

SCOTTISH BORDERS COUNCIL
13 MAY 2021
APPENDIX I

1. To Executive Member for Community Development & Localities

Can the Executive Member advise what plans there are to reopen public toilets in the Borders?

Reply from Councillor Tatler

All SBC operated public toilets were closed in March 2020 due to Covid restrictions.

In August 2020, the Council re-opened 16 of the highest priority public toilets across the Borders and it has provided enhanced management and cleaning regimes to ensure public safety at these facilities.

Whilst Covid restrictions are relaxing, Covid precautions are not. Scottish Government guidance advises that there remains a need to continue the enhanced management and cleaning regimes already in place and consequently this impacts resources available to the Council.

The Council understands that there is a desire to re-open other public toilet facilities as tourism increases and it will consider innovative ways to deliver services such as these.

Where an established community group wishes to re-open and operate any other public toilet, officers can discuss opportunities available to them.

However given the enhanced Covid regimes, there are no additional resources available to allow any further public toilets to be re-opened at this time.

Officers will continue to monitor use of public facilities and will bring a report back to Council when and if the government Covid guidance changes.

Supplementary

Councillor Robson referenced an article in the Northumberland Gazette regarding funding of £1m to revamp public toilets in that area and asked if he could give consideration to this and the taking of appropriate measures in the Scottish Borders. Councillor Tatler advised that he was not aware of this article but that officers would be considering the future provision of toilets and proposals would be brought forward in due course.

2. To Executive Member for Adult Wellbeing

Can the Executive Member advise what plans are in place to cope with the number of outstanding home visits needing to be made by occupational therapists?

Reply from Councillor Weatherston

OT Assessments continued by all locality teams throughout the last year, the delivery of this was re-modelled in line with COVID restrictions and assessments were carried out either by a mix of phone, video (Near Me) or home visits depending on need and risks involved. This work covered a range of critical needs around assessment for equipment, moving and handling, and assessments to support hospital prevention of admission and discharge.

Currently we have a waiting list of 30 adaptations within our Care and Repair team. This is higher than normal partly due to a vacant post and maternity leave last year, and partly due to the pandemic. We have put in place a number of measures to manage waiting time such as prioritising external adaptations, completing grant paperwork remotely, asking the service user or family to take measurements/photographs of the bathroom for example enabling us to draw up a draft plan. This can speed up the process to the point of requesting quotes for the adaptation, however, we are then at the mercy of contractors providing quotes and ultimately having the capacity to take work on timeously. We also have a number of

installations delayed due to contractors being unable to carry out any internal works. These have now been prioritised for installation as COVID restriction have been reduced.

Supplementary

Councillor Robson asked that where there had been instances of works taking place without visits that these be checked. Councillor Weatherston asked for site specific information to allow any concerns to be raised with officers.