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Ross Greer MSP
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The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Our ref: Fol/17/02869

7 June 2018

Dear Mr Greer

Freedom of Information Request – Fol/17/02869: Appeal

I write in reference to your Freedom of Information (Fol) request of 27 November 2017 and subsequent appeal for information on support for companies engaged in the defence sector in Scotland.

In your request you asked for information on funding from both Scottish Enterprise (SE) and Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) to companies engaged in the defence sector for every year since 2007-08. In our response, we advised you that we did not have this information which resulted in your request for a review and your subsequent appeal. It is with regret that, only at the appeal stage, did we identify funding information from HIE that had not been found during your initial request. This information is not held by the Scottish Government as a matter of course and therefore it was only on a wider and deeper trawl through records that it was located in our electronic files. The details of funding were only available because it had been obtained from HIE at an earlier date for the purpose of answering a Parliamentary Question (PQ) from John Finnie MSP.

I am aware that both Keith Brown, Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Jobs and Fair Work, and Charlotte Wright, Chief Executive of HIE have written to you highlighting inaccuracies in answers to a PQ from you and another by Mr Finnie. These errors in PQ responses became evident during the investigation into the appeal you raised on your Fol request. This also delayed our response to your Fol appeal because we were working with HIE to ensure the accuracy of the information enclosed.

HIE has now confirmed to us the correct amounts of funding paid to companies that may be targeting defence contracts as part of their operating strategy. I have included the information in an annex to this letter.

I would like to reassure you that I place strong importance on ensuring that the information provided by the Scottish Government is timely and correct. I apologise that this chain of events and errors took place. I am personally disappointed that we were unable to resolve the issue sooner in the efforts made by my staff in this Directorate. I have separately made clear to the Chief Executive of HIE that they need to improve their information handling processes to learn lessons and ensure that this does not happen again. I will remind both agencies sponsored from my Directorate – HIE and SE, of the vital importance of providing accurate information to FoI requests and PQs. We are reviewing the way in which we exchange information with HIE and SE and will reflect this in our sponsorship arrangements with them.

I hope this is helpful, and would reiterate my regret at having to write to you in these terms.

Yours sincerely



Mary McAllan
Director of Economic Development

ANNEX A

Highlands & Islands Enterprise: Funding paid to companies that may be targeting defence contracts as part of their operating strategy

Company	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Scotland Electronics International Limited		£2,020	£1,241		£237,762	£21,990	£57,407	£212,431	£251,678	£423,963	
Makar Technologies Ltd											£260,196
Copernicus Technology Ltd				£10,983	£47,965	£47,885	£67,656	£71,212	£106,489	£31,251	£117,459
ABSL Power Solutions Ltd		£114,860		£7,215	£11,815						
AGM Batteries Ltd					£66,500				£217,172	£195,509	£134,723
Denchi Power Ltd								£250,000	£199,964	£210,836	£206,377
Flexible Technology Ltd				£1,683				£59,931	£7,568	£7,560	£21,510
TOTAL	£0	£116,880	£1,241	£19,881	£364,042	£69,875	£125,063	£593,574	£782,871	£869,119	£740,265