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Y Gweinidog Llywodraeth Leol a Chymunedau
Minister for Local Government and Communities



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/06054/12

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16th May 2012

Thank you for your letter of 24 April regarding local authority provision of public toilet facilities. I am of course aware of the Health and Social Care Committee's report and of your Committee's interest in this issue.

You asked me for an update on several aspects of public toilet provision by local authorities, which I address in turn below. The law as it stands does not require local authorities to provide public toilets; nor does it give Ministers powers to direct them in this regard, or to issue any form of statutory guidance. The following responses to your questions should be seen within that context.

- Does the Welsh Government have any involvement in strategic level decisions relating to public toilet provision?

Like many other local services this is entirely a matter for each local authority to determine in accordance with local needs, priorities and resources. That said, we are working with local authorities to facilitate greater public access to toilets through the Public Facilities Grant Scheme (see below).

- Does the Welsh Government issue guidelines to local authorities on provision of public toilet facilities, including levels of provision?

The Welsh Government has not issued such guidelines.

- Does the Welsh Government monitor or have a role in reviewing the levels of provision, to ensure they are appropriate?

No, this is a matter for individual local authorities. However, we do monitor take up under the Public Facilities Grant Scheme very closely.

- What mechanisms are available to ensure that local authorities provide an appropriate level of access to public toilet facilities?

Local authorities are not currently under any statutory duty to provide public toilets. They are, however, best placed to assess the needs of their communities working in collaboration with other community planning partners (such as community and town councils) and businesses to ensure that appropriate provision is made.

The Welsh Government is conscious of the impact that inadequate toilet provision can have on the elderly and disabled people in particular. With this in mind, we introduced the Public Facilities Grant Scheme in April 2009. The Scheme was initially for a 3 year period, but we have extended the scheme for a further year from April 2012. It reimburses participating local authorities (to a maximum of £17,500 per authority per year) for payments of up to £500 to local businesses for allowing free public access to their toilet facilities. Since the Scheme's inception, £295,522 has been reimbursed to local authorities, who have until 31 January 2013 to submit claims for 2012-13. The toilet facilities provided must have acceptable standards of safety, hygiene, accessibility for disabled people and provision for both sexes.

There are currently 286 businesses in Wales participating in this scheme. We continue to encourage take up of this funding and hope to see further expansion of the scheme during this financial year.



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