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15 March 2018

Dear Professor Duff

Thank you for your letter of 15th February about the use of private sector companies in the running of the census, and specifically about the involvement of CACI UK Ltd.

I am sure you appreciate that carrying out a census is a substantial periodic operational undertaking and it therefore makes sense for National Records of Scotland (NRS), as a relatively small organisation, to engage commercial suppliers to undertake some elements of the work. Like other parts of the UK, and indeed, like many other countries around the world, we need to use the skills and expertise of commercial enterprises to help us deliver an effective, efficient and secure census operation.

Our approach for 2021 will however be different to that of 2011, when the then General Register Office for Scotland (GROS) partnered with a prime contractor, CACI UK Ltd, to run a substantial part of the process. For 2021, we are taking advantage of changes in both technology and procurement to pursue a more “commoditised” approach. In practice, this means that we are breaking down the operation into a larger number of more discrete contracts, or bundles of contracts, capable of being bid for by a wider range of suppliers.

Among our initial procurements however CACI UK Ltd have been successful in their bids for two of the contracts awarded to date. In both cases these exercises were carried under EU Procurement Directives and the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. As part of this, NRS and Scottish Government carried out a range of checks on the potential bidders and the bidders themselves were asked to self-declare that they met the selection and exclusion criteria as outlined in the invitation to tender. By law, the winning bidder has then to submit all of the required certificates and documentation, before they are awarded the contract. Having gone through this extensive process, I am therefore satisfied that CACI UK Ltd fully comply with all of our legal selection criteria and we have no grounds for exclusion.

In relation to privacy and data security more generally, I can assure you that NRS takes the security needs of the census data very seriously indeed. Strong evidence of information governance practices and ability to comply with all of the security requirements played a very large part in the bidder evaluations of the contracts awarded so far. In addition, the requirements explicitly state that the census data cannot leave the shores of the UK. At this stage I am therefore satisfied that the necessary data security measures are being designed in from the start; however this is something that we will be continually monitoring through the development of the systems and is planned to be subject to independent review prior to 2021.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me; I hope this clarifies the position for you.

Yours sincerely



**TIM ELLIS**

Registrar General and Keeper of the Records