

Paying for Water Services 2006-2010
Response of the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities is the representative body of all the Jewish communities in Scotland comprising Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee as well as the more loosely linked groups of the Jewish Network of Argyll and the Highlands, and of students studying in Scottish Universities and Colleges.

In preparing this response, the Scottish Council of Jewish Communities has consulted with members of synagogue management committees of all denominations throughout Scotland, as well as with representative communal bodies.

The Scottish Council of Jewish Communities welcomes the Minister's announcement that the current exemption from water charges for places of worship, voluntary organisations, and certain other bodies will be extended until 31st March 2010.

Places of worship are important to a wide range of people in Scotland, 67% of whom identified themselves in the 2001 census as having a religion.

Whilst we accept that the Minister expects churches and voluntary organisations to benefit from the system of banded water charges that have been proposed from April 2010 we would point out that many congregations already struggle to find enough money for running costs and necessary maintenance. We therefore urge the Scottish Executive to conduct a comprehensive consultation with the sector before the implementation of any changes being proposed from that date.