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Our ref: PO122466/GW

28th February 2009

From Huw Irranca-Davies

Minister for the Natural and Marine Environment, Wildlife and Rural Affairs

Dear Ms Hague,

Thank you for your letter of 28 January to Hazel Blears about private sewers. I am replying as the Minister responsible for this issue.

Hilary Benn announced on 15 December 2008 that the Government has decided that from 2011 all existing private sewers and lateral drains (that drain to public sewers in England) should transfer into the ownership of the nine English water and sewerage companies. The decision signals the conclusion of Defra's long-standing review of private sewers.

In order to prevent the proliferation of a new generation of private sewers following transfer the Government has also decided that design and construction standards for all new sewers and drains that are proposed to connect to the public sewerage network should be made mandatory and that they should be automatically adopted as part of the public system.

Work on drafting the regulations to provide for the transfer is now beginning and we expect to consult on these regulations later in 2009, prior to their being presented for Parliamentary approval. Once Parliament has approved these regulations, the transfer will be a statutory duty for Water and Sewerage Companies according to the form and timetable set out in the regulations.

Huw Irranca-Davies

HUW IRRANCA-DAVIES

