



Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government

**Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local
Government**
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Our reference: TO2026/04431

Cllr Dolley Wooster
Chair of Environmental
Services and Climate Change Committee
Swale Borough Council

dolleywooster@swale.gov.uk

cc: martyncassell@swale.gov.uk

17 February 2026

Dear Mr Cassell,

Making Public Conveniences a statutory obligation

Thank you for your correspondence dated 6 February 2026 to the Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP requesting that public toilets are made a statutory duty for local authorities. I have been asked to reply.

I am sorry to hear that your Council's Environmental Services and Climate Change Committee has decided, following a review, to authorise the closure of three public toilets across the Borough and potentially transfer further facilities to town and parish councils.

The Government understands the desire to ensure adequate public toilet provision and remains committed to revitalising high streets across the country. Access to a clean, safe public toilet can be the deciding factor in whether someone feels comfortable visiting a town centre. Public toilets help people stay out longer, support local businesses, and make our public spaces more inclusive and welcoming.

However, the Government has no current plans to introduce a statutory duty relating to toilet provision in keeping with its commitment to funding simplification.

Decisions on toilet provision and maintenance rightly sit with local authorities, who are best placed to assess local needs and manage these facilities effectively. However, the Government recognises the importance of this issue and have taken steps to support local leaders. At the 2025 Spending Review, the Government committed over £5 billion in new grant funding over the next three years for essential local services such as toilets. In addition, the Government continues to provide 100% mandatory business rates relief for separately assessed public toilets.

The Government is also investing in some of the most deprived communities in the UK through our Pride in Place Programme. In areas receiving Pride in Place Programme funding, decisions on investments are taken locally, and may include public realm improvements such as public toilet provision, where this aligns with the area's Pride in Place Plan.

As you indicate in your letter, non-statutory approaches such as Community Toilet Schemes can play a role in improving access to facilities. While not a replacement for dedicated public toilets, these schemes can complement public provision. We welcome continued collaboration with local authorities and businesses to explore how such models can be used effectively and sustainably.

Thank you for taking the time to write to us.

Yours sincerely,

Emmeline
Correspondence Unit