

Ken Skates AM
Minister for Economy and Transport
Welsh Government

4 October 2019

Dear Ken,

Thank you for the Welsh Government's response to the Committee's report on the Blue Badge system in Wales, and the subsequent updated version. Members discussed the response at our meeting on 3 October, and agreed that I should write to you in advance of the Plenary debate, which is scheduled for 16 October.

Members were disappointed that several of our recommendations were rejected outright by the Welsh Government. We acknowledge that three of the recommendations which were initially rejected were subsequently accepted in principle in the updated response, however six recommendations were still rejected. We were surprised because during the oral evidence session on 1 May, you appeared to suggest that you would be amenable to considering some of these issues.

Recommendation 4 relates to exploring options for introducing a separate concessionary parking scheme for people who require swift access to amenities, but do not merit a blue badge in their own right. We discussed with you potential options for enabling people, such as carers, to have such access and you told us that your preference would be to look at a parallel process for a "positive parking scheme" that would capture a larger number of people. I note that the response refers to the need for a firm evidence base, and whilst we recognise this, the essence of this recommendation is that the Welsh Government should **explore options** for introducing a scheme. We are therefore disappointed that you were unable accept the principle behind this recommendation and would be grateful if you could re-consider this.

Recommendations 9 and 10 refer to amending the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. In rejecting these, the response states that there is no capacity in the legislation programme for this Assembly term. However, it does not indicate whether, time allowed, the Welsh Government would support the

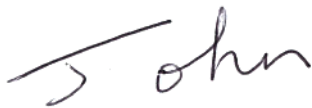
principle of these. Can you clarify whether you accept the principle of these recommendations?

Recommendation 11 also relates to amending the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, in this case specifically around issuing statutory guidance. The response to this recommendation indicates a disconnect between the evidence you gave to us. The response states that the Welsh Government does “not consider that a power to issue statutory guidance in respect of the Blue Badge scheme is required”, yet in evidence to us, you conceded that “it’d be more desirable to have statutory guidance in place”. You will recall that inconsistencies in implementing the scheme was one of the main concerns raised by stakeholders, and during your evidence you told us that your first priority was to ensure the scheme is implemented consistently across Wales. We are surprised and disappointed therefore, that this recommendation was rejected.

The Committee thought it would be helpful for me to write to you to outline our concerns. I would be grateful if you could provide clarification on these issues and respond by 15 October to enable us to give this further consideration ahead of the debate.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning.

John Griffiths AM

Chair

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.
We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

