transport for London)

- **Develop a Greater London Authority public toilets plan to coordinate action on improving public toilet provision** in areas where the Mayor of London has a role, such as the TfL network, Night Time Strategy Guidance for boroughs, London Plan policy and funding from programmes such as the Good Growth Fund. Actions in these areas can help support local authorities.
- **A designated GLA staff member should oversee the plan,** and responsibilities should include working with boroughs and community organisations to identify ‘loo deserts’ and develop solutions.
- **To review the effectiveness of current London Plan policy in relation to new developments and public toilet provision** and ensure that the 2026 refresh of the London Plan (London’s Strategic Planning document) is strengthened to have more impact on improving provision.
- **To call on the government to increase funding for councils so that they have greater resources to improve provision in their area.**
- **For Transport for London. To deliver and report regularly of actions to improve provision on the TfL network outlined in the ‘Improving our toilet provision’ document published in October 2024.**

Recommendations for the Government

- The national Government should fund local authorities sufficiently so that they can achieve good provision of public toilets.

Examples of good practice

The recommendations in this report outline many ways that councils can improve the provision of public toilets in their boroughs. Although there is a lot that must be done, we are mindful that councils face significant challenges. This is one reason why we have decided to not name individual councils in cases where we feel significant improvement is necessary. Moreover, we do recognise that there are councils across the city that are taking steps to improve the situation. In the list below we give recent examples of good practice.

- **Councils developing public toilet strategies:** Haringey and Southwark are two examples of councils developing public toilet strategies.

Haringey Council is developing a strategy with residents and input from several council departments that aims to include initiatives that are innovative and have a long-term impact. In the first four months of 2024, the Council conducted a consultation with residents and businesses to identify priorities.

In October 2024, **Southwark** Council announced a public toilets strategy focusing on accessibility. Key elements of the strategy will include, ensuring adequate and appropriate access to toilets across the council's estate, including council offices, libraries and leisure centres; up to date information and sign posting on the location and availability of accessible toilet facilities across the borough; and working with the borough's business community, linking to their Thriving High Streets programme, to encourage businesses to make their toilets available to shoppers and users of the high street.

- **New CTS:** Tower Hamlets launched a new CTS to increase toilet availability in the borough.

Tower Hamlets began a phased launch of their new CTS in the summer of 2024. Two years of planning, including thorough business engagement, meant that the Scheme had more than 85 participating businesses when it launched. The Scheme features its own branding and business engagement focused on benefits such as increased footfall from potential customers and enhancing the relationship between business and local community.

- **Councils refreshing and relaunching existing CTS:** Richmond upon Thames Council and Merton Council are working to upgrade their CTS.

The London Borough of **Richmond upon Thames** marked the 20th anniversary of their CTS in 2024 by expanding the number of participating locations to over 70. The expansion was based on a review of the Scheme following the COVID-19 pandemic and the Scheme includes an interactive map.

Merton Council have launched a review of their CTS with the intention of expanding the Scheme in 2025. Work to improve information for the public about toilet locations has already begun and residents and community organisations are working with the Council ahead of an expanded Scheme in 2025. A Project Officer role has been created to lead work on the review and expansion.

- **Supporting a voluntary and community sector organisation to deliver a CTS:** Lewisham Local deliver a thriving CTS and Loo of the Year competition.

Lewisham Council supports community organisation, **Lewisham Local**, to deliver one of the largest schemes in London with theatres, cafes, pubs and many more venue types participating. To raise awareness of the Scheme a Loowisham Community Toilet of the Year Competition launched in 2023. As well as a ‘top 20 loos’, there are several award categories, including ‘most fascinating toilet’ and ‘prettiest toilet’.

- **Investment in new public toilets:** Islington and the City of Westminster are among those councils investing in new and refurbished public toilets.

Islington Council and the City of **Westminster** Council are examples of two councils, which are investing in new public toilets. 2024 saw Islington Council begin work on a programme to replace their six Automated Public Toilets. Some of the new automated public toilets opened in 2024 and the full work programme is scheduled for completion in Spring 2025.

In 2024 City of Westminster Council announced the latest phase of its public toilets investment programme with plans to refurbish eight central London public toilets. Alongside extensive refurbishment at West End public toilets, the Council is also upgrading its Automated Public Toilets and making improvements to its ‘neighbourhood public toilets’.

Working with local resident-led campaign groups.

Many councils across London do listen to and work with local residents shaping plans to improve provision. Local residents know their neighbourhoods well and are often those best positioned to advise councils on local needs and gaps in public toilet provision. As part of the London Loos campaign, Age UK London has supported local groups of residents to deliver local campaigns. Alongside campaigning activities such as deputations, community audits, questions to the council and petitions, these groups have also worked constructively and in some cases in partnership with councils.



Examples of this include:

- **Merton:** The More Loos for Merton group have shared their community research with the council and met councillors and officers on several occasions.
- **Southwark:** The Loos for Southwark group made a range of contributions to a Scrutiny review and are working with the Council to support the development of a public toilet strategy.
- **Haringey:** The Loos for Haringey group sit on the Council's public toilets strategy co-design planning group and have supported the delivery of a boroughwide consultation.
- **Islington:** Loos for Islington campaigners met with the Council on two occasions.
- **Barnet:** Findings from an audit conducted by Loos for Barnet campaigners have been shared with the Council.



About Age UK London

Age UK London is a charity that campaigns for an age-friendly London. Working with older Londoners themselves, we campaign for specific change to improve the lives of those over 50 living in the capital and ensure that their experiences, needs and contributions are heard and taken into account by decision makers.



Age UK London is a member of the London Loo Alliance a coalition of charities, trade unions, civic societies, resident and community associations, researchers and equality campaigners joining together to demand more and better public toilets in London.

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