



association for public service excellence

# Local Authority public conveniences provision 2025



Briefing 25/47  
December 2025

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## **Local authority public conveniences provision 2025**

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### **About APSE**

The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) is a not-for-profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK.

Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority frontline services and operates one of the UK's largest research programmes in local government policy and frontline service delivery matter.

## Results at a glance

(Change from 2024)

### Type of provision

Councils providing more than 30 permanent public conveniences	<b>20.83%</b> -1.12%
All facilities are cleaned and maintained by the council e.g. an inhouse team	<b>69.57%</b> 8.59%
Councils currently undertaking a review of the provision	<b>43.48%</b> 11.78%
Vandalism and anti-social behaviour in or around facilities is the greatest challenge	<b>73.91%</b> -13.59%

### Charging for provision

Councils reporting that they do not charge for public conveniences	<b>59.09%</b> 7.87%
Covering the cost of running the provision as the main reason for charging	<b>38.46%</b> -9.69%

### Strategy and sustainability

Councils that have a public convenience strategy in place	<b>25.00%</b>
Health and safety of users and the general public and cost are highly important factors when developing a strategy	<b>55.56%</b>
Amended cleaning regime to include more sustainable cleaning products	<b>70.00%</b>
Planning to install solar panels on public conveniences	<b>100.00%</b>

## **1 Local Authority Public Conveniences Survey**

APSE conducted an online survey from October to December 2025, which was sent out to local authority contacts throughout the UK.

A series of questions were asked covering the current provision, income generation, temporary and alternative provision, the approach, and strategy for managing the provision.

The data collected through the survey is intended to provide a snapshot of local authority public conveniences provision and as the survey has been conducted for the last three years it is also possible to provide comparison data for some questions.

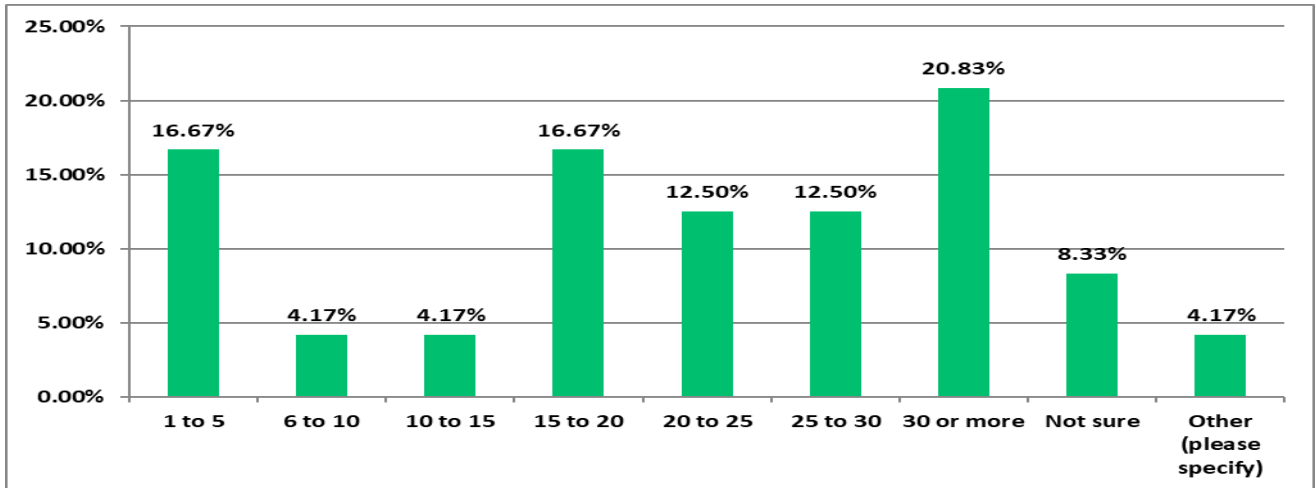
## **2 Results**

Respondents were UK wide with 39.12% from England, 4.35% from Northern Ireland, 43.48% from Scotland and 13.04% from Wales. The survey therefore reflects APSE's UK-wide membership and provides a UK-wide picture.

## **3 Type of provision**

### **3.1 How many permanent facilities does your council provide and maintain?**

The vast majority of respondents, 91.67%, reported that they provided permanent facilities which is a decrease from 100% that reported this to be the case in 2024. The graph below provides an overview of the number of permanent facilities that the council provided in 2025.

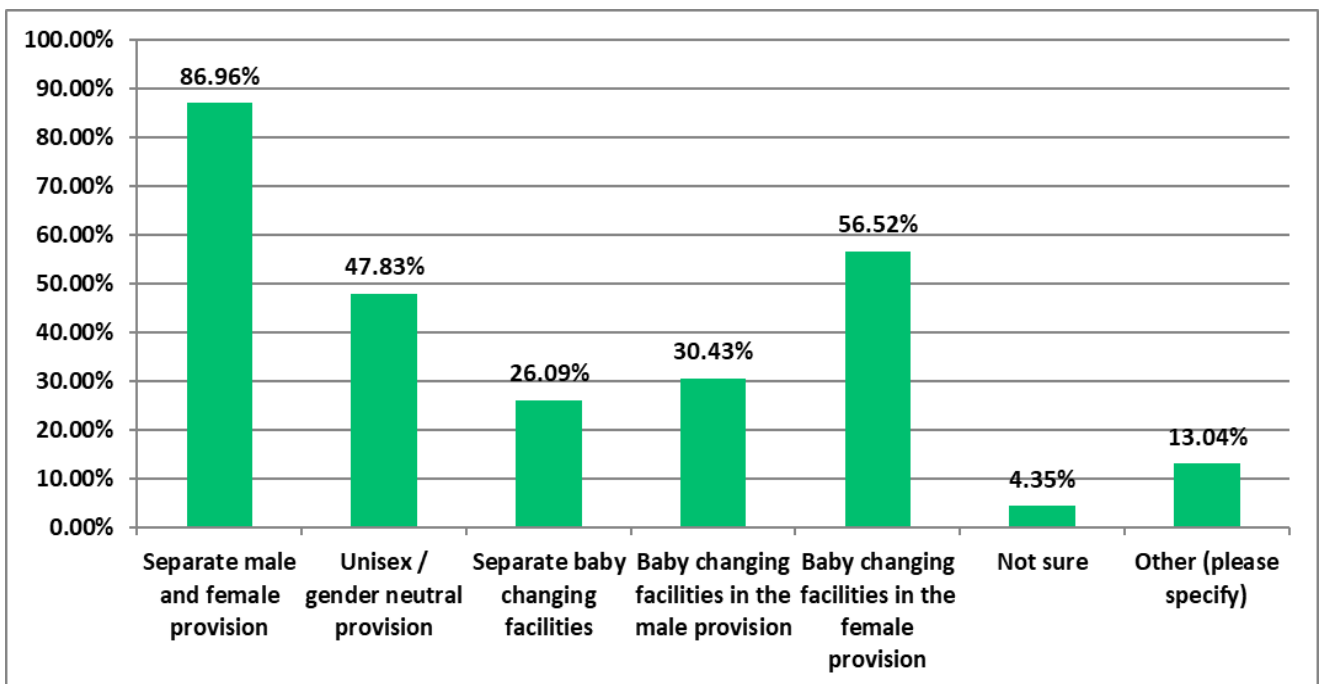


The responses provided demonstrate the range in the number of permanent facilities provided. The greatest percentage of respondents report that there are more than 30 facilities, with 20.83% of respondents advising this to be the case.

For the 4.17% of respondents that state other, they specify that they do not provide any permanent facilities.

### 3.2 What type of permanent provision does your authority provide?

The survey sought to gain an understanding of what type of permanent provision authorities had in place and the graph below provides an overview of the responses.



The vast majority of respondents (86.96%) reported that they provided separate male

and female provision and 47.83% advised that they provided unisex / gender-neutral facilities. When it came to baby changing facilities, 59.52% have baby changing facilities in female provision, 30.43% have baby changing facilities in male provision and 26.09% report having separate baby changing facilities.

It was also commented that local authorities provided separate disability-friendly provision and Changing Places provision.

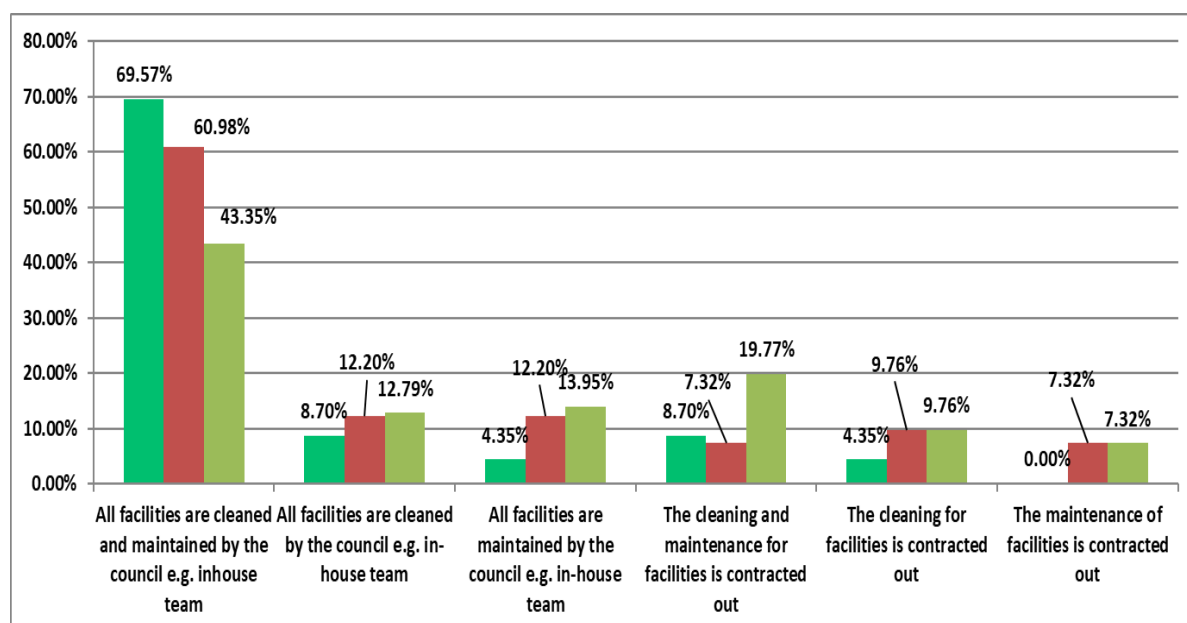
### 3.3 Do you provide temporary toilets?

It was stated by 69.57% of respondents that they did not provide temporary provision, none of the respondents reported that the council does provide temporary provision and 30.43% make temporary provision available on an occasional basis.

The main reasons given for providing temporary provision were reported as being for events, to support the night-time economy, to support tourism and while the permanent provision was being refurbished or is unavailable.

### 3.4 How is the provision maintained and cleaned?

The survey asked how the provision was maintained and cleaned to gain an understanding of the model that local authorities have adopted. The graph below outlines the responses received for the 2025, 2024 and the 2023 survey.



There has been an increase from 43.35% of respondents that reported the facilities were maintained and cleaned by an in-house team in 2023 to 60.89% in 2024 and 69.57% of respondents stating this was the case in 2025.

In comparison there has been a decrease of 11.07% in the respondents that advise that the cleaning and maintenance is contracted out which could indicate that councils are opting to insource the cleaning and maintenance of the public convenience provision.

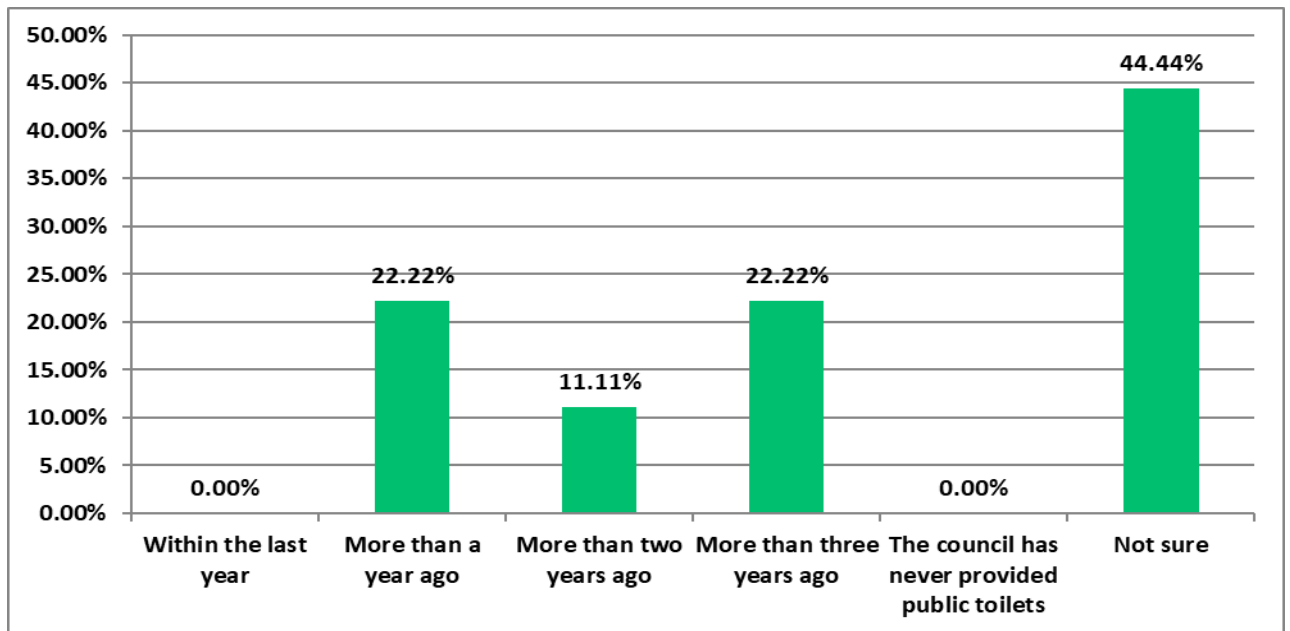
In response to the question, it was also reported that some authorities have a mixture of in-house and contracted out cleaning. The reason given for a mixture was due to either the location of the facilities or to assist with the maintenance and cleaning in periods of high demand, for example in popular tourist hot spots.

### **3.5 How has the overall level of provision provided by the council changed in the last five years?**

APSE was keen to understand how provision had changed over the last five years. The responses from the survey show that 41.67% report that the provision provided by the council has decreased or significantly decreased over this time. By comparison, only 4.17% report that the provision has increased or significantly increased in 2025. The greatest proportion of respondents (37.50%) report that the facilities provided have remained the same.

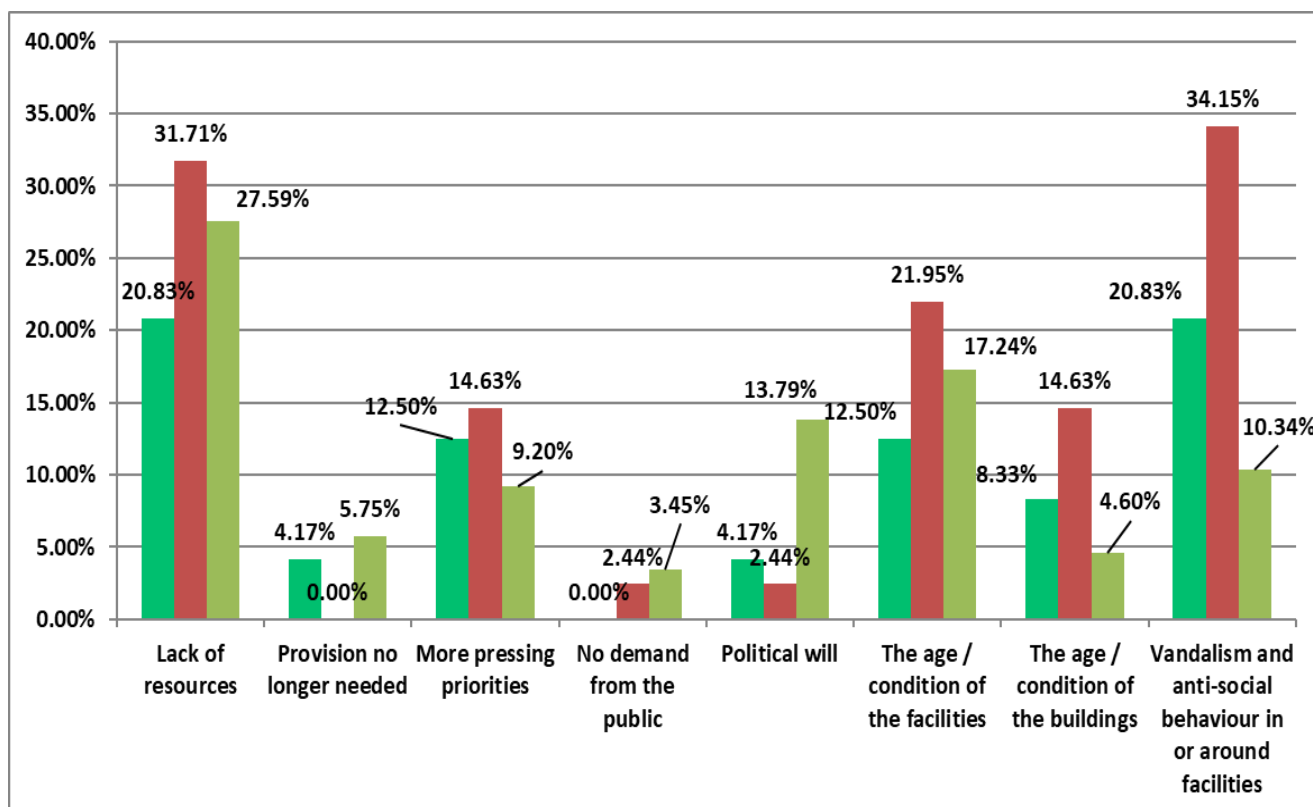
### **3.6 If the council had ceased providing public toilets, when did this occur?**

Over 44% of respondents reported that they were not sure when provision was ceased, which could be attributed to the changes in the workforce within the service. It is clear from the responses that councils did not cease any provision within the last year. The graph below outlines the responses received.



### 3.7 What are the main reasons for not providing permanent public toilet facilities?

The survey looked at why councils had decided not to provide permanent public toilet facilities. There were a variety of reasons reported, and the graph below details of the responses received.



There has been a decrease of 13.32% from the high of last year of the number of respondents reporting that vandalism and anti-social behaviour was a major factor in not providing public conveniences. However, it is still one of the highest reported reasons with 20.83% reporting this to be the case.

The other main reason being cited is the lack of resources with 20.83% of respondents advising this was the reason for not providing permanent public conveniences.

'No demand' from the public was not cited as a reason to cease the provision, demonstrating that public conveniences are required and used by the community.

In addition to the reasons stated in the survey, it was commented that facilities had been transferred as a community asset, or the fact that there was not a statutory requirement to provide the provision. This further highlights the impact the wider council budgetary pressures are having on the facilities that are available.

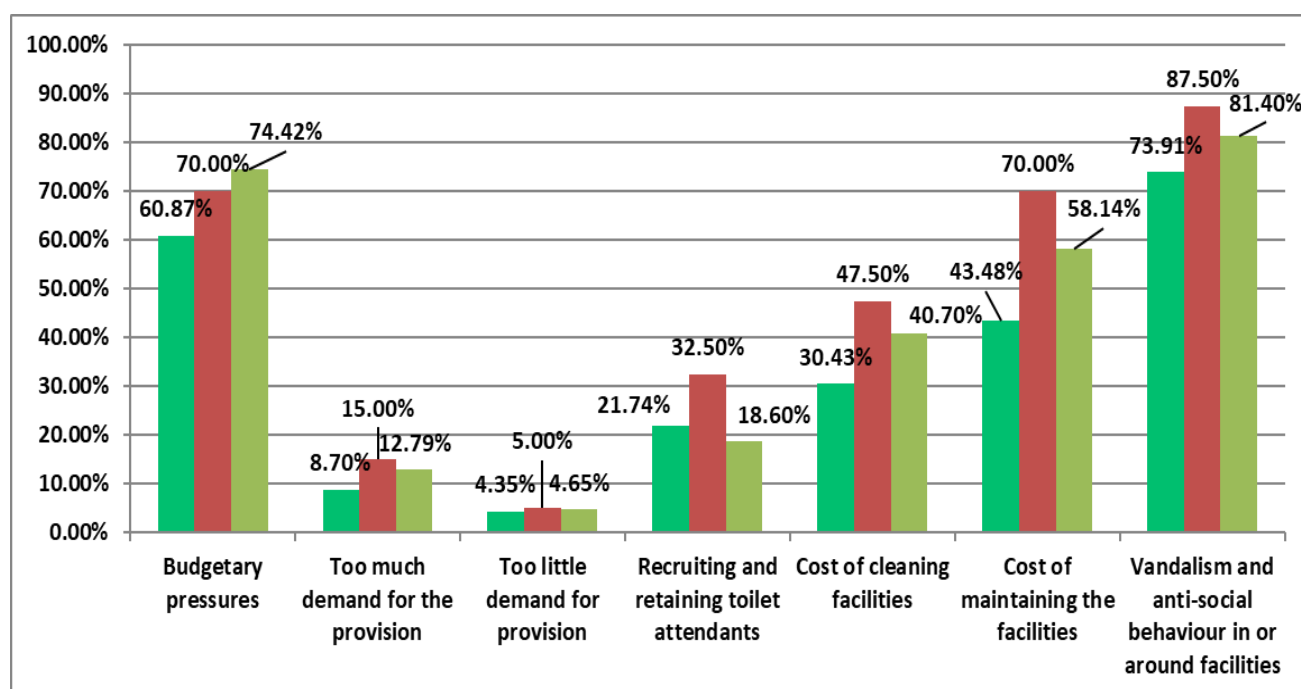
### 3.8 Is your authority reviewing or planning to review the provision provided?

When asking authorities if there is a review of the provision currently being undertaken or if there are plans to do so in the next 12-24 months, 43.48% report that there is a review currently being undertaken, 26.09% have no plans in place to conduct a review and 26.09% are looking to commence a review in the next couple

of years.

### 3.9 What are the greatest challenges in providing public toilet facilities?

To gain an understanding of the challenges local authorities are facing in providing public toilet facilities, the survey asked respondents what the greatest challenges are. The graph below provides an overview of the responses received for the 2025, 2024 and 2023 surveys.



The responses have been consistent over the last three years. However, the results highlight that the greatest challenges relate to vandalism and anti-social behaviour and with 73.91% of respondents reporting this to be the case. Although the number of respondents reporting budget pressures has decreased from 74.42% in 2023 to 60.87% in 2025 it is clear that this is still proving to be a major challenge for councils.

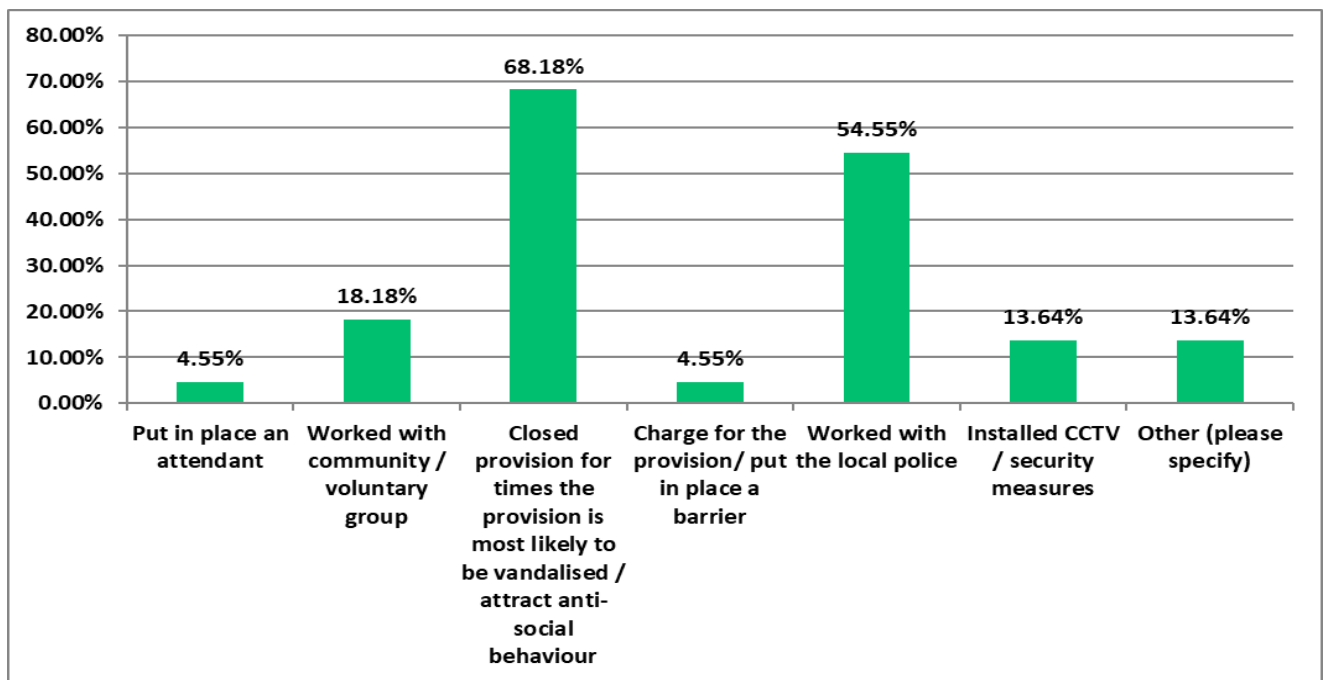
From the comments associated with this question the other challenges were reported as being:

- Facilities are not in the right place, due to the demand for provision moving to an alternative area.
- Rural facilities in tourist areas are in high demand for short periods of time.
- Expectations of the levels of cleanliness.

### 3.10 What measures has the council put in place to mitigate the impact from vandalism / anti-social behaviour?

With vandalism and anti-social behaviour being cited as one of the main reasons for ceasing provision or one of the greatest challenges, APSE was keen to establish the measures that councils had put in place to mitigate the impact.

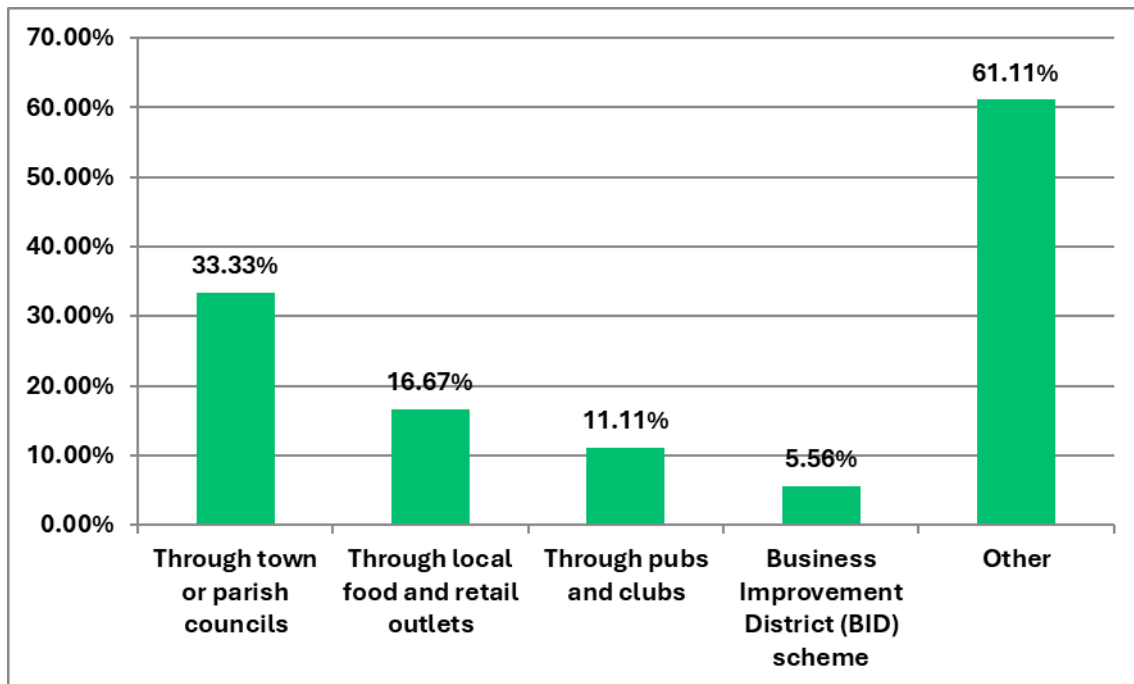
The graph below provides an overview of the responses received.



The majority of respondents, 68.18%, advise that they close toilets at the times when the most vandalism occurs and 54.55% have worked with the local police.

### 3.11 Has the council developed alternative arrangements for public toilet provision?

To gain an understanding on whether councils had put in place alternative arrangements for public toilet provision, the question was put to respondents with a series of options, and the graph below highlights the responses received.

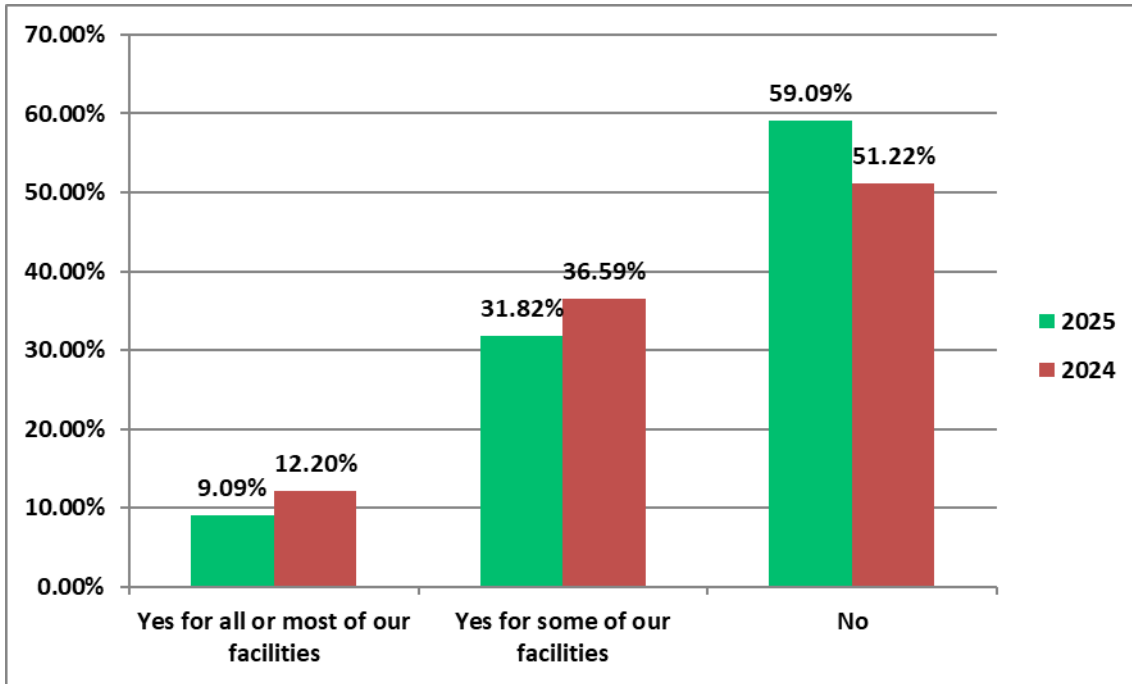


From the options over a third of respondents (33.33%) advise that the provision is delivered through town or parish councils and 16.67% report that it is provided by local food and retail outlets.

The largest portion of respondents, 61.11%, have advised that they have had other arrangements in place, which included having facilities available for public in council buildings such as leisure centers and the respondents also report that community groups operate the provision.

#### **4 Charging for provision**

The survey asked if councils charged for their facilities and the graph below provides a comparison of the responses from the last two years.

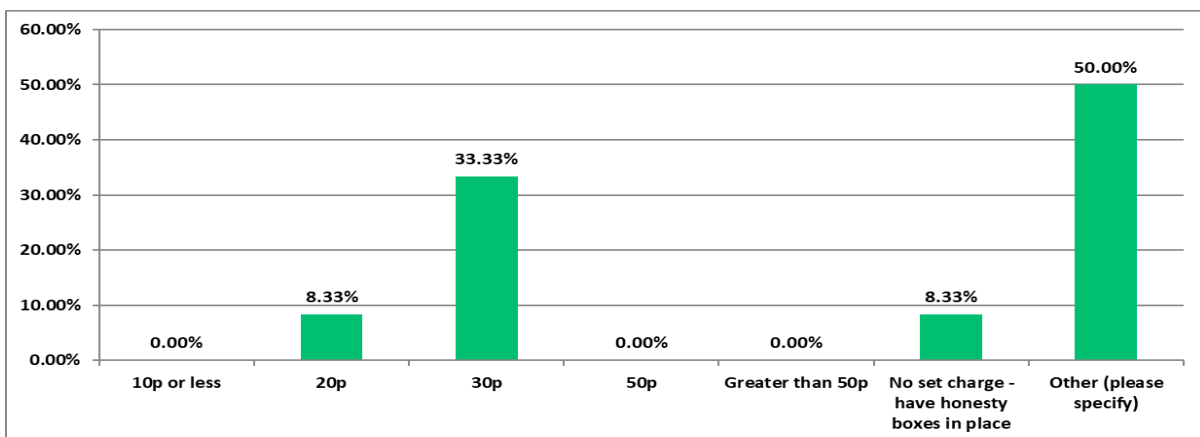


Over half of respondents, 59.09% in 2025 and 51.22% in 2024 report that they do not charge for public conveniences.

Only 9.09% of respondents in 2025 and 12.20% of respondents in 2024 report that they charge for most or all of the public conveniences the council provides.

#### 4.1 How much do you charge? - if there is a variable amount, please provide an average?

The graph below outlines the charges levied for the facilities.

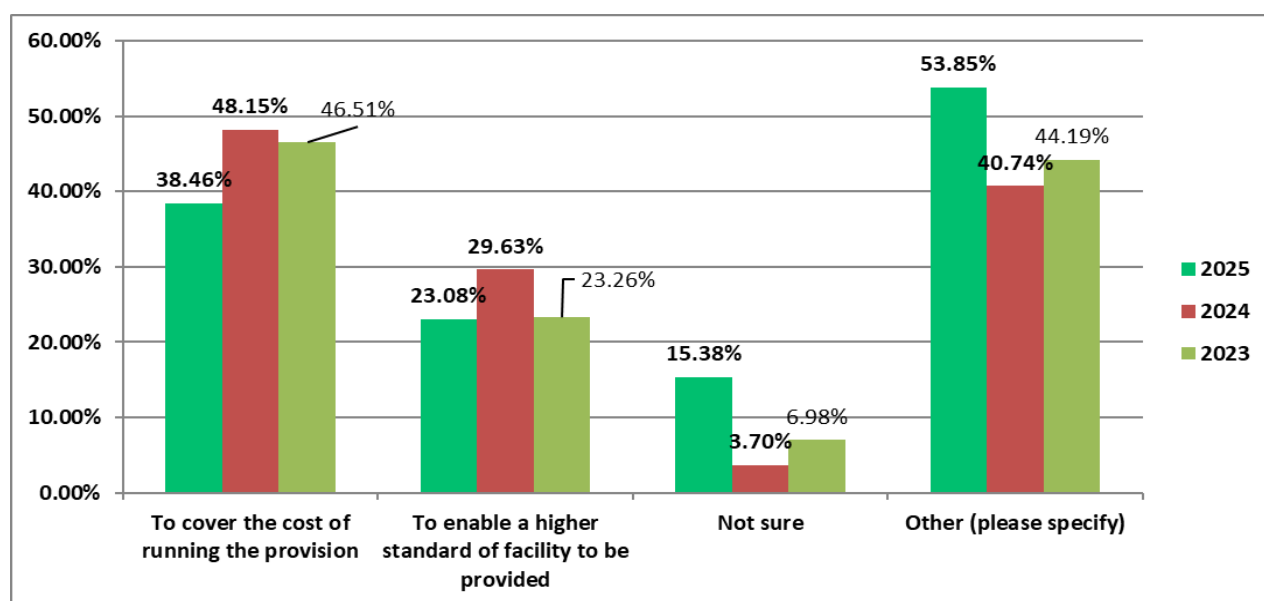


The amount charged ranged from £0.20 up to £0.30. The most commonly charged fee is 20p with 30.77% advising that this was the average charge.

The comments associated with the 50% of respondents that have answered other show that the amount charged is dependent on the location and type of provision. For example, if the provision has an attendant, then the charge is greater than unmanned public toilets. Therefore, it was commented that it was difficult to state the average charge.

## 4.2 What is the reason for charging for the provision?

To gain an understanding of the reason that councils had decided to charge is outlined in the graph below.



38.46% of respondents report that the charge is levied to cover the cost of running the provision. In the comments associated with the question, respondents advised that they did not charge, or they made a charge to deter vandalism and antisocial behaviour.

It is clear that the charges are not levied to make a profit for the council with none of the respondents reporting this to be the case, it was also commented by a minority of the respondents that the provision was run at a loss.

Although not asked in the survey, the reason for councils not charging for provision could be due to the costs of managing the security and collection of money and to ensure that the community are not deterred from using provision.

The vast majority of respondents (86.36%) said they did not earn sponsorship or advertising income from the public conveniences, 4.55% did utilise sponsorship and advertising. It was reported that the main form of advertising was done by way of

posters for local events.

## 5 Disabled toilet facilities and Changing Places.

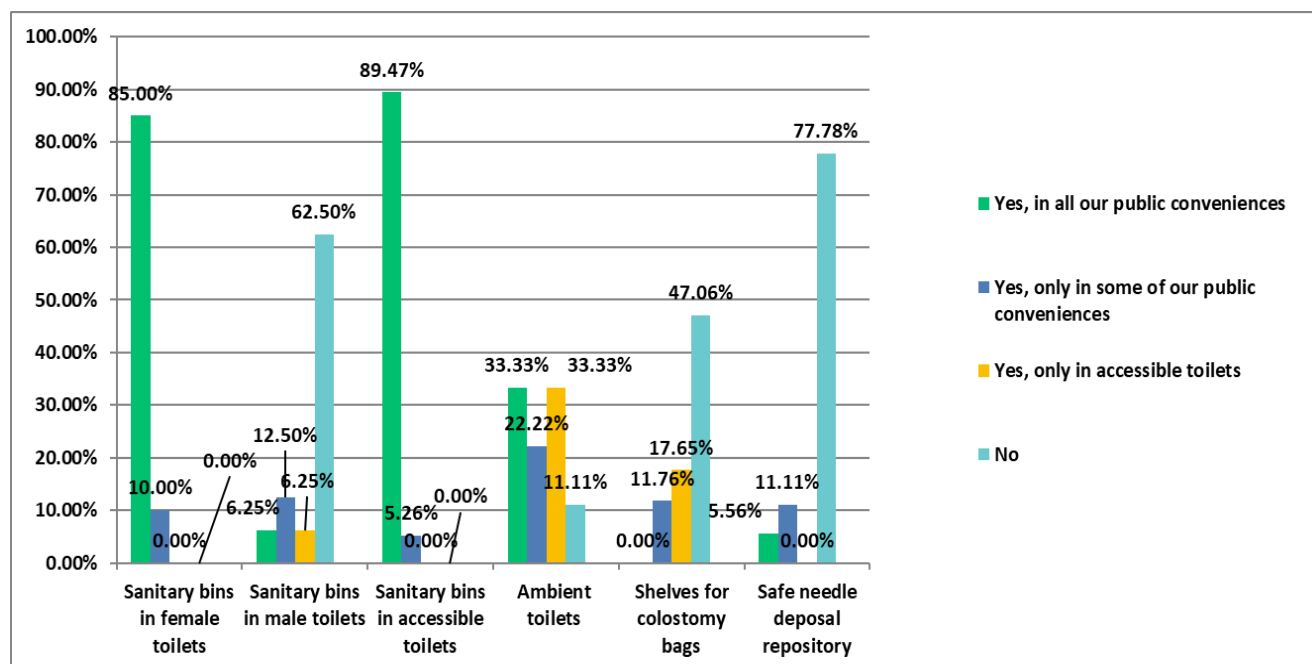
### 5.1 Do you operate a key / access system for disabled toilet facilities?

76.19% of respondents operated a key / access system for the disabled toilet facilities, and 14.29% reported that they do not have this type of system in place and a further 4.76% advised that there was a key or access system in place, but it was not fit for purpose.

In addition, 4.76% advised that there was another arrangement in place and the most comment response was that council staff provide a key when the facilities are required.

### 5.2 Do your public conveniences include any of the following provisions?

A new question was asked in 2025, to gain an understanding of the additional facilities that councils provide in their provision. The graph below highlights the responses.



The majority of respondents, 85% provide sanitary bins in all their female toilets and 89.47% provide them in all their accessible toilets.

33.33% of respondents report having ambient toilets available as part of their public

convenience provision.

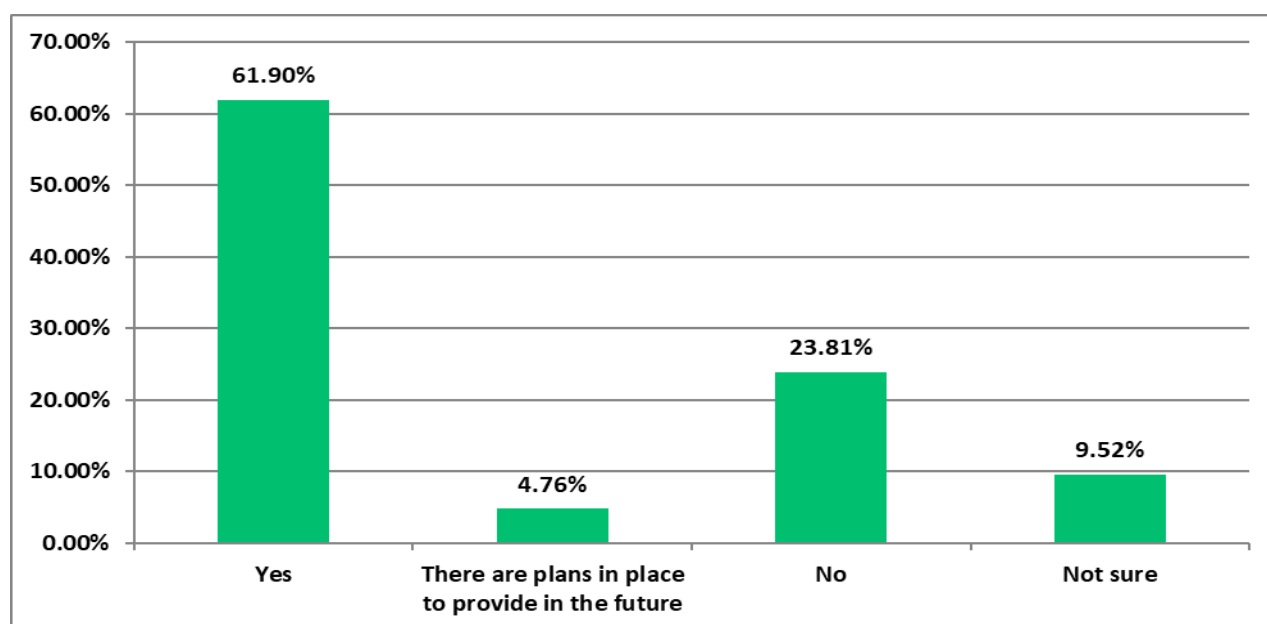
It will be interesting to see if the responses change over the next few years, with more awareness of the additional facilities that can be added to public toilets to make them more accessible to the wider community.

### 5.3 Does your authority provide Changing Places toilets?

Changing Places toilets are larger accessible toilets for people with a severe disability, with equipment such as hoists, curtains, adult-sized changing benches, and space for carers.

In 2021, there was a major change to building rules in England requiring thousands of large (12m<sup>2</sup>) and well-equipped accessible toilet facilities to be designed and built into new public buildings.

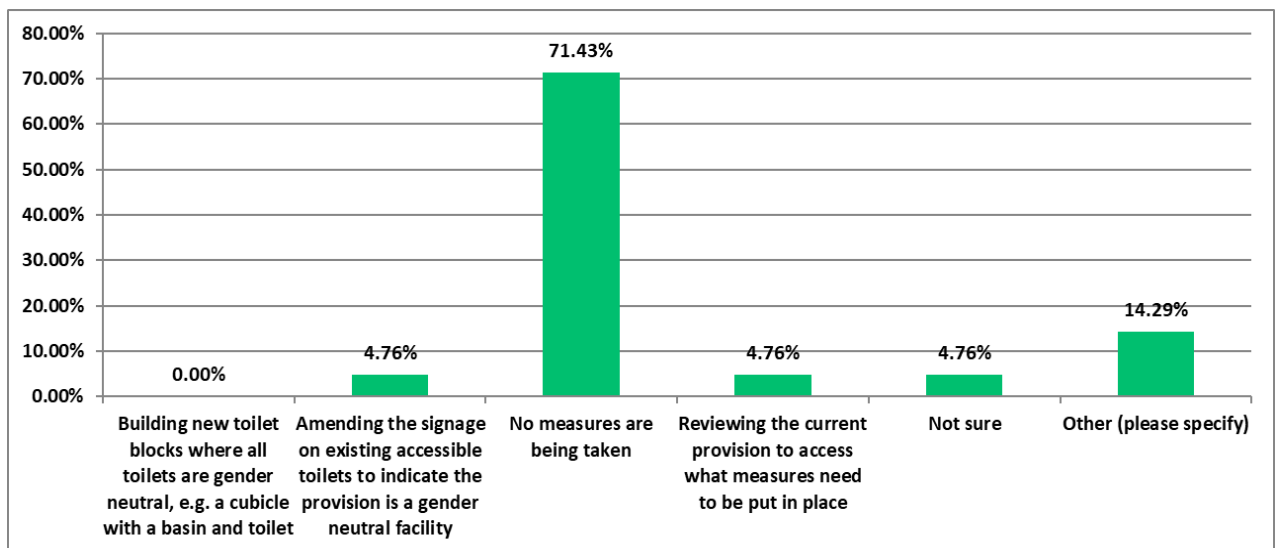
The graph below provides an overview of the Changing Places provision provided by councils.



Over half of respondents have Changing Places facilities in place with 61.90% reporting this to be the case, which is an increase from 51.22% reporting this to be the case in 2024. A further 4.76% report that they had plans in place to provide the provision in the future. The new regulations relate to England, therefore most respondents that report they do not have the provision in place are from authorities outside of England.

## 5.4 What measures are you taking in relation to the provision of gender-neutral toilets?

In May 2024, the UK government announced [new requirements for single-sex toilet facilities in England in most new non-domestic buildings](#), therefore a new question was asked in the survey for 2025 to establish what measures councils were taking in response to the requirements. The graph below highlights the responses received.



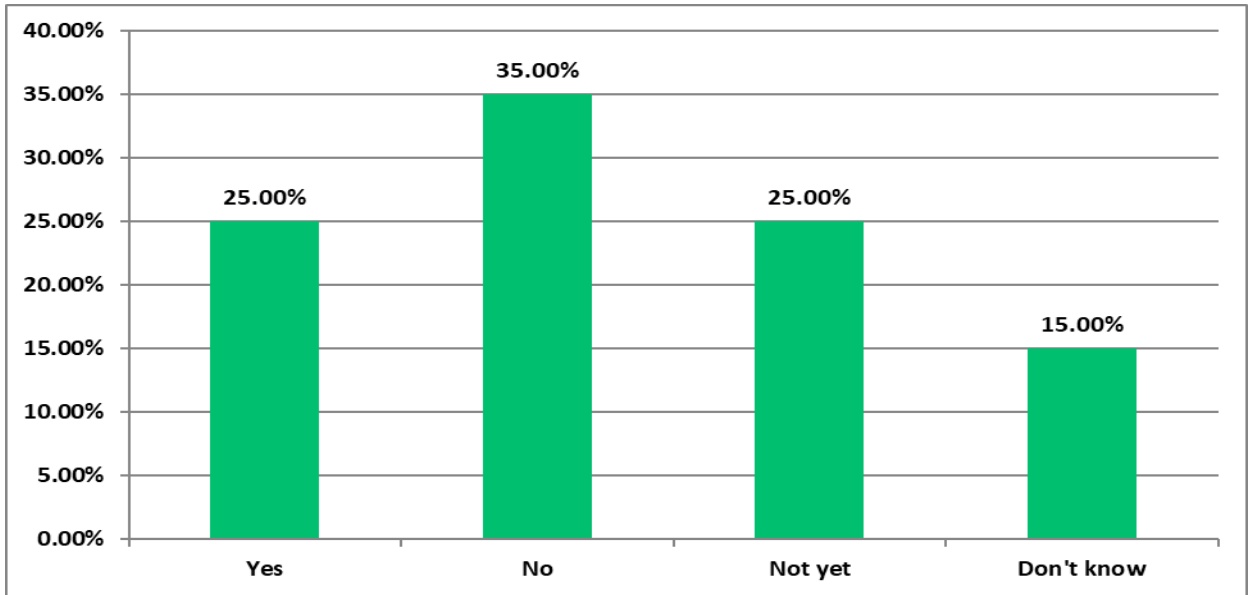
Whilst a small minority, 4.76% of respondents report that they are reviewing the current provision, the vast majority 71.43% of respondents report no further measures are being undertaken. As the policy becomes embedded and case law sets precedent, it will be interesting to see how this is reflected in the data going forward.

## 6 Public conveniences strategy.

### 6.1 Does the council have a formally agreed strategy for public conveniences?

The Public Health (Wales) Act 2017 places a duty on each Local Authority in Wales to prepare and publish a local toilets strategy for its area but this is not a requirement for all authorities in the UK. Therefore, APSE was keen to understand to what extent councils had a formally agreed strategy in place for their public conveniences provision and what factors the strategy included.

The graph below highlights an overview of the responses received.

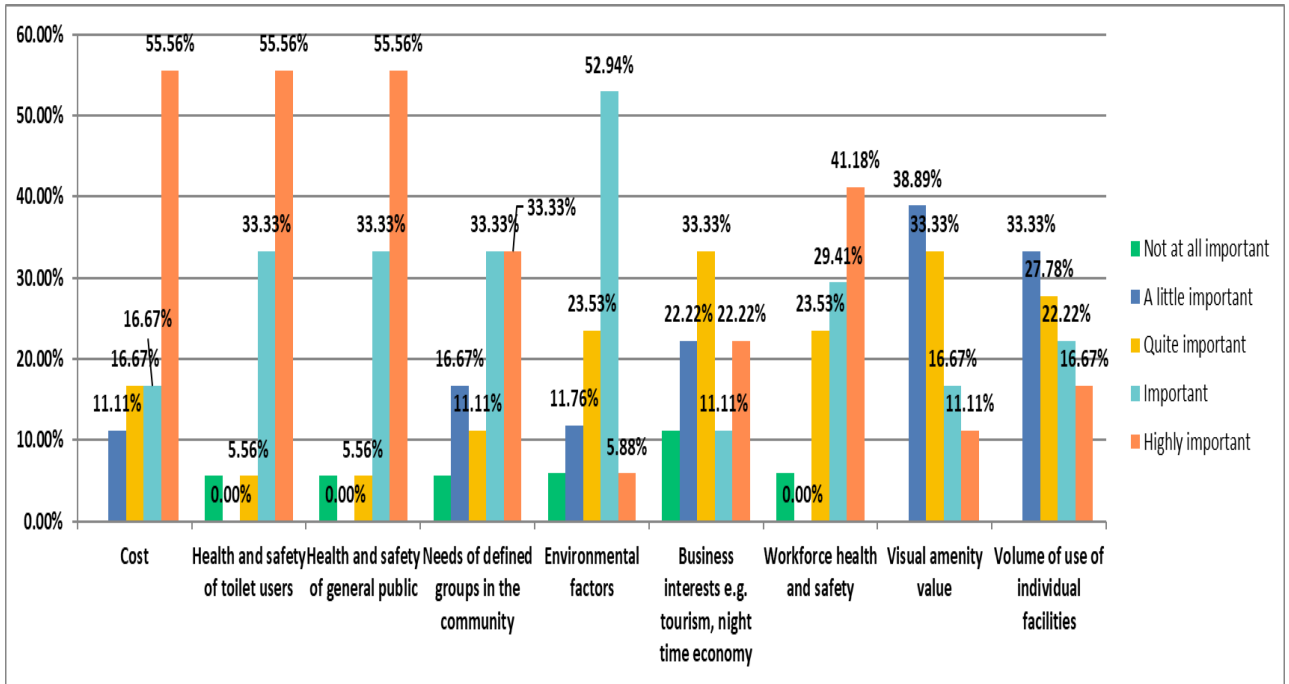


35% of respondents report that they did not have a strategy in place, a quarter of respondents advise that they have adopted a strategy and 25% of respondents state that they did not have an agreed strategy yet, which indicates that they are intending to develop one.

## **6.2 How important are the following factors to the council's strategy for public toilets?**

APSE sought to gain an understanding of what factors were important to local authorities when developing a strategy for their public conveniences.

The graph below provides an overview of the responses received.

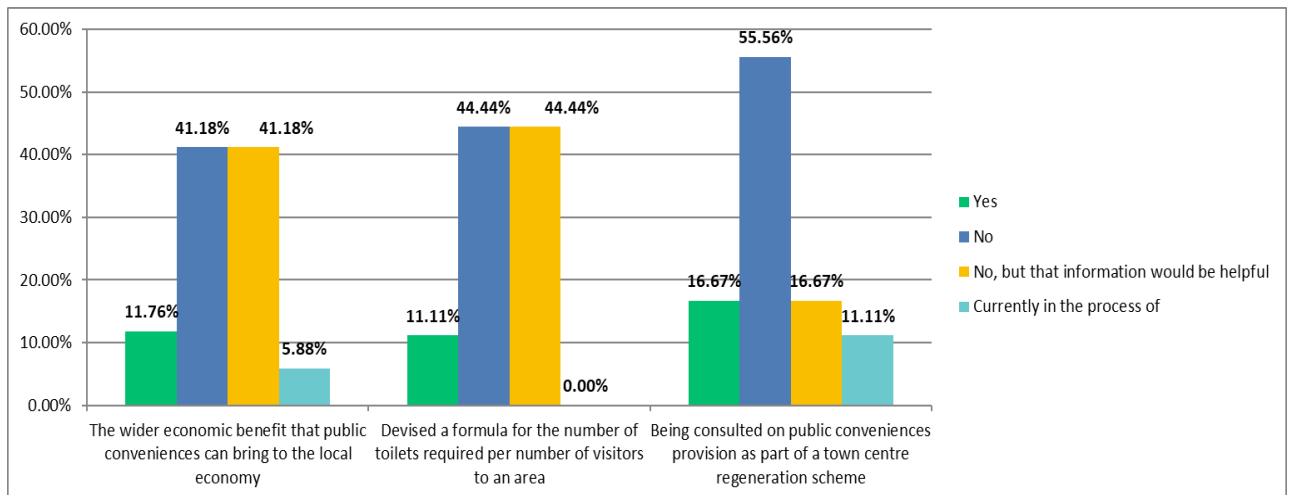


It is clear from the responses that there are three main areas that respondents believed were highly important, cost, the health and safety of toilet users and the health and safety of the general public with 55.56% of respondents respectively stating this to be the case.

A further 41.18% of respondents believed that the health and safety of the workforce was an important factor to be considered in their strategy.

### 6.3 Has your authority done any of the following?

To gain a wider understanding of the importance of what local authorities are looking at when developing their strategy or promoting the importance of public convenience in their areas the survey asked if there had been any work undertaken on the following: -



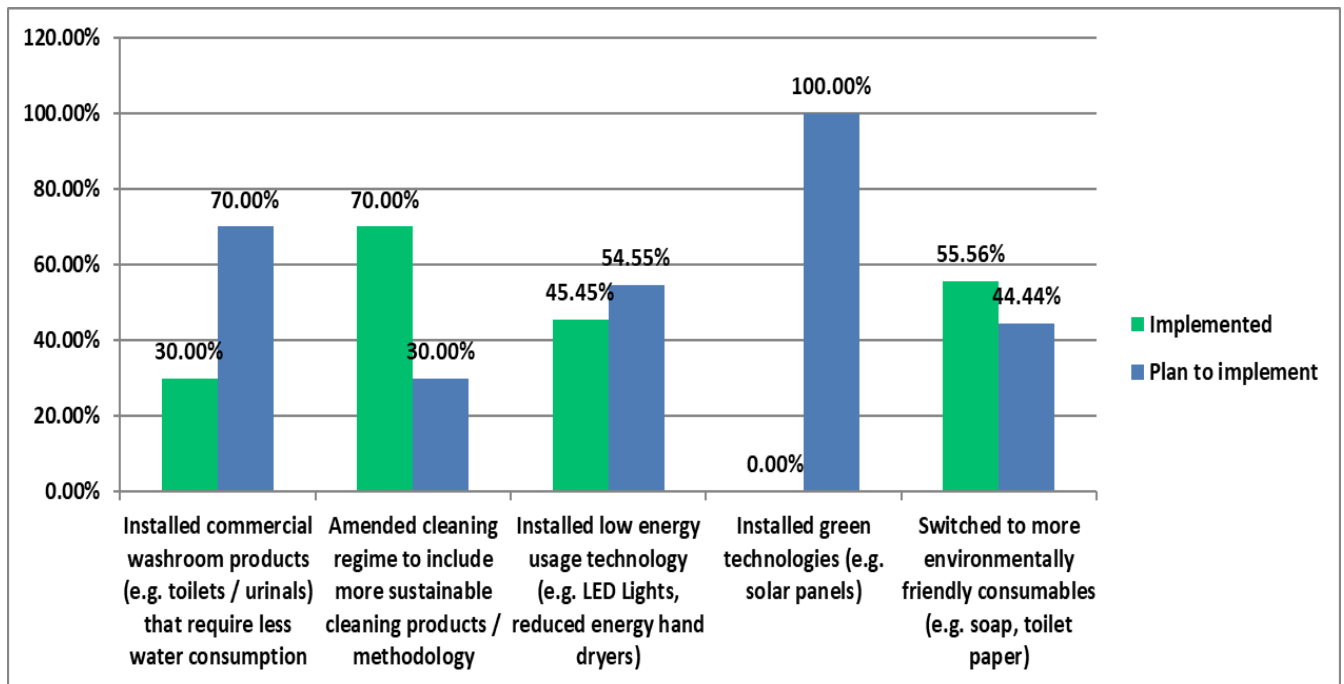
11.76% of respondents had undertaken some work to understand the wider economic benefit of public conveniences, 11.11% had devised a formula for the number of toilets required per number of visitors and 16.67% of respondents had been consulted on public conveniences provision as part of town centre regeneration.

Although these numbers are relatively low, it is clear from the responses that respondents believed that data on the wider economic benefits and a formula for the number of toilets to number of visitors would be helpful when developing a strategy. Therefore, going forward further research in these areas would be beneficial.

#### **6.4 What measures are being introduced in response to climate change?**

Many councils have declared a climate emergency and to achieve the targets set for net zero, councils are implementing a range of measure to make their assets more sustainable which includes public conveniences. Therefore, APSE sought to gain an understanding of what local authorities were doing with the public convenience provision.

The graph below outlines the responses received.



The majority of respondents, 70% have amended their cleaning regime to include more sustainable cleaning products or methodology, 55.56% of respondents have advised that they have switched to more environmentally friendly consumables. In addition, 45% of respondents report that they have installed low energy usage technology.

It is clear from the data that measures have been implemented, but there are also plans to implement further measures with 100% of respondents stating that they are looking to install green technologies such as solar panels.

The survey responses demonstrate that the quick win measures have been implemented and the measures that are more challenging or have higher costs associated to implement them are taking longer and require more planning.

## **APSE COMMENT**

The survey highlights that due to the pressure on local authority budgets there has been a decline in the provision provided by councils over the last ten years. However, there is a strong case to be made for retaining public conveniences, whilst respondents report that they do not make a profit from their public toilets, the additional income to local economies, of “good toilet provision has been shown to increase retail turnover, tourist numbers and economic growth” according to Professor Clara Greed of the University of the West of England.

The provision of safe, clean, and accessible facilities ensures that people with disabilities, pregnant women and older people who need regular access to toilets can have the confidence to visit the town centre, park, or tourist attraction and for others in the community it can encourage them to stay longer in the area.

Councils reported that they had worked hard during the pandemic with the changing guidance to keep public toilets open for key workers. As restrictions were lifted and people returned to utilising local parks, beaches, and tourist attractions, the service ensured that provision was available and that they were able to meet any changing guidance.

APSE would recommend that councils develop a clear strategy for their public conveniences, taking into consideration the local need, and the future sustainability of the facilities. They should also explore methods of financing public conveniences such as charging or introducing complementary services such as café facilities, particularly with the roll-out of electric charging points in remote areas, which require users to spend time in a location. Some local authorities have resorted to asset transfers to communities or town / village councils, where direct provision is unaffordable or utilised comfort schemes that pay local businesses to provide toilet facilities. Many also provide facilities in existing council buildings for use by the public (e.g., libraries, sports centres), which should be considered as a further possible solution. It is important to ensure that consideration of public conveniences is an integral part of local place-based strategies, including the feasibility of walking and cycling routes, tourism developments and when considering a holistic approach to encourage physical activity in areas of green space and public realm. Recent press reports have highlighted the issues of so-called ‘wild toileting and the impact this has on local areas, which suggests that in the absence of public provision anti-social

behaviour may become increasingly prevalent.

On a final point, as Local Government Reorganisation looms on the horizon for authorities in England it is more important than ever that councils have up to date asset registers detailing a council's public convenience provision, the condition of facilities, charging policies, cleaning and maintenance scheduled and associated contracts that are in place.

This will help ensure that councils can make informed decisions regarding the future of provision and ensure that the needs of the community are met

[APSE Solutions](#) has a range of support that can be provided to assist local authorities in reviewing their provision, developing strategies and preparing for Local Government Reorganisation. To discuss this kind of support contact Matt Miller or [mmiller@apse.org.uk](mailto:mmiller@apse.org.uk) or Emma Taylor [etaylor@apse.org.uk](mailto:etaylor@apse.org.uk).

**Vickie Hacking,**  
**APSE Principal Advisor**

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Networks are a free service included as part of your authority's membership of APSE and all end with an informal lunch to facilitate networking with peers in other councils. If you do not currently receive details about APSE network meetings and would like to be added to our list of contacts for your service area, please email [enquiries@apse.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@apse.org.uk).

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- Catering
- Cemeteries and crematoria
- Local Government Reorganisation
- Veterans and Military Champions Network
- Social Value, Procurement and Commercialisation
- Housing, construction and building maintenance.
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- Renewables and climate change
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- Sports and leisure management
- Vehicle maintenance and transport
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