

Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Website www.parliament.uk

Rishi Sunak MP
Minister for Local Government
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

21 January 2019

Dear Rishi,

I am writing further to your letter of 10 December and my preceding letter of 19 November on the subject of public parks.

Firstly, on the publication of an annual written statement, given the nature of such statements it is difficult to see why pressures of the parliamentary timetable may impact upon the publication of a written update. At the time of the Government's response to our report in September 2017, the Committee did recognise that the 2017 general election may impact somewhat on the publication, however I think it is now reasonable for us to expect that the update on progress against the recommendations in our report is now published without further delay.

I would also like to take this opportunity to request some further information in response to your letter. Firstly, you will note in my letter of 19 November that I requested who the attendees were at each of the meetings of the cross-departmental working group and the Parks Action Group respectively. Similarly, I asked how much of the £500,000 funding related to the Parks Action Group has been spent and for what purposes. I would be grateful if you could now provide the information as requested. In addition:

1. Reference to two separate groups – the cross-departmental group, as recommended by the Committee, and the Parks Action Group – was made as the Government's response to the Committee's report outlined that both would be established. Can you (a) clarify whether these two distinct groups have been established and (b) if so, on what dates the cross-departmental working group has met, the seniority of its membership, and what its current work priorities are. If the cross-departmental working group has not been established can you (c) please clarify for what reason.
2. For what reason there has not been a meeting of the Parks Action Group since 23 May 2018, and on what date it next plans to meet.
3. On what dates each of the individual working groups have met since May 2018.
4. Who the Chair and members are of each of the individual working groups.
5. Given the fundamental importance of objective, reliable data on which to make decisions, and the imminent Local Government Settlement, what progress has been made in better understanding the funding allocated by local authorities to public parks and green spaces.

This request for information will help the Committee to have a better understanding of levels of activity, and in due course, we shall be interested in how this is progressing towards influencing outcomes that support public parks and green spaces.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts', written in a cursive style.

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee