



REGENERATION AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - 17TH JULY 2012

SUBJECT: PUBLIC FACILITIES GRANT BY WELSH GOVERNMENT

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the availability of the Public Facilities Grant from the Welsh Government and how this can assist with increased Public Convenience Provision across the county borough

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 As Members will appreciate there has been a general decline in the number of Public Conveniences provided by Local Authorities over the past decade. This Authority, together with many others has decommissioned unsuitable and costly buildings so we can concentrate our limited resources on a lesser number of better quality facilities.
- 2.2 The Welsh Government had recognised the problems faced by Local Authorities regarding the provision of suitable and sufficient Public Conveniences and has made a Public Facilities Grant available to increase the number of facilities available.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The Public Facilities Grant Scheme benefits Local Government and the Public as residents have free access to toilet facilities while businesses and other bodies receive cash to help them keep their facilities in good order.

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 The Public Facilities Grant has been available to all Welsh Local Authorities for the past 2 years and provides funding of up to £17,500 per annum for Authorities to sign up businesses in their area. The funding provides a £500 annual grant to each property if the business owners allow the public access to the toilet facilities they already provide at their premises. There are quite strict qualifying criteria to obtain the grant such as signage, opening times, facilities available etc. and in the past there has been limited interest by local businesses in Caerphilly County Borough.
- 4.2 As stated above in the past two years there has been very little take up with the scheme despite sending letters to those properties deemed suitable and some canvassing work being undertaken in our main town centres by the Town Centre Management Team.

- 4.3 Towards the latter end of 2011/12 and after consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member it was resolved that we may get a better response if properties were paid a personal visit by officers from the Public Services division and a concerted campaign was launched to try and sign up as many of the 35 grant fundable properties as possible for 2012/13.
- 4.4 In excess of one hundred properties were visited/contacted during the campaign (see appendix 1) and whilst there was some initial interest it took several additional visits to persuade the property owners to participate.
- 4.5 During this exercise officers were mindful to try and get a good geographical split of properties covering as many of our towns and villages as possible across the county borough and as can be seen from the list of properties who have signed up for the scheme (appendix 1) the majority of the county borough is now covered. Unfortunately there may be a couple of areas/villages that are not covered and this is either because there were no suitable properties or there were no properties interested in participating in the scheme.
- 4.6 Participating properties were required to sign a "Public facilities Grant" Contract. Appendix 2 includes an extract (terms and conditions) from this contract
- 4.7 All properties participating in the scheme have now been included on a dedicated page (Community Facilities link on Public Convenience Page – link attached) on our Web -site [http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Transport Streets/community toilets.pdf](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/pdf/Transport%20Streets/community_toilets.pdf) and have appropriate signage detailing opening hours and facilities available.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no significant financial implications as the Grant Payments are a straight pass through from the Welsh Government to the property that offers the use of their facility via Caerphilly County Borough Council.
- 5.2 This is of course a very cost effective way of offering a larger range of toilet facilities for use by the public and if any additional properties are identified by Members in areas not already covered by Grant Funding then they could be considered for funding from the current Public Convenience budget.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in this report.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Members are asked to note the contents of this report and, where appropriate, to identify any properties in areas that are not already included that would be prepared to participate in the scheme.

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Consultees: Anthony O'Sullivan, Chief Executive
Councillor David Poole, Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services
Mark S. Williams, Head of Public Services

Background Papers:

Welsh Government correspondence on Public Facilities Grant Scheme. Public Services, 1st Floor,
Ty Pontllanfraith

Appendices:

Appendix 1	Properties that have signed the Public Facilities Grant Agreement
Appendix 2	Terms and Conditions of Scheme