

**PUBLIC TOILETS IN PLYMOUTH - BRIEFING
REPORT**
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT - NOVEMBER 2025



Purpose of report

This report sets out the principles that will be used to inform the provision of public toilets in the City and will guide the next steps in relation to this element of the development of our Strategic Asset Management Plan.

Members of the Housing and Communities Scrutiny Committee are invited to comment on the principles we are proposing to use and embed.

Background

Plymouth City Council provides 22 public toilets at various locations across the City. The average annual running costs for repairs, maintenance, utilities and cleaning for these facilities is £353,402.03 of which on average £48,906.45 is generated from charges for usage. Providing public toilets is not a statutory function, however the Council recognises that to deliver its mission; to make Plymouth a great place to live, work and visit, facilitating access to toilets is key.

To inform how the public toilet provision is managed the Council needs a clear approach that sets out the principles for decision making.

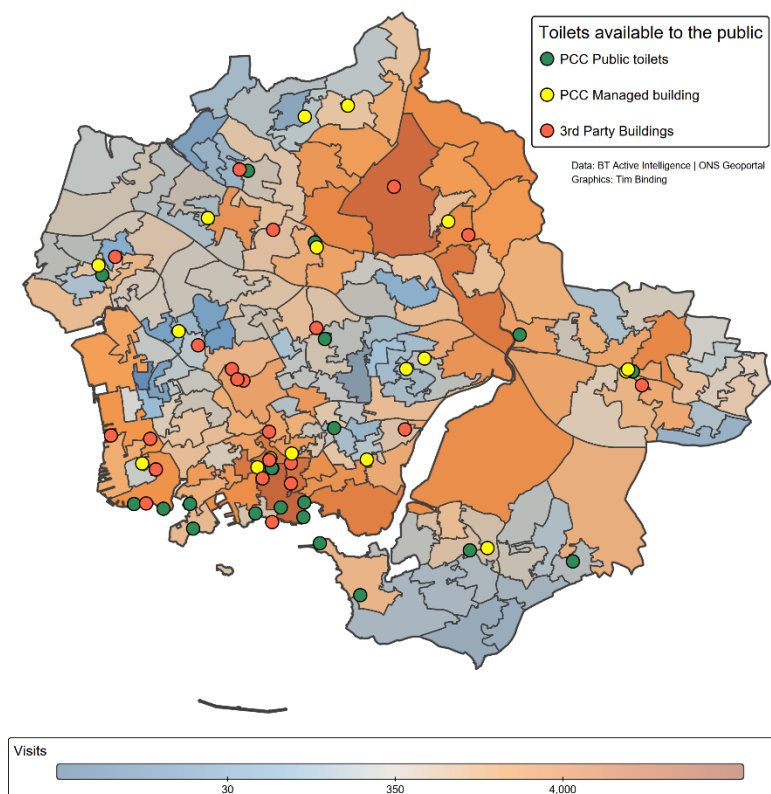
This report sets out the data in respect of the footfall across the City and the public toilet facilities that are available, including the Council's public toilets, toilets available in council operated buildings and 3rd party public toilets. Analysis of this data has been undertaken which provides an insight into the Citywide provision.

Footfall Data

To understand what public toilet provision is required across the City a review of the survey data provided by BT in 2023 was undertaken.

The data provides details about how individuals move around the City and includes those coming into Plymouth from outside the City boundaries. The data for people travelling to and from work within Plymouth was excluded for the purpose of this review as they will have access to toilets in their home or workplace. The data was captured over a standard weekday. Please see map below

Visitor footfall across Plymouth and location of toilets accessible to the public



The map above shows the variations in footfall across the City with the blue areas being the lower end of the visitor movement and the orange areas being the higher levels of footfall. This has been overlaid with the locations of council managed public toilets, customer toilets in council buildings and 3rd party organisations that allow the public to use their toilet facilities. It should be noted that there are other commercial sites in the City that will offer use of their toilets however this level of data has not been captured at this time.

The darkest orange areas, representing the highest footfall during the week, is in the city centre and waterfront areas around the Barbican. These are also the area with the highest levels of tourism and so will see seasonal increases. The north of the city, around Derriford, also has high levels of footfall, however this is unlikely to increase over the summer period.

It should be noted however that the Derriford area houses the major hospital in Plymouth and although has high levels of footfall, this is likely to be for medical emergencies and the hospital has its own toilet facilities which are not included in the map above.

Management Principles

There has not been a holistic approach to public toilet provision across the City for a considerable period. As we develop our Strategic Asset Management Plan this needs to change.

The approach to repairs and maintenance of the council's public toilets has been ad hoc without consideration of wider issues such as a broader perspective of the local area, future changes within the City, or how best the council can support its residents and visitors.

To meet the council's priorities, toilet provision needs to link to the Council's key areas of focus and the associate locations across the City as follows:

- Good transport links are key to supporting a vibrant economy and helping to support those working in the City to have a choice about how they travel to and from their workplace – public toilet provision should be available at key transport interchanges.
- Supporting the tourist industry by being welcoming and providing a clean and tidy city – public toilets should be available in areas of high tourist footfall.
- Encouraging residents and visitors to utilise the green spaces and the foreshore to promote health and well-being therefore reducing health inequalities – public toilets should be available in heavily used green/blue spaces.

These areas of focus can be supported by reviewing the visitors map and public transport provision to ensure that there are sufficient toilets available in the locations that relate to the above.

To ensure that the toilet provision is suitably based, the following principles should be considered:

- Any decision taken in respect of how the corporate estate is managed, linked to the asset management plan and future investment in the City, should consider if access to a public toilet facility is required.
- Council priorities, such as those above should be taken into account during the decision-making process.
- How future provision is funded. If grants or financial support are available as part of the investment into the City and the lifetime costs of any provision taken into consideration.
- Partnership working should be developed to ensure that toilet facilities that are available to the public within the City are promoted.
- Council managed public toilets should be reviewed to ensure that they offer value for money and consideration given to future provision as buildings reach end of life or if there is substantial change in the local area.