

Public conveniences

Consultation report

Date of issue: 23 April 2018

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1. Overview

In 2015 we had a consultation on reviewing our public conveniences and as a result the number of toilets in our town centres was reduced from nine to six and urinals were de-commissioned.

It was agreed at a Cabinet meeting on 3 October 2017 that the council would undertake a further review of the public toilets service as part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and as part of this the council wanted to have the views on a range of issues relating to the continued provision of this service from service users.

The council currently operates six public conveniences which also offer disabled facilities. The toilets are staffed by four toilet attendants who work on a rota system to open, close, and clean the toilets.

Bridgend town centre has two public conveniences, Porthcawl town centre has three and Maesteg has one. These are comparable to other town centres where Pontypridd had two public conveniences in the town and Neath has only one.

The council also operates a comfort scheme with businesses across the county borough.

2. Introduction

A public survey based on Bridgend County Borough Council's public conveniences was conducted over an eight week period between 7 February 2018 and the 4 April 2018. The survey was available to complete online on the consultation pages of the council's website. Paper copies were made available at local libraries and Bridgend and Maesteg bus stations. Residents could also request a paper copy (Welsh, English or accessible).

In total, there were twenty-one questions which required a reply from respondents; all other questions in the survey were optional. All survey responses offered the option of anonymity. The council's standard set of equalities monitoring questions were also included with the survey, as is recommended good practice for all public facing surveys carried out by the council.

The consultation team attended two meetings: Bridgend Shout and the Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People, paper copies of the consultation were provided at both meetings. The content of the consultation remains available online in closed consultations.

Comments regarding the consultation were also invited via letter, email and phone call.

3. Promotional tools and engagement methods

The following sections breakdown the communications and engagement methods used to reach people and encourage participation.

3.1 Social media

Facebook and Twitter have widely been used to promote the consultation.

Information was posted to the council's corporate Twitter and Facebook accounts throughout the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the proposals. The council currently has 10,304 followers on its corporate Twitter

accounts and 10,577 on Facebook. During the period, the authority 'tweeted' 22 times and the information was seen 19,093 times. Two posts were made to the council's Facebook page, which were seen 28,241 times.

Facebook adverts were placed during the consultation period to raise awareness of the consultation and to encourage citizens to share their views on the proposals. The adverts were seen 29,486 times, generating 672 clicks through to the consultation webpages.

3.2 Local press

Details of the consultation were sent to local media outlets via a press release.

The consultation featured on Wales Online on 8 February 2018 and the local Gem on 15 February. The consultation was also featured in the February issue of the Seaside News.

All information was made available on the Bridgend County Borough Council website via the consultation webpages.

3.3 The public convenience survey

The online and paper surveys contained twenty-one questions which required a reply from respondents; all other questions in the survey were optional.

The survey was available on the council's website and was sent to all 1,686 members of the Citizens' Panel.

Additionally this was sent to 126 respondents who took part in the public convenience survey in 2015 and who had asked to be kept up to date with future consultation activity. It was also sent to a further 442 respondents who have completed similar surveys and have asked to receive key surveys in the future.

3.4 Community engagement

Details about the consultation were sent to local groups and organisations. We had a request from SHOUT in response to this and as a result the consultation team and service area attended one of their meetings on 21 March 2018. 20 people attended the meeting, and all attendees completed paper copies of the consultation.

Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People had invited officers from the council to speak to members about the 'Supported Bus Service Consultation' that was live at the same time as the Public conveniences consultation, as part of their regular group meeting. This was therefore used as an opportunity inform members of the 'public convenience consultation' where attendees were given the opportunity to complete the survey. 15 members of the coalition attended the meeting, in total 14 completed the public conveniences survey.

Members of the transport service area and consultation team attended the Your Bus Matters event held in Bridgend bus station on 13 March 2018. The aim of this event was for service providers to gain feedback directly from the public. The consultation team used this opportunity to also inform passers-by of the Public conveniences survey and offered paper surveys or informed people of the online survey if this was their preferred method of engagement.

3.5 Posters

Posters promoting the consultation were placed in all local public conveniences. Posters were circulated to the library service for use in their 12 branches and at Bridgend and Maesteg bus stations.

4. Response rate

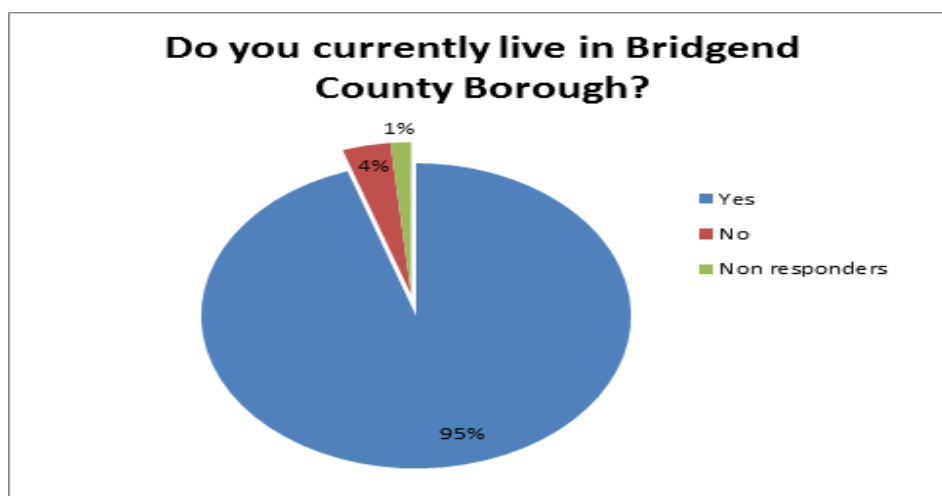
In total, there were 1137 interactions, representing one per cent of the Bridgend County Borough population. The response rate has been divided into several areas including: consultation survey responses, emails, letters, phone calls and social media interactions.

Method	Detail	#
Consultation responses	Paper responses	134
	Online responses	775
Interactions	Email	6
	Letter	1
	Facebook	209
	Twitter	11
	Instagram	0
	Phone	1
Total		1137

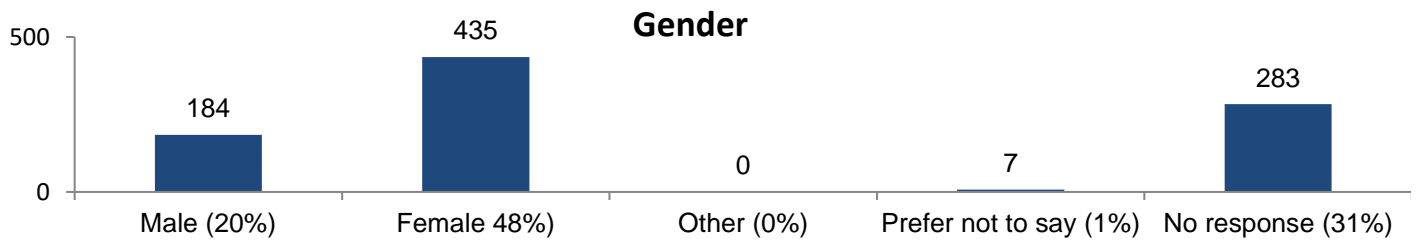
5. How effective was the consultation?

The public conveniences consultation was conducted over an eight week period in which a range of marketing methods were used to create awareness of the consultation and encourage members of the public to engage with the council.

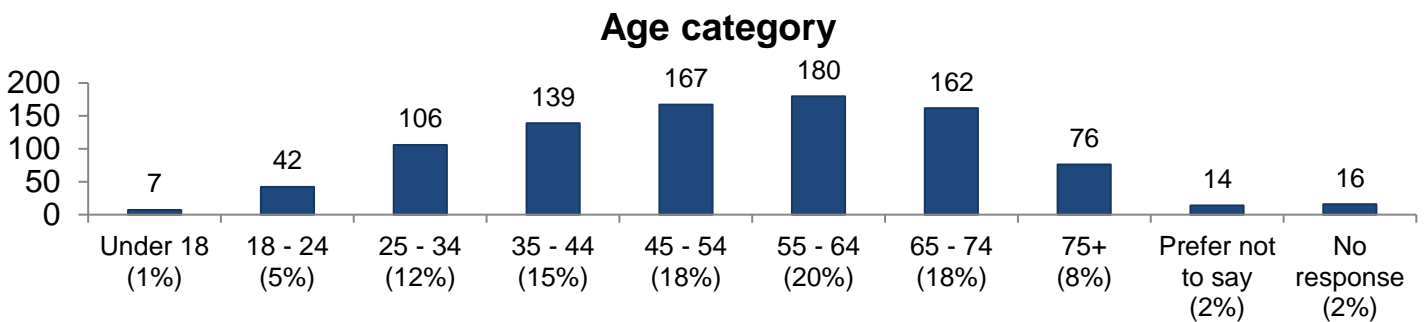
The social demographic data reflects a good cross section of the county borough's population (862 respondents lived in Bridgend County Borough, 33 outside the area 14 did not provide a response to this question).



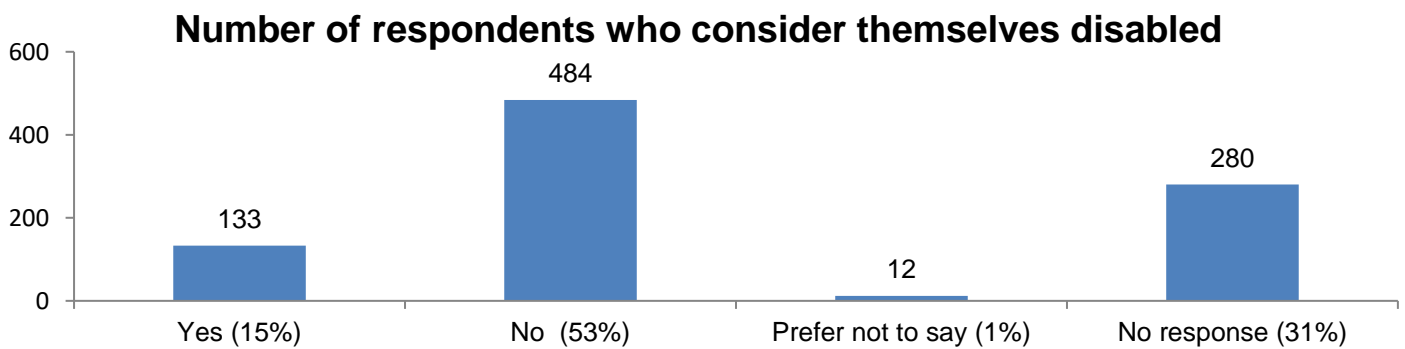
48% of responses were received from females and 20% from males. 31% of respondents did not provide a response to this question and 1% selected prefer not to say.



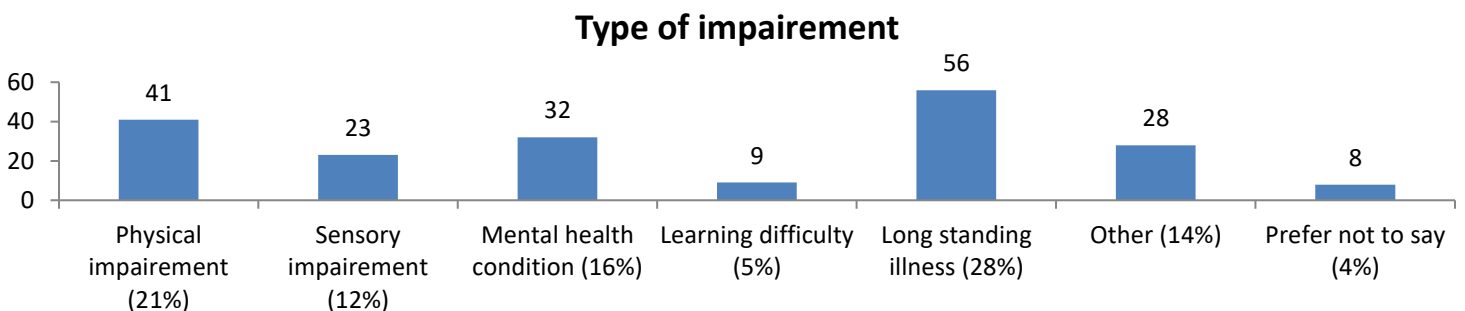
The majority of respondents (20%) were aged between 55 and 64, followed by 18% aged 45 to 54, closely followed by those aged 65 to 74 (17.8%). In total the group aged 55 or over made up 46% of respondents.



15% of respondents stated in the survey that they had a disability. 31% of respondents however did not answer this question.



The type of disability respondents reported were mainly long standing illness or health condition (28%), physical impairment (21%) or mental health condition (16%)



The data collection methods, which include the online survey, a paper survey and an accessible survey, were all developed using plain English to maximise understanding. These response methods were designed to give a consistency to the survey across multiple platforms.

6. Headline figures

- 6.1 95% of those responding to the consultation supported the continued provision of public convenience facilities within the town centres and believed two facilities should be provided within each town centre which should be fully attended.
- 6.2 93% of respondents utilise public toilets within the town centres. The Porthcawl area (49%) and Bridgend town centre (43%) being the most popular location. John Street and Bridgend Bus Station were indicated as the most popular toilets, with the majority of respondents (60%) utilising them on a weekly basis.
- 6.3 Respondents believed John Street (77%) was the most needed convenience within the Porthcawl area.
- 6.4 Bridgend Bus Station was the most popular (89%) convenience within Bridgend town centre.
- 6.5 54% of respondents were prepared to pay to use public toilets. The majority (52%) would be prepared to pay 20p to use the public convenience.
- 6.6 A large proportion of respondents (62%) were not aware of the comfort scheme but thought it was a good idea and the council should promote the scheme more widely to the public and businesses.
- 6.7 54% of respondents said 'yes' if the comfort scheme expanded to include more premises, they would be comfortable using a business such as cafes/bars as an alternative to council operated public toilets. However the majority (74%) of respondents also indicated they would not support the closure of public conveniences and replacement with the comfort scheme as an alternative facility within town centres.

7. Question and analysis - consultation survey

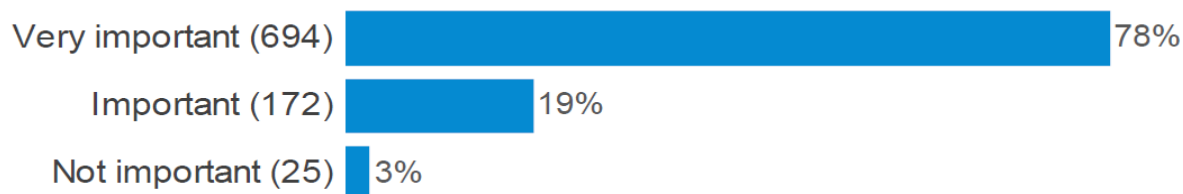
Section seven of the report looks at the questions asked in the consultation survey – with 909 respondents in total.

7.1 Please select a language to begin the survey.

Respondents to the consultation survey were initially asked which language they would like to complete the survey in. Overall, 99 per cent of respondents selected English with one per cent selecting to complete the survey in Welsh.

Language	#	%
English	899	99
Welsh	10	1
Total	909	100.0

7.2 How important are public conveniences to you



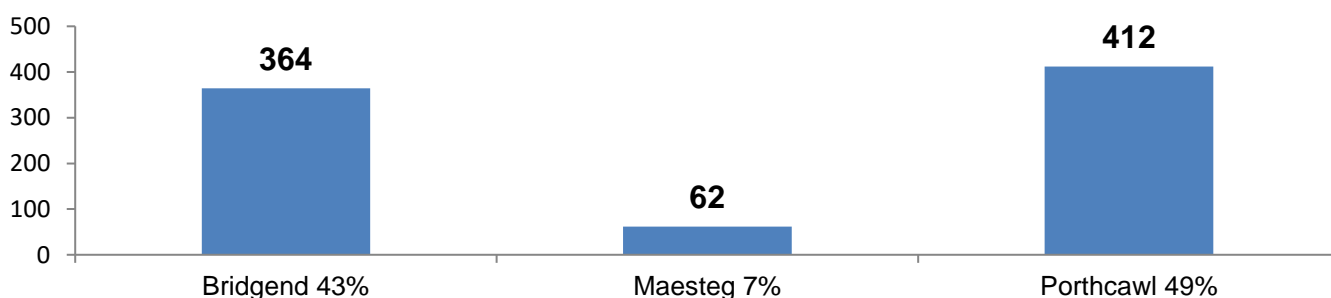
Of the three statements, 78% of respondents felt that public conveniences were very important to them. 19% believed they were important to them, only 3% felt that they were not important to them.

7.2.1 Do you utilise public toilets in the town centre



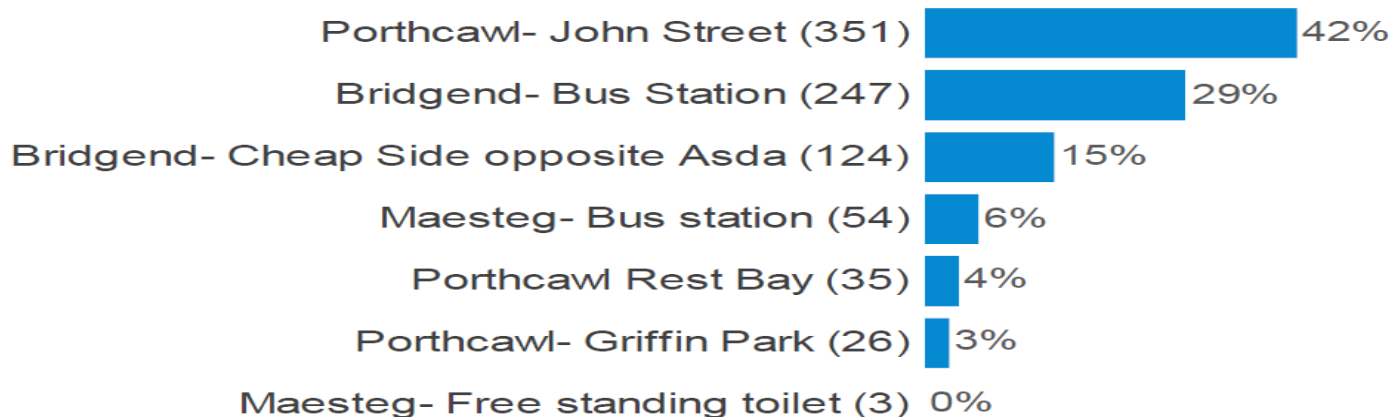
903 people provided a response to this question. Of the 903 respondents, the majority (840) selected 'yes' and 63 people responded 'no'.

7.2.2 Which town centre do you use public toilets the most



49% of respondents stated that they utilised the Porthcawl toilets the most, closely followed by Bridgend (43%). The least popular response was Maesteg (7%).

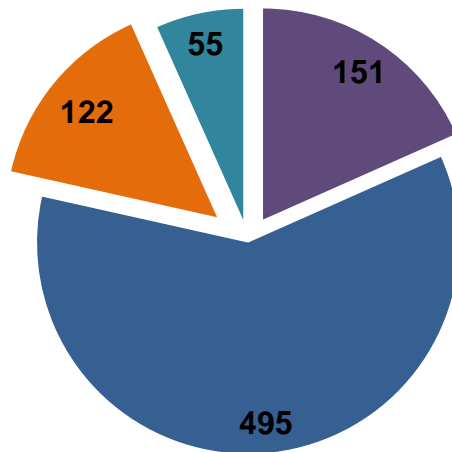
7.2.3 Which of the toilets in this town centre do you use the most?



When analysing the responses from the survey, it can be determined that ‘Porthcawl- John Street’ (42%) and ‘Bridgend Bus Station’ (29%) are the most popular toilets used in the town centres. The least utilised toilets are ‘Maesteg- free standing toilet’ (0%), ‘Porthcawl- Griffin Park’ (3%), ‘Porthcawl- Rest Bay’ (4%) and ‘Maesteg Bus Station’ (6%).

7.2.4 How often would you say you use these facilities?

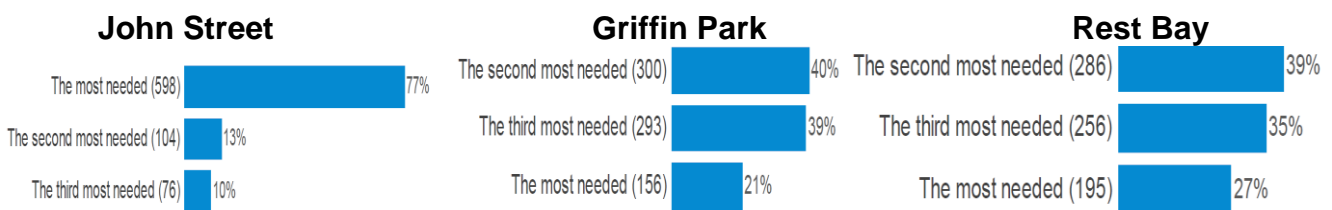
There was a 91% response rate on ‘how often would you say you use these facilities’. The majority of people utilise the council public conveniences (60%) weekly, and 18% of respondents stated that they used the toilets daily.



■ Daily (18%) ■ Weekly (60%) ■ Monthly (15%) ■ Less than monthly (7%)

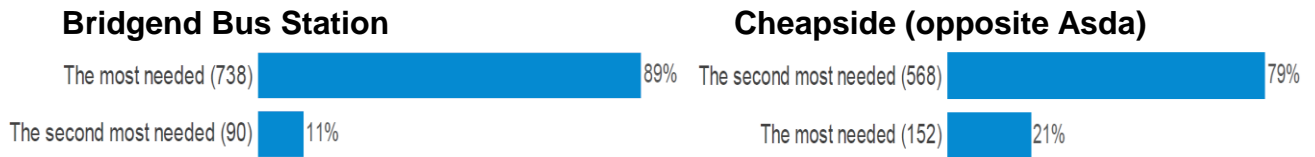
7.2.5 In Porthcawl town centre, which convenience do you consider is the most needed?

When analysing the data on which convenience within Porthcawl town centre they consider is the most needed, there was a total of 949 responses to ‘most needed’, 690 ‘second needed’ and 625 ‘third needed’. This demonstrates that some respondents opted to choose ‘the most needed’ option on more than one occasion instead of responding to ranking the importance of each public convenience location, which has distorted the results slightly.



The respondents ‘most needed’ convenience within Porthcawl was demonstrated to be the most popular response (77%) at ‘John Street’. There were very little differences between the total number of respondents choosing ‘Griffin Park and ‘Rest Bay’ as their second and third choice of most needed conveniences. (40%) ‘Griffin Park’ and (39%) ‘Rest Bay’ as the ‘second most needed’. (39%) ‘Griffin Park’ and (35%) ‘Rest Bay’ as the third most needed convenience.

7.2.6 In Bridgend town centre, which public convenience do you consider is the most needed?

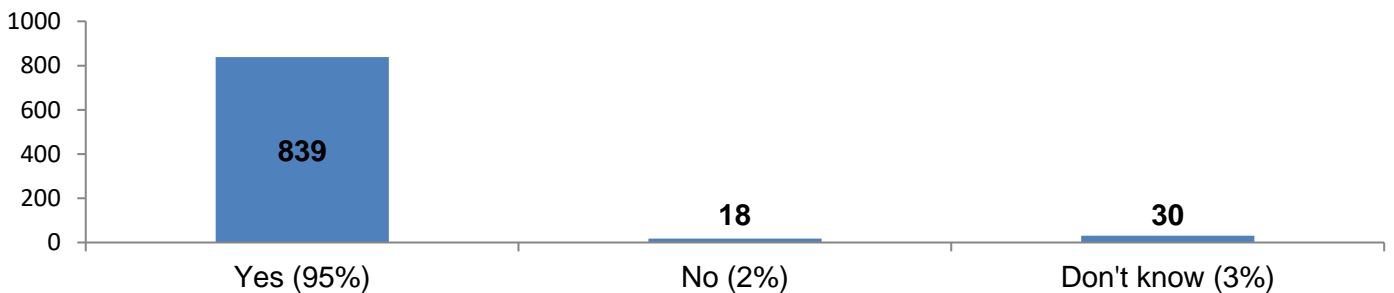


There was a total of (828) responses to Bridgend Bus Station and (720) responses to Cheapside public conveniences. When analysing the data it can be ascertained that some respondents were choosing to opt for 'the most needed' as their only response instead of choosing a 'second most needed' option. The most favourable response was provided to 'Bridgend Bus Station' (89%) as the 'most needed convenience' and (79%) provided to 'Cheapside (opposite Asda) as the 'second most needed' response.

7.2.7 How important is Maesteg public convenience to you

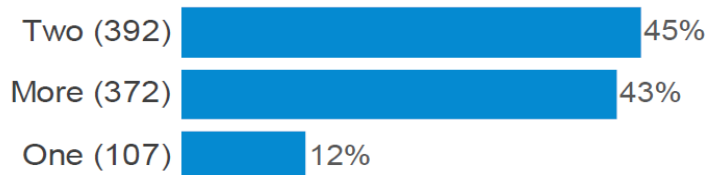
There was a total of 801 responses to 'how important is Maesteg public convenience to you' giving a (88%) response rate. 56% of respondents felt that the public conveniences were either important or very important to them. 54% believed that Maesteg public conveniences were 'not important' to them.

7.2.8 Do you support the continued provision of public convenience facilities within town centres?



Majority of people (95%) supported the continued provision of public convenience facilities within town centres, with 2% responded 'no' and 3% responded 'don't know'.

7.2.9 How many facilities do you think should be fully provided within each town centre?



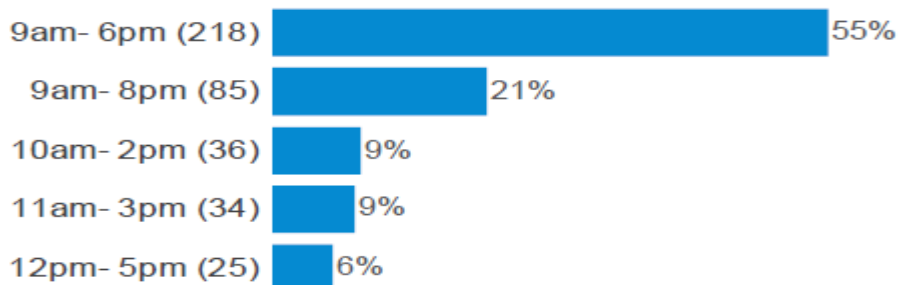
There was very little difference between the responses of how many facilities the respondents wanted in each town centre, with 45% feeling that two were needed and 43% wanting more than two.

7.3 Do you think the facilities should be fully attended?



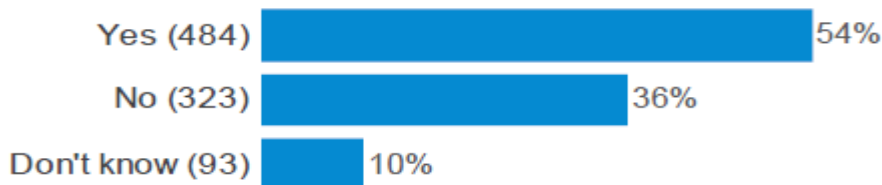
There was a total of 878 responses on whether the respondents felt the facilities should be fully attended, giving a 97% response rate. There was very little difference between the response types 'yes and no'. 53% felt that facilities should be fully attended and 47% believed they should not.

7.3.1 What period during the day do you think they should be manned?



The majority of people believed the facilities should be manned (55%) between 9am-6pm, with the second most popular response (21%) between 9am-8pm.

7.3.2 Would you be prepared to pay to use a public toilet?



54% of respondents stated that they were prepared to use a public toilet, 36% responded 'no' and 10% responded 'don't know' to this question.

All the respondents who responded 'don't know' to the multi choice question were asked if they could specify a reason why they 'didn't know'. Overall there were 43 comments. These were converted into themes, which are provided below:

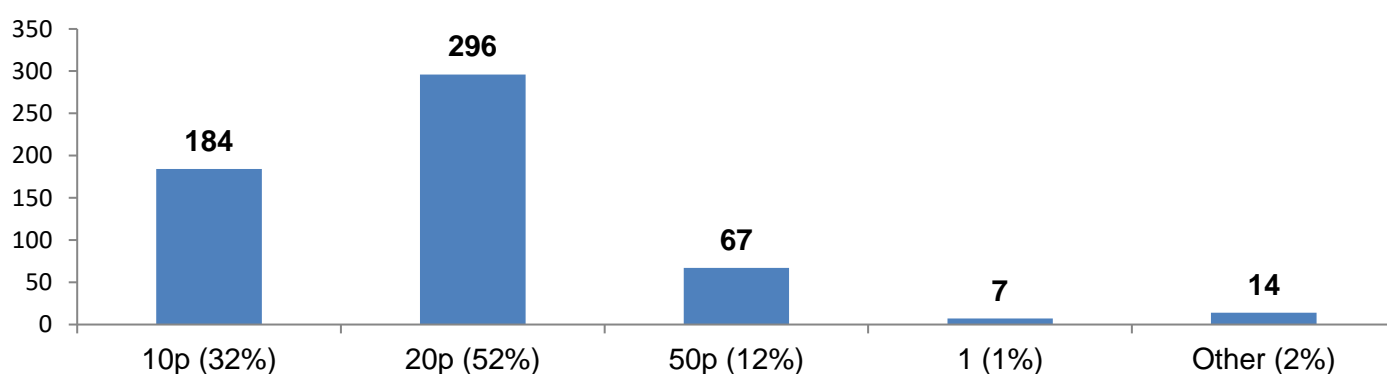
Theme	#
Depends on if they are attended	2
Free disabled facilities	4
Depends on cost/ how much I would be charged	7
We pay enough council tax already	6

Depends on quality of facilities	10
Depends on payment systems e.g. coins, card etc. We don't always carry change	13
Need more information	1

30% commented 'depends on payment systems e.g. coins, card etc'. 23% said it would 'depend on the quality of the facilities' and some respondents believed they 'pay enough council tax already'. A small proportion (5%) of the respondents felt they 'need more information' before making that decision.

7.3.3 How much would you be prepared to pay?

568 people responded to this question. Of the respondents, the most accepted amount (52%) of people were prepared to pay 20p. The least favourable amount (7%) was £1.



568 people responded to this question. Of the respondents the most accepted amount (52%) people were prepared to pay was 20p. The least favourable amount (7%) was £1.

In total there were 26 comments associated to the multi choice question, which were analysed and put into 11 key themes. 35% of comments were themed as '0p' and 12% of respondents commented '20p' and '30p'. 8% of the respondents believed it depends on the 'quality/ cleanliness of the facilities' or it should be 'free disabled facilities'.

Theme	#
0p	9
10p	1
20p	3
30p	3
5p	2
Anything	1
Only if the facilities are attended	1
Don't know	1
Free disabled facilities	2
It is difficult to ensure you have the correct coinage	1
Quality/ cleanliness of facilities	2

7.3.4 Were you aware of the council's comfort scheme?



The majority of people (62%) who completed the survey indicated that they were not aware of the councils comfort scheme, with only 38% of respondents stating that they were aware of the scheme.

7.3.5 Do you think the council's comfort scheme is a good idea?

When asked if the council's comfort scheme was a good idea a large proportion of respondents (52%) believed 'yes' it was a good idea, 24% responded 'no' and 24% stated that they didn't know if it was a good idea.

7.3.6 Do you think the council should promote the comfort scheme more widely to the public and businesses?

Majority of people (71%) believed the council should promote the comfort scheme more widely to the public and businesses, compared to 15% responding 'no' and 14% 'don't know'.

7.3.7 If the council's comfort scheme expanded to include more premises, would you be comfortable using a business such as cafes/ bars as an alternative to a council operated public toilet

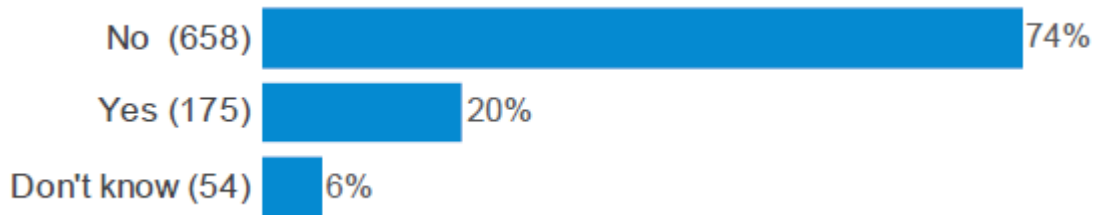
There was a total of 894 responses to the question, creating a 98% response rate. When responding to the multi choice question, the most common response (54%) was 'yes', with 36% responding 'no' and 11% 'don't know'.

There were a total of 304 comments out of the 894 responses to this question. These comments were converted into 19 themes. The comments gained from the additional qualitative question were widespread, however the most common themed responses were; (32%) I 'don't feel comfortable using bars/ cafes as its embarrassing' and (33%) would 'feel obliged to purchase something' from the business.

Theme	#
Accessibility	56
If attended	1
Human basic right	1
Donate money into a charity box	1
We pay enough council tax/ Reduce wages	5
Disabled access	4
Don't know	3
Don't feel comfortable using bars/ cafes it's embarrassing	97
It currently works for all equality groups	1
Free disabled facilities	7
Should be funded by BCBC	3
Good idea to have a comfort scheme	2
Historic building	1

Not enough information to make a decision	1
Would feel obliged to purchase something	99
Safety concerns	15
Depends on quality/ cleanliness of facilities	5
Religious issues using bars	1
Time consuming to find location	1

7.3.8 Would you support the closure of public conveniences and replacement with the comfort scheme as an alternative facility within the town centres?



The majority of respondents (74%) indicated that they that they would not support the closure of public conveniences and replace them with the comfort scheme as an alternative facility within the town centres. 20% would support the idea and 6% stated 'don't know'.

All the respondents who responded 'don't know' or 'no' were asked if they could provide further detail. Overall there were 409 comments which were converted into 16 themes, as provided below:

Theme	#
Accessibility issues	70
Needs to be more advertised	21
Concerned over antisocial behaviour	3
Attended	3
Basic human need	111
Use the cost of the comfort schemes to keep the public toilets	5
Council tax/ reduce wages	9
Disabled facilities	33
Embarrassed	27
Funding	2
Inconvenience	8
Miscellaneous	61
Obliged to purchase something	36
Quality	5
Regeneration	2
Unsuccessful	13

The qualitative themes gained were generally negative responses, with the most common theme (27%) commenting 'basic human need', 17% said they would have 'accessibility issues' and some respondents believed the comfort scheme would be 'unsuccessful'. A small proportion 1% of the respondents had concerns over 'antisocial behaviour, and quality of the toilets'.

7.4 Qualitative responses

Each response received to the following open comments from all methods across the survey were read and subsequently themed. Each theme was then measured to provide a quantitative figure to the qualitative responses.

7.4.1 Do you have any alternative recommendations?

There were a total of 274 responses, providing a 30% response rate.

Theme	#
Accessibility	6
Adequate funding	1
Breastfeeding mums	1
Charge	27
Create unisex toilets	3
Decrease the attendants/ Staff Maintenance	6
Disabled/ health issues to consider	11
Divert funding from other places	40
Do both comfort scheme and 1x public convenience	2
Donations	4
Increase in anti-social behaviour	5
Install turnstiles	2
Keep at least one public toilet	1
Keep the ones we already have	51
Keep them all apart from Cheapside	4
Local community	1
Miscellaneous	27
More advertisement	24
More facilities	8
Need more maintenance	5
Pay local businesses to maintain the public toilets	2
Payment type to include card	2
Porthcawl toilet essential for tourism	14
Privatisation	1
Public toilets to be more evenly spread around the towns	1
Quality/ cleanliness of toilets	2
Redevelopments to include new public toilets	3
Remove public conveniences pushes people away from the town centre	3
Rest Bay has no alternative toilets	1
Self-cleaning toilets	1
Sponsorship of toilets from businesses	4
Use council office toilets	2
Use supermarkets toilets	3
Utilise community service/ Community service orders	5
Wouldn't use a council public toilet	1

The most popular qualitative responses were to keep the ones we already have (19%), divert funding from other sources (15%) and more advertisement (9%).

7.4.2 Are there any further comments about the future provision of public conveniences across Bridgend County Borough?

There were 298 responses, giving a 33% total response rate. Of those, 53 were not relevant and as such, were removed from the table below:

Theme	#
The impact on tourism destination	47
The impact on disabled/ older generation with health issues	57
Associated risks of social isolation/ toilet accidents	9
As long as there is a variety of toilets to use	2
Use council tax funds	18
Regeneration	18
Look at the maintenance of the toilets	21
Donations/ charge	13
Anti-social behaviour	10
Advertise more	9
Keep all the public conveniences	2
Accessibility issues	39

19% of the respondents believed 'the impact on disabled/ older generation with health issues was a concern.

16% highlighted the impact on tourism primarily in Porthcawl area.

13% stated accessibility issues.

7.5 Communications regarding the consultation

7.5.1 Would you like to be kept up to date on our key consultations?

85 respondents wanted to be kept up to date on key consultations and as a result their email addresses have been added to a relevant database.

7.5.2 How did you hear about the 'Public Conveniences' consultation?

Respondents to the survey were asked where they had heard about the consultation in order to inform next year's marketing and engagement plan. Facebook (61%) was the most popular way to find out about the survey, followed by word of mouth (13%).

8. Social media, email, letter and phone responses

Social media, email, letter and phone comments received during the survey's live period were also analysed. There were 277 themes to the consultation from 230 responses. Of those, 81 were not relevant and as such, were removed from the table below:

Theme	#
Better maintenance	14
Bridgend toilets	8
Causes loss of business/Failure to promote tourism	18
Cut spending/ reduce staff	21
Disabled people and their independence	18
Maesteg bus station	10
Pay to use toilets	7
Porthcawl toilets	29
Promote comfort scheme more	15
Costs under council tax	19
Necessity	37

9. Conclusion

A response rate of 909 to the survey questions is robust and is subject to a maximum standard error of ± 3.24 per cent at the 95 per cent confidence level on an observed statistic of 50 per cent. Thus, we can be 95 per cent confident that responses are representative of those that would be given by the total adult population, if a census had been conducted, to within ± 3.24 per cent of the percentages reported. This means that if the total adult population of Bridgend County Borough had taken part in the survey and a statistic of 50 per cent was observed, we can be 95 per cent confident that the actual figure lies between 36 per cent and 46 per cent.

There was a total of ten survey that were not included within the consultation due to them being returned after the closing date.

9.1 Equality impact assessment

The EIA screening informed the development of the consultation questionnaire. This consultation should assist the completion of the Full Equality Impact assessment and the breakdown of equalities data from those respondents who provided it has been supplied to the service area.