

Cross-Party Group on Changing Places Toilets

10 January 2024 6pm – 7:30pm

Minute

Present

MSPs

Paul O’Kane MSP
Jeremy Balfour MSP
Tess White MSP
Evelyn Tweed MSP

Invited guests

Maree Todd MSP

Non-MSP Group Members

Jenny Miller PAMIS
Laura Rutherford PAMIS
Fiona Souter
Cara Devaney
Lorna Fillingham
Patricia Ferguson
Dougie Peddie
Emma Clark
Pippa Swan
Robert Dick
Cameron Smith
Linda Reilly
Jill Clark
Sarah Heward
Diana Winfield
Angela Dulley

Apologies

Jackie Baillie MSP
Colin Beattie MSP
Alex Davie
Dr Caroline Gould
Karen Pritchett
Jan Kerr

Agenda item 1

Minutes

Just in terms of some housekeeping, can I just have the minutes of the previous meeting proposed and seconded? Anyone who was present?

Cameron Smith: All correct and propose

Paul O'Kane: Thanks Cameron, cheers and any one second?

Robert Dick: I will second

Agenda item 2

I'm delighted to say that we have two new MSP members of the group called Colin Beattie MSP although unable to attend this evening due to unforeseen circumstances and Evelyn Tweed MSP who's with us, I think on the call and is going to stay for a while, is joining the group as well.

So, we're delighted to have two new members, MSP members, of the group and we're very grateful to you and we hope you are ready for the discussions ahead.

Agenda item 3

Guest speaker: Maree Todd MSP

First of all to say that we are going to record this as we usually do, just to ensure that we can capture an accurate minute which Angela does for us and circulates so if anyone's got an issue with being on camera then obviously you can turn your camera off, but just to let everyone know that we are we are going to do that in this evening. So, really good to see everyone here for the first CPG of 2024 and a very Happy New Year to everyone. I hope everyone had a good Christmas period and a break.

So, good to see you all and thank you for joining us indeed. As I say this is evening slightly different, to previous meetings because we've dedicated the agenda to the Minister for Social Care Well-being and Sport who like Kevin Stewart MSP in his previous role as Minister, Changing Places toilets are part of the Minister's brief.

We're going to I'm going to give the opportunity for the Minister if she wants to say an opening statement and then we'll move into questions. The way we're going to do this is people have pre submitted questions. I'm going to kind of try and group them together and get to the kind of key issues and then if people feel like there are supplementary, they want to ask if we've got time then we will do that.

I think if people can kind of indicate in the chat whether they might have a question as we go along that'll be quite helpful for me.

And then after we've concluded our questions to the Minister, we're going to have our usual update from PAMIS and then any other business but as I say, I may have to disappear just prior to that but Angela and the team will take us through it. Without much further ado I'm pleased if the Minister wants to just make a brief opening statement and then we can move into questions.

Minister Maree Todd: Yeah, thanks very much.

Thanks Paul and hello everyone. It's lovely to see some familiar faces. Thank you very much for inviting me along today to meet you all and to speak about the Scottish Government's approach to Changing Places Toilets.

I suppose I have to say first off, I'm here on my own. I don't have an official accompanying me which is a very, very unusual circumstance as Minister. Usually, I have an entourage. If there is anything I can't answer, I'll take a note of it and get back to you.

So sometimes during meetings like this if there is a technical detail or something that I can't answer officials are able to fill in because I don't have an official with me tonight. I'll endeavour to get that information to you at a later date. To set the scene I'm sure many of you listen to the debate last night. I grew up in Ullapool and I now have moved back home, and I have the Ullapool Harbour Changing Places not just in my constituency, but in the village that I grew up in and I know how vital the facilities are and I know what a difference they can make to a community.

We are a wee tourist village and we're absolutely aware of the difference that that has made to visitors to our community, and we love, we thrive on hospitality. So, we think it's a great thing that we're able to welcome families in. It's just one of a number of examples from right across Scotland, which absolutely makes the case of how these facilities make a real difference to disabled people and their families, enabling them to go out and about and do things that other people take for granted.

I was absolutely delighted to be able to confirm to the Scottish Parliament in September last year that we will look to make the £10 million Changing Places toilet fund available across the financial years 24/25 and 25/26 and I reiterated again in the debate last night.

That means the fund will open at the start of 2025, so one year from now and flow over two financial years.

The Scottish Government's policy position on changing places toilets is really simple. We are committed to them, we committed in the SNP Manifesto prior to the last election to invest £10 million over the Parliamentary term to increase the number of Changing Places toilets across the

country and to support mobile Changing Places toilets to enable disabled people easier access to events and to outdoor venues and we took forward that commitment into the 2021 Programme for Government. As I said, I announced to the Scottish Parliament in September that we'll look to make that £10 million investment over the next two financial years.

It is three and a half times greater than England's investment on a per population basis. I think anyone who knows Scotland will understand why that needs to be because the geography and topography is such that we and the rurality means that we need to have more and take a different approach. We are absolutely committed to accessibility inclusion and human rights.

I think that level of investment demonstrates that. I know how important it is that we speak to people with lived experience when we're designing Scottish Government policy. So, it's brilliant to be able to hear directly from you about your experiences today.

Now, I know it's frustrating. I don't have a magic wand. I can't just throw the money on the table and let everyone scrabble for it. We have to take a certain amount of time to develop work to open the fund by the beginning of 2025 but we are starting that work now and I'm hear this evening partly because I know you guys have got lots of lots of questions for me, but I also have lots of questions for you because I want to be able to draw on the experience and expertise available in this CPG to help with all the work.

A couple of the things I was thinking is we might want to do some research into demand and what an effective building program would look like. We want to make sure the fund is fair and is equitable, we need to think carefully about eligibility criteria. So, there's a lot of work to do, we need to be thinking about should we consider co-funded applications? How would that work for small community projects? Should private sector applications be considered, and you know, I mean things like airports or large shopping centres where lots of people go so seems like a, you know, a place where they might be needed. Should they be eligible? Should government-funded bodies be eligible? The likes of Historic Scotland, Social Security Scotland, NHS boards, should they be able to apply to that fund? And crucially, how do we ensure ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the CPT's and trust the project management of the build?

So, there will be a whole lot of range of views on that I think it's important that we gather and consider all of those. Thanks for giving me a few minutes to throw in my questions and I'm more than happy to take questions from you all.

I suppose one thing to note and to celebrate before we get into your questions is that in we have currently got 267 Changing Places toilets. That's a 25% increase from the 209 that were available in 2019 when we first changed the building regulations. So, to increase by a quarter. I know we need a lot more but I think that's a substantial step forward and even before this funding became available and depending on how we use this funding, we can probably, you know, if we are careful about how we use it strategically £10 million we can get really good coverage out of so I'm more than happy to answer your questions and I look forward to hearing from you.

Oh 270, I'm delighted. It's going up as we speak anyway happy to take questions. Thanks.

Paul O'Kane: Thank you very much to the Minister as I say, I have some questions that were submitted in advance, and I've kind of, I'm going trying to group them just so we can get through

them because I'm conscious of time. I think if people do have a question if they can just indicate and we will try and get to you or if there are then supplementary's that come from the Minister's responses and we will try and get to them as well. When are you available until Marie?

Maree Todd: I can wait until 7:30. I've gotten to 7:30, if I can get away 7. I was in the car on my way to the West Coast at 7:30 this morning so I didn't do my daily miles so I'm itching to get out for my run. I can do that late.

Paul O'Kane: I think the running time for the meeting was kind of 7:00 anyway, so we will try and try rattle through this. Okay, so I think the kind of first theme that I've kind of picked up from some various people is I suppose the assurance that this money is going to be available now, I think there have been a variety of frustrations around the timing and I think those were well rehearsed last night in the debate in Parliament and have been expressed by the group and a number of contributions in terms of questions have shown frustration.

So, you know, we are where we are in terms of the government have said 2025. Is that a kind of cast iron guarantee I think that's what people want to know? Because it has been a long time in terms of coming. So, are we absolutely talking about a year from now and then that over the two final financial years of the Parliament?

Maree Todd: That's certainly the intention. You'll know as well as I do Paul things sometimes you know, unexpected circumstances arise and the Scottish Parliament has to deliver a balanced budget.

So, one of the challenges we faced last year in 2022 was that we put, our budget was passed by Parliament in February and by May it was worth substantially less than it had been when we passed it. So last year there was a huge year savings exercise in order to balance the budget legally. We cannot go over budget. So that's a very challenging situation. This year we faced another challenging situation. You know, we did not get the consequential from the UK Government's Autumn Statement that we had expected and you know, we're not just hoping for these things. We are in discussion with the UK Government in about their spending plan.

So, it was a bit of an unexpected blow. Despite all these challenges that £10 million commitment is still in there, and you know as far as I'm concerned, I will be doing absolutely everything I can to deliver it and to make sure that we get that fund up and running by next year.

But you know there's challenging times and I can't give you a legally binding contract or anything, but I'm pretty determined that it will be there and it is still there, you know despite everything, despite all the challenges we faced that £10 million is still being committed to.

Paul O'Kane: So, we have a commitment there from the Minister I think and then in terms of you know, the detail of that, Maree, will be in the budget we would expect next year? Is that what you intend to make clear exactly how that is going to be profiled?

Maree: Yep.

Paul O'Kane: Okay, So I think I think you know people will have heard that so I think it is at the Minister's word there and absolutely will be looking at the details of the budget because I think that's important. I suppose the next kind of...and these are a number of questions and I'll explain

kind of towards the end of them who's been asking these questions, but I suppose part of the challenge and I raised this in the debate last night was we need to make sure that essentially the preparation work is done because you referenced in your contribution, you know, the reality being that there has to be, you know, a prospectus if you like, of how this is going to be done, who's eligible, how the application will be made etc.

So, I suppose the question would be what work has been done or is going to be done in that space with it in this year that we have because obviously that groundwork has to happen in order to make the fund available on day one, we would hope of it coming through the budget. So, could you maybe just explain to us what thinking has been done about that or how you intend to do that? Are you going to consult? Are you going to speak to lived experience? You know I suppose those are the kind of questions people are asking.

Maree Todd: Absolutely. So, I think it's really important that we work with lived experience and that would I think include the CPG as well as some obvious stakeholders like PAMIS in order to get the policy right. We need to think about how the fund is administered, so I've listened very carefully to the experience south of the border. There the funding was distributed through the local authorities.

So, it was given from government to local authorities and there were some grumblings around that. It did mean that they didn't get an adequate geographical spread in the first tranche because some local authorities didn't go for it.

So, I think we need to think carefully about what outcomes we want to see and how best we can deliver this funding to achieve it. There definitely needs to be some.

So how do we get the geographical spread that we require and those questions that I asked, you know about private sector applications public sector applications, you know, we need to think about these changing places being in the right place being open and accessible to the community.

How can we achieve the greatest level of accessibility for them? Maintenance and upkeep are an issue, so we need to think about all of that and build a system that works and that ensures the money is well spent and that we achieved the outcomes that we want to achieve with it.

Paul O'Kane: Maybe come back to just the practicalities of you know, and I think Pippa just popped that in the chat because that's you know, what program works been done to date? You know, how is this going to take place over the coming year because I think that's crucially important but you mentioned there that you have been looking at what happened in England and we did have a question in from Lorna Fillingham who has campaigned for Changing Places toilets in England and was part of the work that you know Rishi Sunak when he was Chancellor released the money.

So, Lorna was keen to know what meetings you've maybe had with groups and charities and those with lived experience of the distribution of the money you know in the English context. Is that something you've looked at? Is that something you will look at to understand, I mean you kind of said there that there are some learnings from that around the local authority piece?

Maree Todd: So, I think the contact has been official to official in between governments rather than with lived experience although there may well have been some lived experience feedback into that process, but I think it's been between governments so far. So, if there are people that Lorna thinks

we need to speak to or you know, if we need to hear from, I'm happy to set that up that would be great.

Paul O'Kane: I think is useful because I suppose my action with the being there if we can maybe get some information as to who was working in England and who received funding and what the experience was. I think that would be helpful and also then of course we're going to look to how we capture some of that in terms of who is looking for funding in Scotland.

So, both Pippa Swan and Sarah Heward have submitted questions where I've covered some of that already around guarantees and around this whole point about how we were going to then spend this year. You know, can you say something further about what work has been done because if we are going to launch this funding, you know, are you going to undertake that if that funding is there in the budget that there's going to be an application process very clearly set out from day one that that will be ready to go, that people will be able to apply because what we have is a number of projects around the country where there have been kind of consortium led projects like in Tyndrum which you probably know about through the debate last night and others but also in Dunbar and other places where community councils have really taken the lead so those kind of consortium approaches if you like between very often local authorities community councils, community groups, businesses.

How might we kind of capture some of that and how we're going to ensure that's ready to go because I suppose the reality is that many of these projects are quite an advanced stage and are looking for that enabling funding that I think I spoke about last night. So, I think really just trying to get a sense how are we going to move that forward?

Maree Todd: So, there will be work that goes in the course of this year to develop a funding mechanism. Decisions will be made on how that money will be distributed and we'll be working with people with lived experience to try to set the criteria to make sure that we spend that money well. I know that there are different approaches and just real basics like, do we want to set a limit for how much each project can get and then we know we can get say if the limit is £50,000 we know that we can get 200 changing places toilets across Scotland if projects are costing a great deal more than that, then we're not going to get the same bang for our buck. So, we just need to carefully think through these criteria. I think if we get the right people gathered together, and that's again, I'm reliant on the CPG and people with lived experience to explain to me who needs to have input. I don't think for a second there will be consensus immediately. So, we need to gather the right people together. We need to think about what questions there are you know to be answered and then we'll be ready to go.

I don't think it'll be particularly challenging once we have worked out things like eligibility criteria and what we need to do.

Paul O'Kane: And is that something the government would intend to consult on because....

Maree Todd: Absolutely and I would expect the CPG, so this is a gathering of expertise. I would expect the CPG to absolutely have that input into that process. So, I'll be back to you.

Paul O'Kane: Okay, so I think it is crucial and I think there are some commentary in the chat about the timing being of the essence because we do want to ensure that you know, now that we have this

discussion around a year from now that we are moving into money actually being distributed through the application process rather than at then taking more time. So, I think the CPG would be really keen to perhaps do a bit of a call for views we internally and get that to you as soon as possible and then do some kind of formal consultation process if that is what you're going to do.

Maree Todd: Absolutely and as I said, you know, one of the basic questions is about demand geographically, you know, where is the demand? Where do we need these places to be? What is the level of demand? You know if we were thinking strategically about this, where would we be putting them and how do we create a fund that then meets the needs of the people? Rather than, you know, I mean, it's great if folk are enthusiastic and of course, I want to support enthusiastic projects, but we need to think about getting it right for the people who are going to be using and accessing these changing places.

So that's what I would like to start, and I think the CPG can definitely be a help in that.

Paul O'Kane: So, there are some issues I think about, there are projects as I say that are advanced that are moving forward. I think there's a concern about inflationary costs of much of this and the value of £10 million has having been committed in 21 and the value of that now in terms of what that might contribute to so is there any consideration by government of how that might be taken into account and how that might kind of be worked through essentially?

Maree Todd: Sorry could you repeat that I was busy...

Paul O'Kane: Sorry Maree, we were making the point there about inflation so obviously £10 million from 2021 is not £10 million in 2025 and the cost of building these facilities to the standard which is expected becomes more challenging so really what consideration can the government give to those inflationary pressures and taking recognition of that I suppose?

Maree Todd: Yeah, I mean these are challenges that we're facing in in government as well.

So, we are not unaware of the inflationary pressures particularly in the construction area, absolutely aware of the extra inflationary costs in rural areas. So, we'll you know just have to take all that on board. I am delighted to have secured that £10 million given the capital challenges that we are facing as a government. I am delighted to have secured that commitment, I am not going to start pushing right I mean, I'm not saying the job will be finished and so forth. Let's see how far we get with that £10 million and then see what more we need to do, but I'm not going to start now negotiating for that funding pot to be bigger. I think we start with the £10 million. We see how that goes and we learn from that experience. I think it will be challenging to get that to get it right and getting it out and that was certainly, the experience in England is that they didn't get it right in first time.

So, yeah, it'll be challenging. I mean the inflation calculator there's also a whole variety of costs.

I mean if I look on the UK government website about the cost of Changing Places toilet, they talk about costs of between £17,000 and £43,000 pounds. That's a huge range so, you know, we will have to make sure that there is good value for money in these projects and we'll have to as I said, I don't think I can secure any more than £10 million but let's start with that, see where we go and then we'll get more once we've done a good job.

Paul O'Kane: So, I suppose some of the questions may be related to that are probably about that rurality. I think if there's not a possibility of going beyond the £10 million given the financial challenges, I mean, you've said there I think that you want to look at rurality and the particular challenges in funding that might be required to be larger than in rural areas.

So, is that something you will look at in terms of those inflationary costs?

Maree Todd: Absolutely yeah, and we're working you know we'll be working with you guys to help understand these issues so, you know, I suggested you might want to put a maximum amount on how much is allocated to each project, you may want to have some flexibility in that for you know, you may not want to do that at all. You know, you might want to consider each application on its merits and without having a cap. So, let's work through all of these issues and see what we settle on. I wanted to work the way that people with lived experience wanted to work. So, let's see what we can what answers we get to. I think even if we, you know, the issue around reality is a really, really important one.

I live in the rural West Highlands I think unless you live in a in a rural place it's quite hard to understand the distances. I certainly struggle to get my colleagues to understand distances involved and in in where I live and you know communities can be hours apart, which requires a changing places toilet in every community.

Now, we are not going to be able to fund in the first tranche of £10 million a Changing Places toilet in every single community in Scotland. It's just not achievable, that first pot, so we need to think about how we make sure we get good coverage and that they are accessible.

.You know looking at transport routes. I mean, I'm aware in England. I think they did. I think it was a separate fund they did for motorway service stations, and I think it's important that we look at transport routes. I mean the harbour it may have got some government-funding but they kind of put that project together and did that on their own initiative because it's such an important transport route. So, we need to think about where we would get the best impact and the most transformative impact from that, I agree, limited sum of money but let's think carefully about how to spend it well and then we'll look at more.

Paul O'Kane: Yes, I think those issues are absolutely pertinent which is about where routes are connecting people and I think you know there's clearly key issues around making sure that arterial routes are well served to places where people pass through.

You know, I think the Tyndrum example is a good one of a confluence of routes to the highlands and again community projects where communities are coming together to provide that not only for the community in which they serve but actually, the wider sort of tourism that goes through it and people being spontaneous and all those sorts of things. So, I think we would definitely want to put on record much of that in terms of the consideration process. And I just wonder decision-making, Minister, I mean, I think that's important for us to understand as well who's going to make the decisions and what will that process look like? I don't know if you're given thinking to that.?

Maree Todd: So, although we set up funds it's rarely ministers that are making individual decisions on funding like this. There are usually other organisations that we work with be they local authorities sometimes, be it in you know organisations trying to think of gosh my head is gone completely

empty about some of the organisation's we work up with that distribute funding for us, but there are organisations that do that time to type of thing.

I am keen to work with you to set the criteria so I don't want to, I mean, I will I expect be the final decision-maker in setting the criteria, but I'm keen to hear from lived experience because I'm will get it right then and as I say we will go through a process of gathering information and ideas. We'll try to achieve consensus and then we'll set up a fund that will work with criteria that we all are clear and agreed on. If it was down to me, I would just give the money to my favourite projects, and it would all end up in the Rural Highlands and that wouldn't be fair to the rest of Scotland. That's why they don't let ministers distribute the money.

Paul O'Kane: Okay, I think that will be important as well and I daresay the CPG will want to have a bit of a consideration around how decisions might be reached and just give some of our views on that as well. I mean, I really am kind of no thanking the idea of a call for views that we do as a CPG and submit that to you Maree if you're willing to take that pre any formal consultation. I think would be really useful.

Maree Todd: Definitely, yeah.

Paul O'Kane: I think it will give us all an opportunity to feed in our views and we can even maybe have a set of questions around some of the things that we're discussing here tonight because I think it's really important the CPG helps to lead this and indeed along with I mean, I know PAMIS had popped into the chat there the kind of the experience that they've had and their understanding of what's happened elsewhere in the UK and the picture that they've got of where different things have happened. I think feeding all of that in together would be really useful as well because I am hearing what you're saying about wanting to accept these views. So, I think it's really important that we do lead on that and provide you with something that you can then respond to us really clearly on. I think that's really important. Okay. I've got one final submitted question, which is I think a wee bit more about the planning process and things like that. And then I'm willing to see if anybody else has kind of follow-up questions or wants to ask a question that's not been covered yet.

This question came in from Dr. Caroline Gould: Given that building standards now state that all new hospitals must have a Changing Places toilet, why is there apparently nothing to ensure that once provided these are advertised, sign posted, equipped appropriately. A good example she mentions the Changing Places toilet in the Broadford Hospital in Skye having not been equipped appropriately. So not advertised, not sign posted, staff have no idea what it is and refer to it as the large accessible toilet and they've sent independent wheelchair users to use it, so it's not obviously designed for that.

I think really it comes back to maybe the point that you were making their about, you know, knowing that these things are going to be well cared for and well looked after but also, how do we educate NHS and this case to know what it is to share it and a wonder maybe with your wider NHS role rule how you're going to some of that.

Maree Todd: So, I think there's a job to be done in the NHS in terms of understanding what Changing Places toilet is, and I mean as you say advertising them making sure that they're ready, so we probably do need to have some sort of central register. We've just come across, so we've gone

asking about a few hospitals that have recently built and discovered a few Changing Places toilets that we didn't know about so that just kind of illustrates the challenge. We've also, I can't remember this is all anecdote, but I certainly heard about a Changing Places toilet that was put in in a part of a hospital that itself wasn't accessible. So, whilst they had a Changing Places toilet in the building it wasn't possible for people using motorised wheelchairs to access it. So, there is a more complex piece that sits around all of this and whilst I mean, I am so delighted that we are going to have this fund it is not the magic pill that solves the problem. There is more work to be done around it.

I'm in communication with, it's not a constituent of mine, but colleagues are passing on information in just about somebody who I'm quite keen to involve in the process because they're making such sensible points about some of the new builds that they are seeing in their area, which aren't fully accessible and don't have Changing Places toilets.

So, I think there's more that can be done in terms of education in terms of, you know, there may need to be a slightly broader approach to building standards than just the building standards for the changing place itself. And we definitely need to find some way to make sure that everybody knows about these facilities that needs to know about these facilities. Yeah, it's a bigger piece of work.

Paul O'Kane: So again, I think perhaps something the CPG could feed in and some of our experiences and maybe trying to get a sense of how government might be able to certainly where it's in a public sector building for example that is you know being well educated particularly in NHS settings and elsewhere and the people know what it is and its purpose.

Because, we would be concerned, I think that, if it's there and people don't know about it and they're not able to say what it is and what it does. Okay, so that Caroline's question, we will certainly get that answer back to her and I'm sure she'll be keen to engage further because she always has much experience of what is happening.

Okay, I can see I've got Diana Winfield so I would be happy to bring in Diana and then as I say if we've got some time we can try and do a mop up of anyone else.

Diana Winfield: Hello, yeah, it was just to ask that there is Islands consideration. I know Shetland's very different from Skye and we wouldn't need funding for the hospital or schools for example, and some of the leisure centres are starting to do Changing Places toilets.

But we're also different in the sense that when we've looked at things we'd want a second door on the toilet so they can be accessed by the community because we can't get them into every community building and unfortunately, that means some people will have to go from one end to another side of a little village or town to another one and while people don't want to get wet or cold, realistically we're not at this stage going to get one in every building in a town.

So, it was more things like the building standards and the guidance isn't necessary suitable for what we would be doing. We'd need more space if it's two doors. Some buildings have windows, we wouldn't necessarily be able to fill them in easily but also things like for example, we have a child that needs a specific type of booster cushion to use a changing table.

So, it's just having the shelving space to be willing, you know, people are willing to buy the extra equipment but when the design comes in having the shelving space to store it. So, the family don't have to constantly carry it on a baggage other than the changing, some of the changing, equipment they need in terms of sorry can't remember what nappies are called, but this is a child so I can use nappies thankfully. Sorry. I called them nappies when I had to use them as an adult at one point but just so that extra equipment is allowed for in the spaces and it doesn't become too cramped for everybody to use.

Maree Todd: I think there's a challenge isn't there with putting them into the actual building regulations how much needs to go into the building regulations and how much needs to be left to flexibility for local areas. But I'm certainly willing to look at them again and to look at whether we, you know, we're always refining what we're doing and rarely do we get things absolutely perfect first time out. I think that change to building regulations has made a real difference, but I'm more than happy to take feedback if there's changes needed.

Diana Winfield: I think even if you could put in building regs that the requirement in some areas might need to exceed this, so it needs to be looked at because it allows building standards in each council the legal validity to say go and do your homework because that doesn't fit this child or the saddle.

Maree Todd: Absolutely, so I hear what you're saying there. Yeah, that would be really good. That's a really good point to feed into the process. Definitely.

Paul O'Kane: Okay, thank you. We have probably about maybe 10 minutes more as I said before I need to go and we're going to move into the update from PAMIS. So, I just wondered if there were any further questions. I know there's some conversations going on in the chat, which is really helpful about some of the facilities that haven't been registered with PAMIS, don't know where they are. You know those sorts of things. So, I think that's really helpful and certainly always feed into Laura any information like that because I think it is really useful but anything anyone wants to ask that kind of hasn't been covered. I mean, I think what we have actually from this discussion, which I think is useful is the Minister has given her word, and that's important.

I appreciate there was a caveat there in terms of budgets, but I think this group is really clear about our expectation now in terms of a year from now and we are really keen to get moving because I think there's been a lot of key points made about time is of the essence in terms of getting this into a state. where a year from now, we're going to be seeing funding applications received, considered and we hope approved. I think I've heard the offer from the Minister really clearly there that this group should be absolutely key and central to those considerations. So, I think we would certainly acknowledge and would welcome that, but we absolutely want to make sure that I think we can get in ahead of any formal process and have everyone's views considered and then obviously be part of that formal consultation process as well. So as I say, I think my suggestion to the group would be to do a kind of, as I say, round-robin call for views, allow people to answer the questions that we've outlined in terms of how should funding be apportioned, where are the needs what the criteria should look like, how should decisions be reached and I think all of that would be really rich and really important from people's own experience and adding the Minister saying here that she's quite happy to take that on board and then come back to us. I mean, does that sound to people like that would be a good step?

Okay, I'm going to take silence as assent in terms of we want to definitely try and drive some of that.

Jeremy, I'm going to bring you in; actually, Jeremy, I might hand over to you when I leave if that's okay.

No, he's shaking his head saying he needs to go.

Jeremy Balfour: Sorry I've got another meeting to go to in about a minute so Tess is around she might be able to do it. Very quickly, Minister, I think it has been a really helpful update and I know you want to consult further. I wondered; do you have any initial thinking in regard to who would be excluded from getting any money?

So for example, if any NHS Highlands and Islands applied or if local authorities applied, are they going to be able to apply the money or is it simply going to be charities third sector and also in regard to say without picking anyone particular say Wetherspoons applied and said we'll put in 100 across Scotland if you give us all the money would businesses be also excluded and I know you want to consult and do some thinking but I just wondered if you had any initial thoughts around who could be excluded from getting the money.

Maree Todd: I think we really need to think very carefully about this, and I wouldn't be making that decision without hearing the views from lived experience from stakeholders from the CPG. There's part of me thinks that private businesses should be finding the money themselves. So, you know the idea and the examples that I took in were airports and shopping centres.

Well, they should you know, they're profitable businesses and they should be providing these facilities as part of their usual business case, but we all know that are you know that there are small to medium-sized enterprises that don't have the resources available to them that Edinburgh Airport has, that Wetherspoons has, and I take your point about Wetherspoons you know, we might find looking at.... I doubt you'll find a Health Minister who will invest in a chain of pubs.

However, if Wetherspoons turned out to have the right geographic spread and a business case and that sharing and that was something that people with lived experience were saying to me listen this would give us really great coverage and we don't mind if a whole pot of money goes on this and that's the key. So, it's a finite pot of money at this stage and that's why we need, you know, we need to have these conversations. We need to be making these decisions and I certainly don't want to make them in a situation that I'm uninformed from what you think. My own personal feeling about the NHS and I have some sympathy about existing buildings. They don't have loads of money lying around and there's certainly not in capital funding easily available to our NHS but if it's open to the NHS in its entirety that they could use the whole £10 million pounds easily. And I think the same would you know councils could easily distribute it all in council buildings and that might well not make the difference that we want to see so we need to think really carefully about these eligibility criteria, and I suppose the place to start is what is it we want to see? What's the outcome we want and how do we set up a fund that delivers those outcomes?

We need to think as well. I mean there's been some chat about some of the costs.

I mean, one of the things I've been mulling over is whether it should be entirely about capital costs or whether there might need to be some other costs included in having a Changing Place in a certain

place and you know, these are the kind of gritty issues that we need to get into and as I said, I don't think they'll be consensus immediately. We need to; I need to understand the landscape very well and need to understand what people want and then we need to work together to find a consensus on our way forward knowing that we can wave a wand and change the world.

Jeremy Balfour: Thank you. That's very helpful. Thank you very much.

Paul O'Kane: Thanks Jeremy. And again, I think that opens up the question about the importance of the work of representing some of these views because obviously small to medium businesses are working on a consortium basis in communities with local development trusts is a very different kettle of fish from you know, the big beasts of the jungle if I can use that expression. And so, I think that needs to be really well considered. I think already I'm starting to see how we're going to kind of what we're going to ask for views on how we're going to feed that in. So, I think what we'll do is we will obviously go away as the secretariat -Angela, PAMIS, and others - and really then start to put together a kind of questionnaire that can be filled in by members and can be collated and returned to government and then have an undertaking from the Minister that she'll come back and respond to that as part of the process.

Maree Todd: Indeed.

Paul O'Kane: Okay. Lorna I can see your hand so I'm just going to bring you in as a last contribution on this section. And then as I say I'm going to disappear but leave you in the capable hands of Angela and Jenny. So, Lorna....

Lorna Fillingham: Yeah, I'm from England. So like we had this different separate funding for different things, but I know that the £10 million pounds will go a long way but I'm not sure if there is a case like what we have done in England to have another separate fund for motorway service stations and a separate fund for hospitals because what we're talking about here is actually the dignity and safety of children, adults, disabled children and adults as well as their carers.

There is an obligation by the Scottish Government to actually protect these people because even under the health and safety executive it is the worst thing that you can do is physically lift a disabled child teenager or an adult. It's the worst case for back injuries. It's the worst case for you know for people's dignity and certainly laying somebody on a toilet floor and I know, I'm sure about the £10 million in itself, but there's a danger I think... if that £10 million then becomes job done and I don't think it's a job done until we've got Changing Places toilets in all of our communities.

I would love to come and visit Scotland and sort of like come and be able to travel around and go to other places that I want to but at the moment I am held back by that because of the lack of toilet facility for my disabled daughter.

Maree Todd: No, I would absolutely agree, I don't think it is a job done once we've got that £10 million. I see it as a... so actually I think a big step on the way was changing the building regs and we've seen an impact from that but we do need to put some funding in to see further impact and then we need to think what more do we need to do and we've talked already about the education piece and that we might need to go back into the building regs and things there's definitely, I agree the job is not done until we have one in every Community. So, the quantum in Scotland, so being

£30 million in England and £10 million in Scotland, you know, if it were on a Barnett consequential basis, it would be £3 million in Scotland and not £10 million.

So, it's a bigger sum of money and I think that's probably to reflect our unique challenges. So, we have some motorway but not the same motorway network all over the country as they have in England and large tracts of our country doesn't you know... I mean a heck of a lot... a huge chunk of my constituency is single track road, never mind single carriageway or dual carriageway. So, we just don't have those facilities. So, we need to make sure that whatever we bring in for Scotland works for Scotland and that we get the right kind of coverage and that we think about you know, as I mentioned the Ullapool Harbour thing that that is because that that you know, that is our motorway. Ferries are part of our normal transport system in Scotland, and we need to think about ferry ports, and you know rail and we don't have railway all the way up the West coast my way. So, we need to think about what transport is actually there and make sure that there are accessible toilets, that there are Changing Places toilets right along the commonly used routes and also the less commonly used routes.

So, the part of the world that I live in is at is a really beautiful tourist destination. So, that's why I'm so delighted that we have a Changing Places. It's a gorgeous part of the world, loads of people come on holiday there and it's a great thing that now families with somebody who needs to use a Changing Place can come on holiday there.

It's had a kind of a knock-on effect in the community. We've got a couple of wheelyboats and things now as well so that people can get out on the water and you know, there's a big cultural shift needed so that everything that my family wants to do is possible for you. I mean you might want to do what we want to do.

Lorna Fillingham: Yeah, it's just about having a good life, isn't it?

Maree Todd: and that the possibilities... that options aren't limited by the lack of a toilet that just seems crazy

Paul O'Kane: Okay, thank you. I'm just going to draw that session to a close there just because I'm conscious of time and so if there are any further questions, I think if we can share them in the chat and I'm sure the Minister will be happy to take them away and respond to the group as I say I now need to leave unfortunately. I'm very sorry to everyone to have to do this but I'm going to hand over to Angela a secretariat to take us through the PAMIS update and just mop up anything that's left behind. But thank you everyone. I really appreciate your time and your input and I'm really looking forward to now developing our response to the Minister and to what she said here tonight. So, thank you and I'll see you soon.

Agenda item 4

PAMIS Update

Angela Dulley: Minister you are more than welcome to stay on and listen to PAMIS's update if you have time.

Maree Todd: Yes, that would be lovely we love them at the Black Isle Show every year.

Angela Dulley: Can I hand over to Jenny then please for PAMIS's update.

Jenny Miller: Yeah. Thanks. Thanks Angela. And actually we take the Pamiloo up to the Black Isle and I have to say I think I totally agree about education and awareness but the Pamiloo is probably been the single most effective way of raising that awareness about what a Changing Place toilet has and we're about to produce our annual report on Changing Place toilets but certainly there's been an increase in the number of times at the Pamiloo has been out and fortunately we now have a wider range of volunteers. So, it's not just the PAMIS staff out every weekend but if anybody wants to watch to volunteer it is the best activity ever and you get some really good concerts as well.

Maree Todd: And you get to come to some brilliant events in the Highlands. The Black Isle show is the second biggest agricultural show in Scotland. And it's huge and the idea that people couldn't come and join in with that unless the Pamiloo just pains me. It's such a fabulous solution and I think you've been to Belladrum and other festivals in the area. So, it's just great.

Jenny Miller: So, it has been really brilliant. And also, we were up on Shetland as well at their big ships. I mean, it's just great and actually up at the Black Isle. We met people who were looking at solutions and within smaller communities as well a really great guy who was thinking about what he could build in his local community. So, it's been busy. I mean, you know your point, Minister, about the building regulations certainly has been our finding as well, but since those came into place, there's been a real steady flow of inquiries from that whole range of organisations, but we've been really pleased that there's been quite a lot of community halls and clubs that are also looking at putting in changing place toilets or adapting areas so that they can make enough space to have them in. We've got some contact now in Glasgow with their local authority and we're really pleased to see the Edinburgh City council are engaging more because that has been an area, but I have to say Wetherspoons were the saving grace in Edinburgh because they put in a Changing Place toilet when we couldn't get one in Waverley.

So, there are now 270 in Scotland, 16 were registered last year. And as I said, the annual report is coming soon. There were two new registrations over the past month. And again, those were linked to ferry terminals, and I think Scotland has certainly led the way in the world when it's come to ferries having them on North Link, and CalMac are also looking at putting Changing Place toilets on their boats.

But Brodick and Tarbert Ferry terminals have got a few things I think, Laura haven't they, to fine-tune and then they'll be they will be registered. We did go away from this last meeting with that whole idea about needing to create more again with NHS facilities, which we had done quite substantially in the past, but I think during Covid and also actually it was the Grenfell Fire, and you

know lots of things happened during that period which meant that their priorities had changed, but we met up with them just a couple of months ago and we met again with thanks to the Minister with the national priority areas. I've got the wrong word there Minister the National Treatment Centres and to talk about making sure that they have Changing Place toilets and it was there actually that it reminds you that the story that you as users bring and people that need Changing Place toilets that are so important because we were able to share stories of why one in one part of the hospital isn't enough and shared the story of the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary where we had to fight really, really hard a few years ago to get one in the children's unit as well as in the Adult Services and it took actually the head OT from Children's Services to spend the 40 minutes walking up to the toilet and back again, to then actually raise that question about how much of that cost of consultants missed appointment times if they didn't put toilets in so I think you know sometimes having anecdotal stories that help that really helped the guy and when he hadn't put one in could Kirkaldy Orthopaedic Centre they're definitely now looking at all the centres to make sure that they are thinking about additional ones and not just relying on a hospital that has one. We also we spoke with NHS facilities and Susan Grant about the fact that we need to do some research about how many facilities have got Changing Place toilets, whether they're inaccessible areas, what that spread is geographically, and she also agreed that there needed to be some training. So, we're looking at setting up some workshops for facility and managers as well and I have to say I remember having a conversation with somebody I think it was down in the borders where they were putting in one and somebody suggested they put it at the other end of the car park and when we suggested that perhaps particularly in Scotland that wasn't the best place to have it somewhere you have to wander out in the freezing cold when you've got people who probably are pretty vulnerable when it comes to requiring a warmer environment and he totally got it. But I think the issue is always you don't know what you don't know and I think that for us for the last 20 years has been if you don't know about Changing Place toilets, you don't know and when people find out that's when things really progress and on that note we have a huge number of students for a small organisation that come through and one of the big things that we insist that every undergraduate student does is go and find out about Changing Places toilets and go and visit them and then consider what impact they have on their professional career and that's why they need to know about it. And we had lovely feedback from one of the students a Social Work student who said that she had never heard of them, hadn't realised how important they were and now it totally changed practice and the way that she would consider what she was referring people to and what she was she was considering. We had three occupational therapy students who sadly had also not heard of Changing Place toilets, but have gone back equipped to make sure Glasgow Cali University is very aware of what's going on and the two Canadian occupational therapy students actually thought the Scotland was far more inclusive than Canada and they had gone back to their university and we're looking at doing some exchange work with them in order for them to think about how they develop Changing Place toilets in Canada. But you are right education is so important and I suppose what we believe is if we can get the next generation of health and social care practitioners involved than that might really help and we would also hope that they will then bring in their architect colleagues that they're at university with in order to make sure that we all understand the need for these buildings.

So yes, that's probably our most up-to-date we have, we did meet with Miss Todd, we met with you Maree didn't we just before Christmas just to talk and to share some of the experiences that obviously we've been linking up with MDUK about and we have agreed that you know we will carry

on looking at the research and running workshops to identify need and we will feed the data that we have into and through the cross-party group as well on where....Sarah I'm looking at you because I'm in the workshops that we did with CalMac, you know, which did definitely identify Tyndrum as an area that needed a Changing Place toilet, but equally, you know Oban needing one as that route to the isles. So all of that information will be will be fed through and because I think there's a vast amount of data out there and that should then help you know with some of that decision-making but I think that's probably all we want to say I'm sure Laura will tell me I've missed a whole load of stuff but it's as busy as ever but it's reassuringly busy that people... obviously there is far more awareness than there has been in the past, but still a lot of work to do.

Angela Dulley: Thanks Jenny, just to sort of wrap up now, any other businesses, anyone else have anything that they would like to contribute? No, okay. We have a proposed date for the 17th of April which is a Wednesday. Minister, you are more than welcome to join us again, if you would like to and by that stage, hopefully as Paul says we will have some sort of working document which I will send over to your team you know much in advance. I'll get together with PAMIS and I have a couple of other volunteers who have put their names forward as well. So, we shall get back to your team with this document, okay?

Maree Todd: Sorry, I forgot, I'd put myself on mute.

Angela Dulley: That's okay

Maree Todd: It might be an idea to connect with the team with the officials at a very early stage. So as soon as possible after the CPG, if you want to connect with them and then we can make sure that any consultation that's going out from you can also ask any questions that we might want answered.

Angela Dulley: Perfect

Maree Todd: It's a really good idea. I want the CPG expertise to feed into the process. So, let's make sure that we get questions asked I'm not going to make sure you don't ask tricky questions and I want you to ask all the tricky questions that helps me but yeah, let's make sure that anything that we need to know is asked as well. That would be really helpful.

Angela Dulley: Okay, perfect. So just to say thank you very much to the Minister for attending this evening and to everyone else who has been on the call, and I will be in touch about this working document, and we'll get the ball rolling on that. Okay, so just to say, thank you.

Maree Todd: Thank you folks, bye.

Angela Dulley: Bye.

Agenda item 5

Next meeting date – proposed as 17th of April 2024 but to be confirmed.

End of meeting: 7:30pm