

Public Toilets Review

Consultation report

Date of issue: 31 March 2015

Contents

1. Overview	3
2. Introduction	3
3. Promotional tools and engagement methods.....	4
4. Response rate	5
5. Headline figures	5
6. Questions and Analysis	6
7. Conclusion	15
8. Appendices	17

1. Overview

A public consultation reviewing Bridgend County Borough Council's public conveniences was undertaken on 12 January 2015. The consultation collated results gathered from a traditional eight-week consultation using the council's online and offline mechanisms and the four-week Citizens' Panel inviting responses from the 1140 members.

In total, 933 responses were gathered. More specifically, 272 responses were received from the eight-week consultation, and 661 responses were received from the four-week Citizens' Panel survey. This report details the analysis associated with the consultation.

2. Introduction

A public survey inviting views on the importance of public conveniences in Bridgend County Borough was made available to the public from 12 January 2015. An eight-week survey was made available online and offline as well as a selection of the questions also being asked in the Citizens' Panel Winter 2014 survey over a four-week period. The local authority outlined each convenience and the facilities available at each location. Questions were then asked based upon the respondents who visit the respective local towns, these included the importance of each convenience to them personally, accessibility and the potential reintroduction of the comfort scheme.

The eight-week survey was made up of three sections; section one asked seven questions regarding the respondent to understand their demographic; section two included five quantitative questions regarding the conveniences, current operational procedures and accessibility, a collection of the questions from this section was asked in the Citizens' Panel survey. Section three asked one qualitative question for additional comments and finally, section four featured the standard equalities questions suggested by Welsh Government. All questions asked in the survey were optional. The respondents answering the eight-week survey had the opportunity to remain anonymous.

The eight-week survey was made available to complete electronically in either English or Welsh via a link on the consultation page of the council's website. Click [here](#)¹ to view the content of the now archived webpage. Paper copies of the consultation document and the accompanying surveys were made available at all local libraries throughout the county borough. The 1140 Citizens' Panel members received the survey through their preferred contact arrangement (postal or email) as part of the Citizens' Panel Winter 2014 survey.

Comments were also invited via letter, email and phone call. Contact details were also provided for anyone wishing to receive a paper copy directly or any alternative formats of the survey.

Bridgend County Borough Council officers held an engagement session for the stroke association on 9 February 2015 with its members, the majority of whom subsequently responded to the consultation.

¹ <http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/services/consultation/hub/public-toilet-review-2015.aspx>

3. Promotional tools and engagement methods

Details of the consultation received promotion within the council through a 'message of the day' notification. Bridgend County Borough councillors received a copy of the press release as well as local AMs and PMs.

3.1 Consultation document and survey

A consultation document was created to provide respondents with information on the consultation itself and included a link to the consultation questionnaire. Contact details were also provided to offer additional support or guidance if necessary. Both documents were written in plain English to maximise potential inclusion and translated into Welsh.

3.2 Social media

The council tweeted its 5100 @BridgendCBC followers and posted to the 800 users who have liked our Facebook page about the consultation on several occasions during the consultation period to help raise awareness of the consultation.

3.3 Local press

The consultation also received publicity in the Glamorgan Gazette, the GEM (see appendix 3) and on the council website² (www.bridgend.gov.uk). The topic overall has received high levels of publicity across Wales.

3.4 Engagement event

Bridgend County Borough Council officers gave members of Bridgend's Equality Forum the opportunity to arrange an engagement session to help those with additional needs to complete the surveys. The stroke association held an engagement session on 9 February 2015 with its members, the majority of whom subsequently responded to the consultation.

3.5 Posters

Bilingual posters with a QR code (a bar code that mobile phones and smart devices can read to take you directly to the questionnaire) were produced to advertise the consultation and were placed in all public toilets with contact details on the range of ways in which the public can respond to the consultation.

3.6 Citizens' Panel

The consultation questions were also sent to the 1140 Citizens' Panel members as part of the Winter survey 2014. In total, there were 661 responses which have been included within the results below.

² <http://www1.bridgend.gov.uk/media-centre/2015/january-2015/13-01-2015-consultation-launched-into-future-of-public-toilets-in-bridgend-county-borough.aspx>

4. Response rate

272 responses to the eight-week survey were received in total by the closing date of midnight 9 March 2015. Of the responses received 270 were in English and 2 were in Welsh. The responses were made up of:

Format	English	Welsh	Total
Online	238	2	240
Email	8	0	8
Letter	7	0	7
Telephone	17	0	17
Total	270	2	272
Citizens' Panel (CP)	-	-	661
Total including CP	-	-	933

661 responses were also received from the Citizens' Panel Winter survey 2014. A selection of the questions asked in the public survey were replicated in the Citizens' Panel survey, as such when possible the data of the two surveys has been collated.

There were 87 partial responses to the survey; 52 partial responses had no information input and as such were removed entirely, a further 2 of these responses were duplicates and also removed. In total, 33 partial responses were included in the survey.

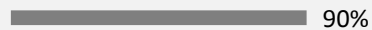

5. Headline figures

- 5.1 Those aged 55 and over are almost twice as likely to use the public toilet facilities than 25 – 34 year olds.
- 5.2 Almost all (96 per cent) of the respondents stated that there should be disabled access at all public toilets in Bridgend County Borough. At present there are four conveniences currently without disabled access: Rhiw Hill (Bridgend), Pavilion (Porthcawl), Blackmill and Pricetown Square.
- 5.3 The Derwen road facility was considered the least important facility to Bridgend Town visitors. All Porthcawl venues received high levels of support and tourism. Pricetown and Blackmill received the lowest levels of support for the out of town facilities.
- 5.4 Nearly nine in ten (87 per cent) have supported the re-introduction of the comfort scheme. Qualitative responses highlighted the importance of promoting venues that endorse the comfort scheme.
- 5.5 The vast majority supported Sunday hours in all of the towns. 94 per cent of respondents wanted Sunday hours in Porthcawl, 80 per cent supported Sunday hours for Bridgend, and 76 per cent wanted Sunday hours for the Maesteg. The most popular times selected for Sunday hours were between 10am – 10.30am to open, and 4pm – 4.30pm to close.




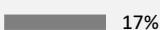



6. Questions and Analysis

The opening two questions in the eight-week survey related to the respondents personal information which would be used later in conjunction with the final question of the consultation to establish future contact on the outcome of the consultation, if the respondent invited further interaction. For data protection purposes these have not been included in this report.

6.1 Do you currently live in Bridgend County Borough?

Resident (Q3)	#	%	
Yes	204	89.5%	 90%
No	24	10.5%	 11%
Total responses	228		

Exactly nine in ten (90 per cent) were residents of Bridgend County Borough. 12 of the 240 respondents who completed the survey did not answer this question. One of the requirements to join the Citizens' Panel is that all members must live in Bridgend County Borough. Note – as the response is rounded to two significant figures the perceived total is 101 per cent however, including one decimal place reveals how this occurs. It is assumed that all 661 Citizens' Panel respondents live within the county borough.

Age (Q4)	#	%	
Under 18	0	0	0%
18 - 24	2	0.9	 1%
25 - 34	26	11.5	 12%
35 - 44	42	18.6	 19%
45 - 54	39	17.3	 17%
55 - 64	69	30.5	 31%
65+	45	19.9	 20%
Prefer not to say	3	1.3	 1%

6.2 Please select an age category.

Over half of the eight-week survey respondents (52 per cent) were aged 55 or over. The lowest response rate was from under 18's and 18-24 year olds with only two respondents for the latter and no responses for the former. 14 of the 240 respondents who completed the survey did not answer this question.

The citizens' panel members responding to the survey follow:

Age	Citizens' panel members		Eight-week survey		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Under 34	21	3.2	28	12.4	49	6.0
35-54	160	24.2	81	35.9	241	29.5
55-64	163	24.7	69	30.5	232	28.4
65+	246	37.2	48	21.2	294	36.0

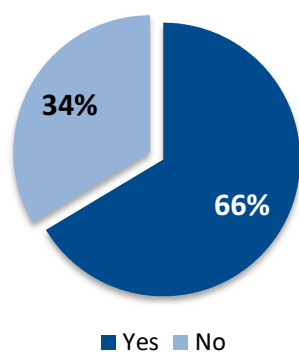
Panel members have a higher representation for those aged 65 or over with almost two in five (37 per cent) of respondents.

6.3 Please select the option(s) that best describes you as a respondent?

Profession (Q5)	#	%	
Student/trainee	5	2.3	■ 2%
Employed – Full time	75	33.9	■ 34%
Employed – Part time	24	10.9	■ 11%
Self employed	19	8.6	■ 9%
Unemployed / looking for work	5	2.3	■ 2%
Retired	77	34.8	■ 35%
Prefer not to say	16	7.2	■ 7%

Given the age range established in section 6.2, the fact that the largest response was from over one in three respondents (35 per cent) defined themselves as retired is to be expected. This is closely followed by 34 per cent of the eight-week survey respondents who selected 'employed – full time'. 19 of the 240 respondents did not provide an answer for this question. This question was not asked to Citizens' Panel members.

6.4 Are you a parent or guardian?



As part of understanding the demographic of responses received, respondents to the eight week survey were asked to identify if they were a parent or not. Following on from this question, respondents who identified yes were asked the age range of their children (see section 6.5). This question was not asked to Citizens' Panel members.

66 per cent stated they were parents. This is in direct contrast to the remaining 34 per cent who selected no to the question. Additionally five respondents selected 'prefer not to say' and 15 respondents provided no answer to the question.

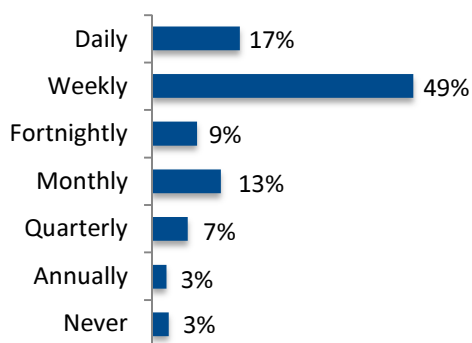
6.5 How old are your children?

Age (Q7)	#	%	
0 – 12 months	6	4.1	■ 4%
1 – 3 years old	21	14.3	■ 14%
4 – 7 years old	22	15.0	■ 15%
8 – 16 years old	30	20.4	■ 20%
Over 16 years old	64	43.5	■ 44%
Prefer not to say	4	2.7	■ 3%

Of the 146 eight-week survey respondents (66 per cent – as highlighted above) who were asked this question, over two in five said that their child was over 16 years of age. 18 per cent of the respondents have children between new-born and the age of three.

Section 6.2 highlighted there were no responses for under 18's however, there is improved reliability in the overall survey due to the fact that there are 79 children related to the survey under the age of 16. It is important to note that of the 146 respondents stating they are parents, some may have provided more than one entry as they themselves may have more than one child in different age ranges.

6.6 How often do you use public toilet facilities provided by the council?



Exactly two in three (66 per cent) eight-week survey respondents stated that they used a public toilet at least once a week (weekly 49 per cent, daily 17 per cent). In contrast three per cent stated that they never use public toilets, similarly three per cent said they used them annually.

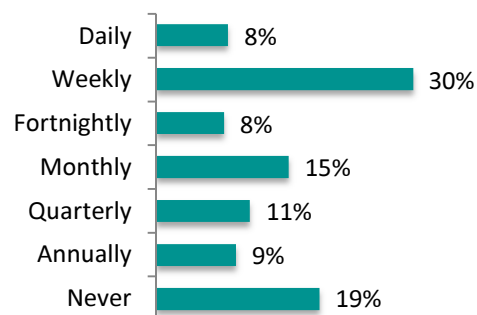
When analysing the frequency of use against the age range of the respondents, there is a steady inclination based on the age.

Age range	Population figures (ONS Census 2011)	Number of respondents using a convenience once a week or more.	% of total respondents
25-34	16,771	11	42%
35-44	19,592	22	52%
45-54	19,999	26	67%
55+	42,510	85	75%

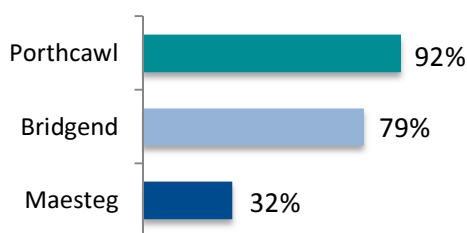
The table shows significant increases in the frequency of convenience usage based on age. Comparatively where four in ten 25-34 year olds use the conveniences once a week or more, this figure nearly doubles for those aged 55 and over, with 75 per cent using the conveniences at least once a week or more. It is important to note that ONS Census data from 2011 stated that 31 per cent of Bridgend's total population are aged 55 or over.

There were 646 responses to this question from the Citizens' Panel survey, giving a total question response of 869.

When combining the data gathered in the Citizens' Panel the usage changes drastically. Daily usage falls by nine per cent and those that never use the service increases by 16 per cent.



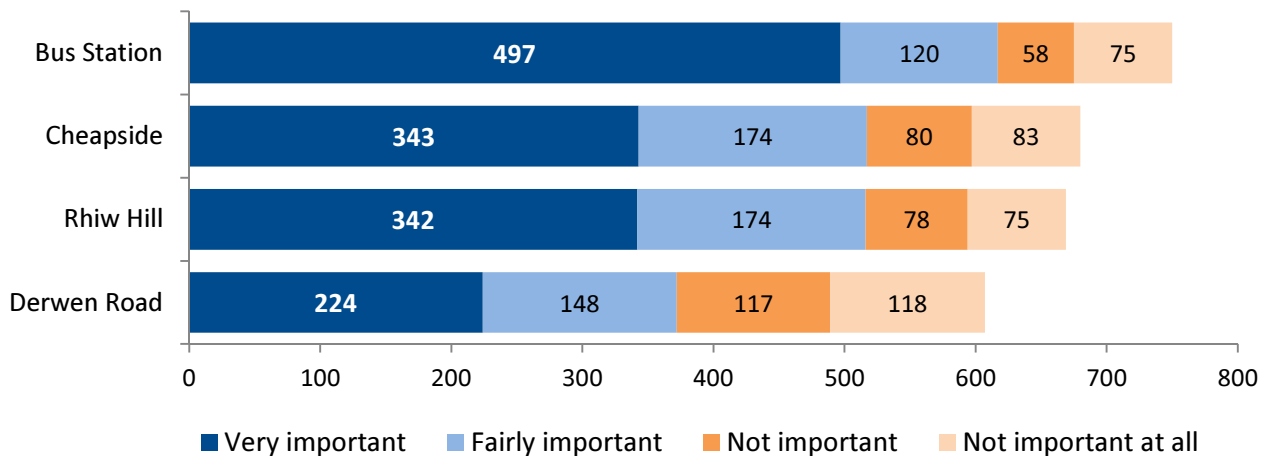
6.7 Which of the following town centres have you visited within the last year?



Collated responses from both surveys shows Porthcawl has been the most visited town with over nine in ten respondents (92 per cent) having visited Porthcawl. This is followed by almost four in five (79 per cent) who have visited Bridgend

Three in ten (32 per cent) have visited Maesteg within the last year. Only one respondent stated that they have not visited any of the three towns within the last year.

6.8 When visiting Bridgend town, how important is it to you and/or your family to have the following public toilets available?



The table above shows the total responses regarding each public convenience in Bridgend town combining the results from both the eight-week survey and the Citizens' Panel survey. By ranking the four conveniences purely on the volume of responses the rating states the importance in the following order: the bus station, Cheapside, Rhiw Hill and Derwen Road.

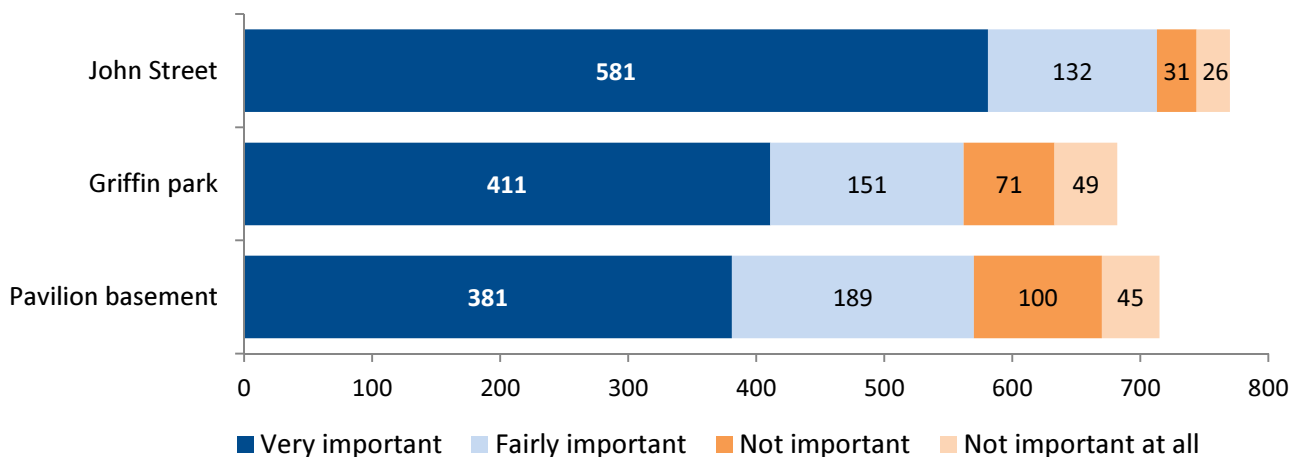
As not every respondent answered each question, a scoring system was created to ensure each response was measured in relation to the number of responses gathered. The scoring system works by applying a score of four for those who rated the experience as very important, three for fairly important, two for not important and finally a score of one for not important at all. Adding these together and dividing by the number of respondents to the question creates an overall score for the importance of the convenience. The higher the score the more important the facility is to the respondents.

Using the scoring system the bus station received the highest response for support, followed by a similar scoring for Cheapside and Rhiw Hill rated as second and third position respectively. Derwen Road received the lowest score of the four facilities in Bridgend Town.

It is important to note in contrast to the scoring system that those who did not respond to each convenience may have done so as they were less affected by the introduction however, in the interest of transparency this cannot be assumed.

Score	Convenience
3.39	Bus station
3.17	Cheapside
3.14	Rhiw Hill
2.79	Derwen Road

6.9 When visiting Porthcawl town, how important is it for you and/or your family to have the following public toilets available?



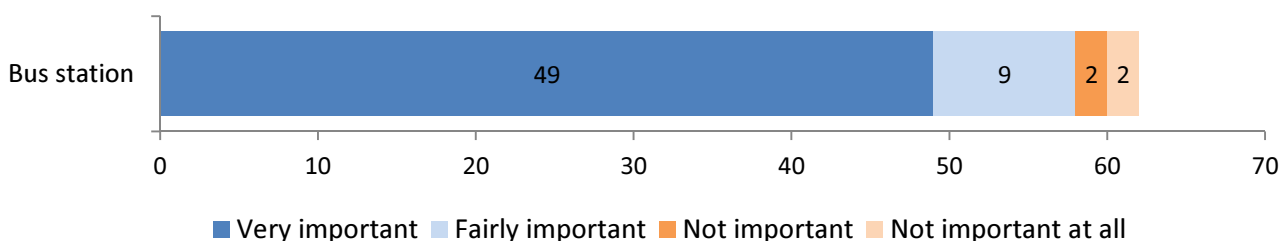
Respondents to the eight-week survey that stated they had visited Porthcawl town within the last year (see section 6.6) were asked how important each of the three facilities in the town were to them (excluding Rest Bay see section 6.13). Citizens' panel respondents had the additional option of 'I do not visit Porthcawl'. John Street received the highest level of support with 93 per cent of those who responded 'very important' or 'fairly important' stating that the convenience was important to themselves and/or their family. Griffin Park was the second most supported with over four in five (82 per cent) saying the convenience was very important. Despite the Pavilion location being the lowest supported of the three, 80 per cent of respondents highlighted the Pavilion as important to them.

The scoring for the conveniences follows the same pattern to the order of the chart above. In order of importance the conveniences are as follows: John Street, Griffin Park and Pavilion basement.

John Street received the largest score from all of the facilities in the consultation.

Score	Convenience
3.65	John Street
3.35	Griffin Park
3.27	Pavilion basement

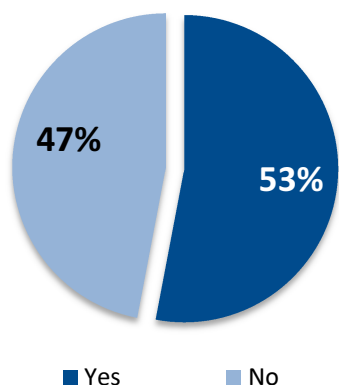
6.10 When visiting Maesteg town, how important is it to you and/or your family to have the following public toilets available?



Similar to the previous two sections, respondents that stated they had visited Maesteg town within the last year (see section 6.6) were asked how important the bus station facility in Maesteg was to them. Over seven in ten (73 per cent) stated that the venue was very important to them or their family members. The scoring system gave an overall score of 3.00. This question was not included in the Citizens' Panel town questions.

Score	Convenience
3.00	Bus station

6.11 Currently, several of the public toilets are manned for the whole duration of time they are open. Would you support having the time in which they are manned reduced to make better use of resources?

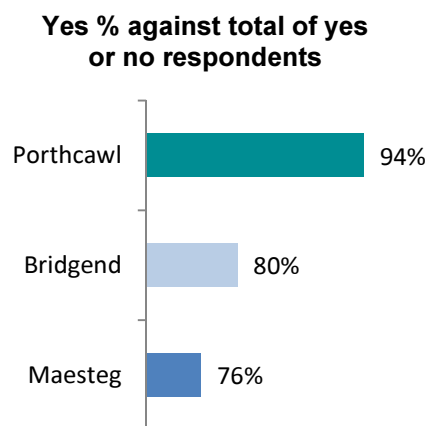


From the 759 responses to the question, just over half of the respondents would support the introduction of manning the venues for shorter periods of time to make a better use of the resources available (53 per cent), compared to 47 per cent respondents who oppose its introduction.

6.12 Do you think public toilets in the following town centres should be open on a Sunday?

All town centres received a high level of support for opening conveniences on a Sunday. The percentages were calculated against those who chose yes or no only. The question was made available to all respondents of both surveys.

Almost all respondents (94 per cent) of both surveys supported the introduction of Sunday open hours for Porthcawl. Exactly four in five (80 per cent) supported the hours for Bridgend, followed by over three in four (75 per cent) stating the Maesteg convenience should have Sunday hours also.



6.13 What hours would you suggest that the public toilets are open on a Sunday?

I. Opening time

Time	7.30am or earlier	8am – 8.30am	9am – 9.30am	10am – 10.30am	11am or later
Response	23	64	197	233	49

The question regarding opening and closing times were only asked to respondents who answered yes to opening the public conveniences on Sundays (see section 6.11). Over three in four (76 per cent) selected times between 9am and 10.30am. There were no significant statistical differences when the times selected were cross-compared against which towns the respondent visited within the past year (see section 6.6).

II. Closing time

Time	3pm or earlier	4pm – 4.30pm	5pm – 5.30pm	6pm – 6.30pm	7pm - midnight
Response	74	207	157	156	138

The closing time was significantly more diverse than the answers provided to the opening times. The most popular response was almost three in ten (28 per cent) stating a closing time of 4pm – 4.30pm, this falls to 21 per cent at 5pm – 5.30pm.

6.14 How much of a problem would the removal of any of the following public toilets outside of the main towns have on you or your family?

	Population (ONS Census 2011)	A very big problem	A fairly big problem	Not a very big problem	Not a problem at all
Aberkenfig	2,045	66	63	166	373
Blackmill	2,495	47	44	150	406
Kenfig Nature Reserve	-	96	94	149	349
Pricetown	2,344	47	40	143	413
Rest bay	2,268	249	226	144	130

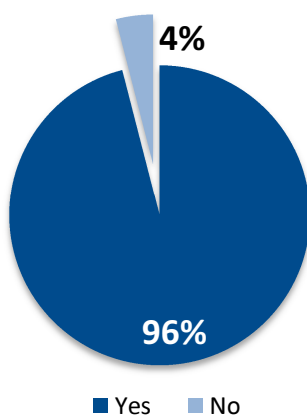
This question regarding the public conveniences outside of the main towns (Bridgend, Porthcawl and Maesteg) was asked to all the respondents answering the surveys. The responses should be viewed independently and not cross-compared to section 6.7, section 6.8 or section 6.9. This is due to the fact that the aforementioned sections were only asked to visitors of the towns, and not the total number of respondents.

The most supported of the five out of town conveniences was Rest Bay, Porthcawl. This was considerably more supported than the other locations. Kenfig received higher support than Aberkenfig, Blackmill and Pricetown. As the nature reserve is visited by tourists, this could explain why more people would be affected by the removal of the facility.

Score	Convenience
2.79	Rest Bay
1.91	Kenfig
1.73	Aberkenfig
1.59	Blackmill
1.57	Pricetown

Pricetown and Blackmill received the lowest levels of support despite having a higher population than Aberkenfig shown in the ONS census data 2011.

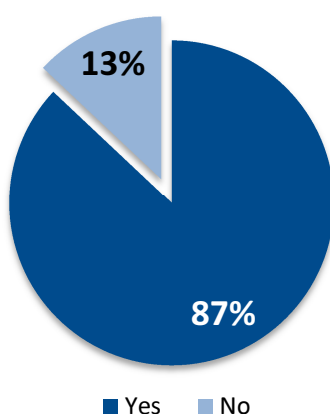
6.15 Do you think that all public toilets should provide disabled access?



Of the 806 combined respondents who selected yes or no, almost all (96 per cent) of the respondents stated that there should be disabled access at all public toilets in Bridgend County Borough.

At present there are four conveniences currently without disabled access: Rhiw Hill (Bridgend), Pavilion (Porthcawl), Blackmill and Pricetown Square.

6.16 Would you support the re-introduction of the Comfort Scheme?



There were a total of 746 respondents who answered either yes or no to the question.

Of those who selected yes or no, nearly nine in ten (87 per cent) have supported the re-introduction of the comfort scheme. The remaining 13 per cent opposing the introduction of the scheme.

6.17 Do you have any other comments regarding public toilets in Bridgend County Borough?

Topic	#	%	
Essential service	54	26	26%
Don't close toilets in Porthcawl	37	18	18%
Cleanliness is paramount	28	14	14%
Protect disabled	18	9	9%
New facilities	17	8	8%
Tourist areas should keep high coverage	16	8	8%
Clear signage to locations	12	6	6%
Longer hours	8	4	4%
Other	17	8	8%

The final question gave the opportunity for respondents (this qualitative question was not made available to Citizens' Panel respondents) to provide a qualitative response. Each response was analysed by the number of topics that were mentioned and collated together to provide a quantitative table of responses from the qualitative data.

Almost three in ten (26 per cent) responses highlighted the necessity of having public toilets within the county borough. Many respondents referenced a concern with any plans for the council to remove the service entirely.

Over one in six (18 per cent) referenced the importance of keeping the toilets in Porthcawl open – particularly, comments centred around the cleanliness of the John Street facilities and the high levels of year-round tourism in the area. It is also important to note that 92 per cent of all respondents to the survey had highlighted that they had visited Porthcawl within the past year (see section 6.7).

Other respondents saw the importance of cleanliness of the facilities that were available to be the most important aspect, this was also referenced by nearly one of six (14 per cent) responses.

During the survey the local press ran a story regarding Porthcawl Town Council running a feasibility report on investing public toilets in Newton³. This coincides with eight per cent of respondents to this survey who requested new facilities within Bridgend County Borough.

Much like the support in section 6.14, protecting the disabled access, or improving the service provided to the disabled residents and tourists was mentioned by nearly one in ten (9 per cent) of respondents.

Clear signage to locations received six per cent of the total responses. Of the respondents, one individual stated the difficulty they have faced in trying to locate where the current facilities are in the past. A minority of these respondents also mentioned the importance of clearly signposting public facilities and comfort scheme facilities, if reintroduced.

A response from Blackmill and Glynogwr Tenants and Residents Association stated the importance of the facility to the area and surrounding valleys.

³ <http://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/local-news/loo-call-newton-dunes-become-7056319>

7. Conclusion

Combining the results gathered from both surveys, over one in three (35.5 per cent) stated that they used the public toilet facilities at least once a week. Additionally, the consultation based survey revealed a large number of respondents had visited Porthcawl (92 per cent) or Bridgend (79 per cent).

Results from the eight-week survey revealed the age range in comparison to the frequency of facility usage highlighted that those aged 55 and over are almost twice as likely to use the facilities as 25 – 34 year olds. As 31 per cent of Bridgend County's total population is aged 55 years old or over, considerations in to how to best accommodate the aging population must be taken into account.

Looking specifically into the importance of each facilities within the three towns in Bridgend County Borough; Bridgend town, Porthcawl town and Maesteg town are as follows:

Bridgend town

There are four conveniences within Bridgend town. The responses showed clearly that the removal of the bus station would have the biggest impact if removed. Dderwen Road would have the smallest impact on the respondents to the survey.

Porthcawl town

Respondents noted there was a necessity to maintain the level of service currently provided in Porthcawl in their qualitative responses due to the high levels of year-round tourism. John Street received the highest level of the support of the three, responses gathered noted the cleanliness of the facility.

Feedback also suggested that an additional facility on Newton beach was needed.

Maesteg town

The sole facility in the bus station, Maesteg received 93 per cent support with respondents who selected that the location was either fairly or very important to them.

Out of town

Rest bay received a significantly higher level of support in comparison to the other out of town facilities with 55 per cent stating it would be a fairly big, or very big problem if removed. Kenfig national nature reserve also received a higher response rate, both of the aforementioned locations receiving higher numbers of tourism in comparison to the other out of town facilities in the borough. Aberkenfig, Pricetown and Blackmill all received lower levels of support however, further research into the closest public facilities in these areas would be desirable, particularly following the response received from Blackmill and Glynogwr Tenants and Residents Association.

Operating hours

The vast majority supported Sunday hours in all of the towns. 94 per cent of respondents wanted Sunday hours in Porthcawl, 80 per cent supported Sunday hours for Bridgend, and 76 per cent wanted Sunday hours for the Maesteg Bus Station facility. The most popular times selected for Sunday hours were between 10am – 10.30am to open, and a closing time of 4pm – 4.30pm.

More contentiously, just over half of the respondents (53 per cent) supported the introduction of manning venues for shorter periods of time.

Accessibility

Almost all (96 per cent) of the respondents stated that there should be disabled access at all public toilets in Bridgend County Borough. At present there are four conveniences currently without disabled access: Rhiw Hill (Bridgend), Pavilion (Porthcawl), Blackmill and Pricetown Square.

Nearly nine in ten (87 per cent) have supported the re-introduction of the comfort scheme. Qualitative responses highlighted the importance of promoting which venues are part of the comfort scheme if it is reintroduced, including sign posting current locations of facilities in the county borough.

Qualitative overview.

Over one in four (26 per cent) responses highlighted the necessity of having public toilets within the county borough. Many respondents referenced a concern with any plans for the council to remove the service entirely.

One in six (18 per cent) referenced the importance of keeping the toilets in Porthcawl open. Other respondents saw the importance of cleanliness at the facilities that were available to be the most important aspect, this was also referenced by nearly one of six (14 per cent) responses.

8. Appendices

Consultation responses

EIA screening

Local press visuals

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

£50m cuts may mean a lose-loos situation

PUBLIC toilets could be closed as Bridgend council battles to save £50m.

People across the county are being asked to give their views on the future of the 13 council-owned facilities as a consultation into their operating hours and staffing gets underway.

"Public toilets are an important service that we have operated for many years and the cabinet has not come to this decision lightly," said Councillor Phil White, Bridgend County Borough Council's

ABBY BOLTER
abby.bolter@walesonline.co.uk

cabinet member for communities.

"However, we have to make £50m of savings over the next few years, and that means being absolutely realistic about the impact on services like these.

"Any decision on the future of public conveniences is subject to full consultation - everyone will be given an opportunity to have their say.

"I would urge as many

people as possible to get involved so that their views are heard."

As part of the discussion, groups representing elderly and disabled service users are being asked for their views, along with the citizens' panel, equalities panel and town and community councils.

The council said any proposals to close or amend the operating arrangements will take into account the views of the community.

A full equality impact assessment is also being

carried out as part of any proposals that emerge.

The consultation began on Monday and will close on Monday March 9.

■ **To give your view or ask questions contact the council on 01656 643664 or e-mail Consultation@bridgend.gov.uk**

■ **Views can also be given by writing to Communications, Marketing and Engagement, Bridgend County Borough Council, Raven's Court, Wing 3, Brewery Lane, Bridgend, CF31 4AP**

How many loos do the public need?

RESIDENTS across Bridgend county borough are being invited to have their say on the future of public toilet provision, as the council attempts to make £50m of savings over the next few years.

A consultation has been launched into the future of the 13 council-owned public toilets, their operating hours and staffing arrangements.

As part of the discussion, groups representing elderly and disabled service users are being asked for their views, along with the Citizens' Panel, Equalities Panel and town and community councils.

Because of cuts to public service funding, Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) says that it needs to review the number of toilets it operates. Any proposals to close or amend the operating arrangements for public toilets will take into account the views of the community and users of the public conveniences.

The consultation period began on

Monday, January 12, and will close on Monday, March 9. Respondents can get in touch or ask further questions by calling 01656 643664 or emailing consultation@bridgend.gov.uk

Alternatively, views can be given online or by writing to Communications, Marketing and Engagement, BCBC, Raven's Court, Wing 3, Brewery Lane, Bridgend, CF31 4AP.

Coun Phil White, cabinet member for communities, said: "Public toilets are an important service that we have operated for many years, and the cabinet has not come to this decision lightly.

"However, we have to make £50m of savings over the next few years, and that means being absolutely realistic.

"Any decision on the future of public conveniences is subject to full consultation - everyone will be given an opportunity to have their say.

"I would urge as many people as possible to get involved so that their views are heard."