

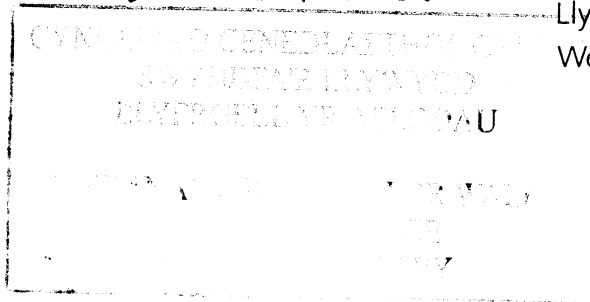


Our ref: OAQ28289

DP 426 /03-02

Llywodraeth Cynulliad Cymru
Welsh Assembly Government

Val Lloyd AM
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA



16 October 2003

Dear Val

I am writing to you following the commitment I made during plenary on 01 October to revisit the changes that the City and County of Swansea have made to the operation of the Hafod Renewal area, which you and Peter Black have raised.

I have looked again very carefully at what the council are now doing and I can affirm that the policy in Swansea is based on guidance from the Assembly which encourages councils to use the flexibility they have to develop housing renewal arrangements to address their own local priorities. The Council has met its statutory obligation in publishing a housing renewal policy following local consultation. The policy was made available to the public in both full form and summary version. It was available on request from the Council.

The Assembly gave local authorities very detailed guidance on the new housing renewal arrangements, but it must be for individual local authorities to decide on policies that address their local priorities. It is therefore not appropriate for the Assembly Government to intervene in those local decisions.

Under the transitional arrangements for the new system, the centrally prescribed level of contributions for participants in group repair schemes applied until the council published its housing renewal policy. That was published on 10 July 2003. The council decided that after that date participants would not be required to make a contribution.

I understand that before the Council introduced its new policy, participants in group repair schemes in the Hafod renewal area on average paid a contribution of £500 toward works on their homes which on average amounted to around £16,000.

The RRO cannot be applied retrospectively nor can secondary legislation be introduced to assist previous participants in the scheme.

I can only suggest that you take this up with the council for them to consider whether the issues you have raised are such that would cause them to review this particular policy.

Edwina Hart

