

West Lothian Council to review current practice on toilets for trans people

West Lothian Council has said it is “reviewing current practice” on toilets for trans people in light of the response from the Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to the Supreme Court.

The review comes after the Scottish Trades Union Congress branded the Supreme Court’s ruling that sex is defined by biology as “hugely problematic”.

The EHRC guidance says “trans women (biological men) should not be permitted to use women’s facilities” in places like hospitals, shops and restaurants – but they should not be left with no facilities to use.

But Roz Foyer, general secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, said she did not agree with the Supreme Court’s ruling, and questioned which facilities trans people should use.

A spokesperson for the council said they would ensure there are facilities for trans people but did not envisage huge changes and were awaiting further guidance from the Scottish Government.

They said: “We are aware of the recent court ruling and we are reviewing our current practice.

The spokesperson added: "As with any legal or policy developments, we will consider where our services need to be updated or amended to ensure we fully comply with guidance and legal obligations.

"However, we understand that any required alterations within our buildings following the recent legal update will be minor."

Broxburn Conservative councillor Angela Doran-Timson raised a motion at the last meeting of the full council calling on the council to protect safe spaces for women. She called on the council to ensure safe spaces "without delay".

She told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "I am delighted that the Supreme court ruled that the legal definition of a woman is based on biological sex. I and the vast majority of the population of the UK agree with this common-sense decision.

"I have long campaigned for safe spaces for women and young girls, and this decision makes this so.

"The safety, the well-being, and the security of women and young girls is beyond the measure of costs; therefore I trust West Lothian Council will, without delay ensure women and young girls in West Lothian have their safe spaces."

At the weekend, the Scottish government said it was seeking a meeting with the EHRC to make sure inclusive and consistent guidance was in place.

A government spokesperson said: "We note the interim update from the EHRC, and that they intend to hold a consultation with stakeholders on their forthcoming guidance.

"We are keen to work with EHRC to ensure consistent, inclusive and comprehensive guidance is in place following the Supreme Court judgement and, following the postponement of last week's

meeting at their request, have asked to meet with them as soon as possible to discuss further."

By Stuart Sommerville. Local Democracy Reporter