



Marlyn Glen

Scottish Labour MSP for North East Scotland

1 March 2008

Scottish Government promise of free all-year round access to city swimming pools for children dropped, claims MSP.

Marlyn Glen, the Dundee-based MSP, said today that the SNP Government had dropped their election promise to give children in Dundee all-year round free access to council swimming pools in the city.

She was responding to answers to parliamentary questions that she tabled on the matter.

These asked for :

- details of the cost of the scheme,
- when it would begin
- if the SNP Government would pay for it in full
- when discussions had taken place with Dundee City Council on the matter, and in particular on extra cost of the attendance of lifeguards for all-year round access.

Ms. Glen said,

“Before last year’s Scottish Parliament election, the SNP said that providing children in Scotland with “with free all year-round access to council swimming pools” was “ a priority”.

“They told the Scottish Youth Parliament exactly the same.

“However, 10 months since the election, nothing has come of this ‘priority’

Ms. Glen said that the replies that she received from Sports Minister Stewart Maxwell gave no details about the cost of the scheme and when it was to begin.

" I have asked for details of meetings they have held with Dundee City Council on the matter and have received no details .

"I have asked about the extra cost of employing lifeguards to be in attendance for all-year round free access to swimming pools in Dundee and have received no details."

The Minister's responded to all of these questions saying ,

"We will continue to work with local government, through COSLA, to develop policy in areas where local government has a key interest.

"Both sides will also work together to discuss and agree implementation and resource issues relating to these policy areas.

"It is recognised that, in some instances, whether through the development of new policy initiatives or for other reasons, there may be exceptional funding pressures which local authorities are unable to meet.

"In such cases, both sides agree that any difficulties will be addressed jointly between the Scottish Government and local government, as part of a developing mature relationship.

"That process will include a review of both finance available and of pressures.

"It will take into account, where appropriate, reviewing the pressures and/or released efficiencies in light of other ongoing initiatives such as in the work being taken forward to simplify the landscape."

392 words

Ends

Notes to editors :

(1) All answers to Ms. Glen's PQs state :

"I refer the member to the question S3W-06557 answered on 3 December 2007"

Here is the reply that he gave to Jim Tolson MSP on a similar question on 3rd. December 2007 which is his reply to Ms. Glen

Swimming Pools

Jim Tolson (Dunfermline West) (LD): To ask the Scottish Executive whether it intends to provide children with free year-round access to local authority swimming pools.

Stewart Maxwell: We will continue to work with local government, through COSLA, to develop policy in areas where local government has a key interest. Both sides will also work together to discuss and agree implementation and resource issues relating to these policy areas. It is recognised that, in some instances, whether through the development of new policy initiatives or for other reasons, there may be exceptional funding pressures which local authorities are unable to meet. In such cases, both sides agree that any difficulties will be addressed jointly between the Scottish Government and local government, as part of a developing mature relationship. That process will include a review of both finance available and of pressures. It will take into account, where appropriate, reviewing the pressures and/or released efficiencies in light of other ongoing initiatives such as in the work being taken forward to simplify the landscape.

(2) SNP tell the Scottish Youth Parliament that they will provide free all-year round access to local authority swimming pools.

4th. bullet point under the section "Healthier" at :

<http://www.scottishyouthparliament.org.uk/SNP2007.htm>

WEBSITE LINKS

MARLYN GLEN www.marlynglen.org.uk

NORTH EAST SCOTLAND LABOUR : www.nescotlandlabour.org.uk