

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bill Nicol [REDACTED].co.uk>  
**Sent:** 29 August 2017 09:36  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Freedom of Information request

Good morning [REDACTED] I did try and mail you, but got an out of office notice. I hope that you are well. In relation to this FOI from [REDACTED] with regards to disclosure of communications between the Hometown Foundation and the Scottish Government. I understand that the draft business plans have been shared already with the exception of the financial information, but you now intend to release the financial information, as a result of the Scottish Information Commissioner's decision. I spoke to [REDACTED] last week on receipt of your mail and he is mailing you direct. I am unsure at this stage why this information is of any real relevance, since the Government has rejected the proposals. I am still of the view that this information was sent to the Scottish Government on a confidential /draft basis, particularly in relation to the financial information which is sensitive to the schools involved. As you know this was meant to be an area for further discussion and we were waiting for feedback on "how the financials were presented". In any event, the figures do demonstrate that there is scope for substantial cost savings, as well as outcomes from innovations, compared to the prevailing state system. The same case was presented for St Joseph's in Milngavie and was contained in the plans that we were told to keep on hold. As you say you are intending to release this information in any event. I would appreciate if you could let me know when this is likely to be done.

Kind regards  
Bill

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 24 August 2017 09:50  
**To:** [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@qalam-academy.org; [REDACTED]@tiscali.co.uk  
**Subject:** Freedom of Information request

Dear Mr Nicol,

Copy: [REDACTED] Al Qalam  
[REDACTED], Glasgow Steiner

The Scottish Government received a request under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 (FOISA) on 14 October 2016 from [REDACTED] to release details of all communication including meetings between the Scottish Government and representatives of the Hometown Foundation. A number of papers had been identified as being under scope including the draft business plans for Al Qalam Academy and the Glasgow Steiner Community School.

We had previously released these draft business plans to [REDACTED], but withholding the financial information contained in them, under the exemption in s33(1)(b) of FOISA which relates to commercial interests and the economy. The Hometown Foundation had been advised of this prior to the release of the plans.

[REDACTED] appealed to the Scottish Information Commissioner to investigate whether Scottish Ministers complied with FOISA in dealing with his request. The Commissioner found that we were not entitled to withhold information under the exemption in s33(1)(b) and has required Ministers to disclose this information to [REDACTED]. The Commissioner's Decision 122/2017 has been published and can be accessed at the attached

link <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/ApplicationsandDecisions/Decisions/2017/201700036.aspx>

In the light of this decision, Scottish Ministers are required to release the financial information contained within both Al Qalam Academy and the Glasgow Steiner Community School draft business plans to

[REDACTED.] I am writing to notify you, and [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], that this is our intention. Please note that this notification is a courtesy, not a statutory obligation, and you do not have a veto on disclosure of the information. Under the terms of FOISA, the decision on whether or not to release the information is for the Scottish Government alone. However, we will take account of your views.

I should also explain that we can withhold information only if an exemption under FOISA applies to that information and, where applicable, the public interest in disclosure is not outweighed by the public interest in upholding the exemption. You can find detailed information about FOISA on our website at: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/about/foi> or on the Scottish Information Commissioner's website at: <http://www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/ScottishInformationCommissioner.asp>

In order to ensure that we comply with the Commissioner's decision, I must ask for your views, and those of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], by Monday, 28 August.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Empowering Schools Unit | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government | Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

Tel. [REDACTED]

Please note I work Tuesday to Thursday

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Tha am post-d seo (agus faidhle neo ceanglan còmhla ris) dhan neach neo luchd-ainmichte a-mhàin. Chan eile ceadachadh a chleachdadh ann an dòigh sam bith, a' toirt a-steach còraichean, foillseachadh neo sgaoileadh, gun chead. Ma 's e is gun d' fhuair sibh seo gun fhiosd', bu choir cur às dhan phost-d agus lethbhreac sam bith air an t-siostam agaibh agus fios a leigeil chun neach a sgaoil am post-d gun dàil.

Dh' fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh' fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 27 June 2017 15:27  
**To:** 'Bill Nicol'  
**Subject:** RE: State-funded autonomous school bids

Hello Bill,

I've now had a chance to discuss your request below with colleagues, and unfortunately we've concluded it would not be appropriate for the Government to provide a letter of support or endorsement for the proposed Scottish Education Trust.

It would be unusual for the Government to endorse a SCIO application from an independent organisation, and it is difficult to see a case for doing so here, given that your key policy aims are not current Scottish Government policy and that we have not been otherwise involved in or aware of the Trust. I am sorry not to be more helpful, but I hope you will understand why the Government could only offer such support or endorsement in very limited circumstances. I hope you can obtain alternative support for your application.

We spoke on 15 June regarding Ministers' decisions on the school applications you had made. If you would find it helpful to have a further discussion, please let me know and I would be happy to meet during the summer.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Empowering Schools Unit  
SG: Learning Directorate  
[REDACTED]

Please note I work Tuesday to Thursday

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**From:** Bill Nicol [mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 12 June 2017 09:37  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** State-funded autonomous school bids

[REDACTED], as hopefully you will know through conversations with [REDACTED], the Hometown Foundation, a Scottish registered charity, has been working with teacher and parent groups to advance and submit bids for state-funded autonomous schools to the Scottish Government. We are now looking to extend our presence in this field by forming a new charity called the Scottish Education Trust (SET). The purpose of this will be more focused on education than the Hometown Foundation, which also had a wider remit.

The function of this organisation is to help improve the quality of education in Scotland by stimulating and delivering new educational models with high levels of autonomy which, by introducing greater diversity and innovation into education provision, would improve greater equity in attainment whilst raising standards.

This will be achieved by:

- Supporting teachers, parents and communities to develop community led propositions for state-funded autonomous schools; and
- Supporting, developing and delivering alternative education models such as low-cost private education.

The Trust will work closely with the Scottish business community and wider community to support these interventions and assist families/parents/pupils to access these opportunities, if they have difficulties participating due to their socio-economic circumstances.

By way of background, there are three Founding members of the new education trust these are:

- Robert Durward – a trustee of the Hometown Foundation, serial entrepreneur with a strong interest in educational reform and improving education standards in Scotland;
- Frank Lennon – a recently retired secondary head teacher in Scotland with in excess of 20 years' experience – (see below); and
- Professor James Tooley – a global expert on education policy, particularly in the field of low cost private schools, (please see below).

We have applied to OSCR to establish a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) to carry out this charitable work. The case officer at OSCR as part of his consideration of the application has raised some questions with us which are straight forward to answer. As is the case with these types of applications, when the word "Scottish" or "Scotland" is used anywhere in the name, you need to demonstrate that the body is pre-eminent or substantial in the field and that support is required from a relevant independent body. That is where I would appreciate your assistance by providing a support letter.

We consider that such an organisation would be "pre-eminent" in that in terms of its aims and personnel already involved it would make it "distinguished", "leading" or "unique".

I would appreciate if you could provide me with a short mail outlining that the Trust would be unique, leading or substantial in this field .

Kind regards

Bill

Additional information – Founding Trustees

### **Professor James Tooley**

Professor Tooley has published widely on the role of government in education. His particular focus is on the phenomenon of low-cost private schools in developing countries and how this can be applied to the UK.

His book, "The Beautiful Tree: A personal journey into how the world's poorest are educating themselves", published by Penguin, featured in several Indian non-fiction best-sellers lists in 2009. It has just been launched as a paperback and audio book (Cato Institute, Washington DC). The book builds on his ground-breaking research on private education for the poor in India, China and Africa, for which Tooley was awarded gold prize in the first International Finance Corporation/Financial Times Private Sector Development Competition. Following on from this, he was founding president of the Education Fund, Orient Global, living for two years in Hyderabad, India (on unpaid

leave from the University), where he helped create a chain of low cost private schools and associated educational infrastructure.

He is co-founder and chairman of Omega Schools Franchise Ltd, a chain of low-cost private schools in Ghana. Its first two schools opened in 2009, and it has grown to 40 schools with 20,000 students, with significant investment from Pearson's Affordable Learning Fund.

Tooley has also created embryonic chains of low-cost private schools in Sierra Leone and India. He is the patron of AFED - the Association of Formidable Educational Development - in Nigeria, an association of 3,000 low-cost private schools.

Prior to joining Newcastle University, Professor Tooley previously taught and researched at the Universities of Oxford and Manchester, England; Simon Fraser University, Canada; and University of the Western Cape, South Africa. His PhD is from the Institute of Education, University of London. His first job was a mathematics high school teacher in Zimbabwe.

His work featured in an American PBS documentary, profiled alongside the work of Nobel Laureate Mohammed Yunus and Grameen Bank. It also featured in a documentary for BBC World and on BBC Newsnight. He has been described in the pages of Philanthropy magazine as "a 21st century Indiana Jones" travelling to "the remotest regions on Earth researching something that many regard as mythical: private, parent-funded schools serving the Third World poor."

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

Professor Tooley is Director of the E. G. West Centre.

#### **Qualifications**

PhD, 1994, Institute of Education, University of London

MSc, 1987, Science Policy Research Unit, University of Sussex

BSc, 1983, Logic and Mathematics, University of Sussex

#### **Previous Positions**

University of Manchester

University of Oxford

National Foundation for Educational Research

#### **Memberships**

Adjunct Scholar, Cato Institute, from 2009

Advisory Board member, Transforming Business: International Journal of Enterprise Solutions to Poverty

Advisory Board member, Transforming Business: Enterprise Solutions to Poverty Programme, Judge Business School, University of Cambridge

President of four educational societies serving low cost private schools in India

Patron, Association of Formidable Educational Development, Nigeria

Adviser, Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, from Dec 2005

Member of Academic Advisory Council for the following think tanks: Reform (London), Civitas (London), Institute of Economic Affairs (London), Globalisation Institute (London), and the Edupreneurs Council of India (New Delhi).

Invited Member, QCA Curriculum and Assessment Committee, 1998 to 2003

Conference Organiser and Officer, Executive Committee, Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, 1991 to 2003

Invited Member, Mont Pelerin Society, from 2003 (The Mont Pelerin Society is an invitation only elite group of social scientists, founded by F.A. Hayek and Milton Friedman in 1947, with 9 Nobel Prize Winners amongst its members).

#### **Honours and Awards**

2010 Sir Antony Fisher International Memorial Award, for "The Beautiful Tree". Presented in Miami, Florida, 22nd April 2010.

Gold Prize Winner, 1st Financial Times/International Finance Corporation, Private Sector Development Research Paper Competition, Sep 2006, (presented at the Annual Governors' Meeting of the IMF/World Bank, Singapore)  
Article on "Private Schools for the Poor in Gansu Province" in Private Education Research won first prize in the 2007 academic essay competition of The Fourth China Educators' Annual Conference ([www.zgjy.cn](http://www.zgjy.cn))  
Templeton Prize for Free Market Solutions to Poverty, 1st Prize, March 2006, (presented to the E.G. West Centre, Colorado Springs, USA)  
Alexis de Tocqueville Award for the Advancement of Education Freedom, (presented in Warsaw, Poland, May 2007)  
National Free Enterprise Award, (presented in Feb 2007, London, UK).

#### **Frank Lennon**

Frank was a secondary Head Teacher for 20 years in two Scottish secondary schools: St Modan's High School in Stirling (from 1996-2010) and Dunblane High School (from 2010-16).

From 1975, Frank taught English in schools in inner city Glasgow, North and South Lanarkshire before being appointed Depute Head Teacher of St Andrew's Secondary Glasgow in 1993. In 1996, he was appointed Head Teacher of St Modan's RC High School Stirling. In 2001 and again in March 2009 St Modan's received outstanding HMIE reports which referred to the "inspirational" and "exceptionally strong" leadership of the Head Teacher. In June 2010, he was asked to take over Dunblane High School as interim Head Teacher at a time of crisis for the school. In February 2011, he agreed to stay on permanently to take the school through the full implementation of Curriculum for Excellence and the new SQA qualifications. An inspection report (which again referred to the "inspirational leadership" of the Head Teacher), was published in March 2011. Dunblane High has since become one of the top performing state schools in Scotland in SQA exams.

Throughout 20 years as a Head Teacher in denominational and non-denominational schools, he has spoken at numerous conferences (educational and otherwise) and have published articles on a range of Scottish educational issues including Curriculum for Excellence. Frank also contributed a Chapter to T Bryce and W Hume's definitive book on education in Scotland '*Scottish Education*' (2008).

Over the years he has served on several national committees including the National Review of Guidance, the National Advisory Group on Values and Citizenship, the Ministerial Reference Group on Inclusive Education and the Scottish Government's Review & Evaluation Group on Flexible Routes to Headship.

Since 2011, Frank has been a leading member of the Commission on School Reform set up by the think tanks Reform Scotland and the Centre for Scottish Public Policy, to consider whether the school system in Scotland is meeting the present and future needs of young people. The commission's report '*By Diverse Means*' was published to widespread acclaim in 2013. Since retiring in April 2016, Frank has written a blog (July 2016) for Reform Scotland on '*Evidence, Governance and Culture: Reflections on Scottish Education in the light of 3 recent documents*' and given a Tedx Talk (September 2016)

Frank now work part-time for the Tapestry Partnership and is a member of the Court of Queen Margaret University Edinburgh and a trustee of the proposed Scottish Education Trust.

#### **Bill Nicol, Director of the Hometown Foundation/ Scottish Education Trust**

Since September 2013 Bill has been responsible for developing and directing the work of the Foundation, a Scottish Registered Charity, with the intent of assisting with community/individual development through co-operative and sustainable principles. Enlightened by philanthropists such as David Dale and social reformers like Robert Owen, the Foundation want "local communities to become stronger by having greater control over things which are important to them" – particularly affordable housing and effective/cost efficient education.

The Foundation is currently progressing:

- **Owenstown** – a concept for a self-contained, self-governed and self-owned community based on the principles of Robert Owen and the resurgent “garden city movement”. Aspects of the Owenstown concept are being implemented – such as sustainable and effective education;
- **Hometown Urban** – progressing plans for public sector asset transfers, community development and local co-operative ownership in fragile communities; and
- **Hometown Education Learning Partnerships** – in order to improve attainment levels in Scottish education, the Foundation is advancing various forms of autonomous education initiatives including a blueprint for the establishment of independent state funded schools in Scotland, advising parent groups wishing to set up independent schools and co-operative tutor schools.

#### **Previous positions**

**Chief Executive, Riverside Inverclyde a Scottish Government Pathfinder Urban Regeneration Company and Chairman of James Watt Dock Limited Liability Partnership a Joint venture with Clydeport/Peel (December 2006 – September 2013)**

**Director of Clyde Regeneration (Scottish Executive National Priority) (April 2005 – December 2006). Also, simultaneously, a Director of Property for Scottish Enterprise Renfrewshire (2005- 2006)**

**Director, Property, Locations and Place, SE and Director of Akeler (Scotland) Ltd, a public/private joint venture company established to deliver business parks in Scotland (2002 – April 2005)**

**Director - Clackmannanshire Economic Development Partnership (1999-2002)**

**Team Leader – Regeneration, Tourism and Property (1992-1999)**

**Senior Planning Officer (Planning and Implementation) (1986-1992)**

**Planning Officer – Falkirk District Council (1984 – 1986)**

#### **TRUSTEE AND ADVISORY POSITIONS**

**Former Chair of the New Lanark School, Parents Teachers Group**

**Former Advisor to the Princes Scottish Youth Business Trust**

**Former Business Awards Judge for Greenock Chamber of Commerce**

**Ambassador for Ocean Youth Trust Scotland, a world leading sail/training charity**

**Former Trustee of WASP's (a charity providing workspace for artists across Scotland)**

**Special Advisor to Lanark Community Development Trust and Chair of the Business and Finance Sub-Group**

**Trustee of New Lanark World Heritage Site and Director of New Lanark Hotel Group**

## EDUCATION

**Qualification:** Honours Degree in Town and Country Planning (1980 -1984). Won Glasgow City Council Design Award, ASH Landscape Design Award, Royal Town Planning Institute Award, Governors Prize.

**Qualification:** Postgraduate Diploma, Urban Property Appraisal / Land Economics (1994 – 1996)

**Qualification:** Postgraduate Diploma, Business Administration – Management (2000 -2002)

**Qualification:** Harvard Business School – Leadership Development (2005)

**Qualification:** Prince 2 Project Management (2012)

In addition the individuals involved with the bids for state-funded autonomous school status will form part of the management team of the new charity together with educationalists from Scotland and England.

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 31 May 2017 11:40

**To:** [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: State-funded autonomous school bids

Hello Bill, and thank you for the offer to meet. It probably makes sense to do this after the Next Steps paper has been published, so perhaps later on in June (there isn't a confirmed publication date yet). I will be in touch at that point, not least to let you have the Next Steps paper.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Empowering Schools Unit

SG: Learning Directorate

[REDACTED]

Please note I work Tuesday to Thursday

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**From:** Bill Nicol [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk

**Sent:** 30 May 2017 15: 17

**To:** [REDACTED]

**Cc:** [REDACTED]

**Subject:** RE: State-funded autonomous school bids

Hi [REDACTED] thanks for the mail and update. [REDACTED], happy to meet up and bring you up to date with what I have been up to with regards to state-funded autonomous schools, an education trust and low-cost private/egalitarian schools. All of these seeking to introduce diversity and innovation into the system to drive up attainment.

Please let me know when suits.

Kind regards

Bill

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 30 May 2017 12:35  
**To:** [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: State-funded autonomous school bids

Hi Bill

Thanks for your email, and sorry for the delay in responding to you. Your holiday sounds lovely - I'm quite jealous!

You might recall back in March I said that Ministers were planning publish a Next Steps Paper setting out our plans. They intend doing this in June.

On your other question, you will see I have copied my colleague [REDACTED] in -she is now leading on the state-funded autonomous schools bids. I know that you previously expressed frustration at not having a consistent lead in in Scottish Government on this, so my apologies for another change, but [REDACTED] is fully up to speed and will be in touch with you shortly.

Thanks again  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Empowering Schools Unit | People and Infrastructure Division | 2A South Victoria Quay | Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | Blackberry: [REDACTED]

Please note: I work Monday -Thursday

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**From:** Bill Nicol [mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 23 May 2017 11:16  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** State-funded autonomous school bids

Good morning [REDACTED] I hope that you are well. I am just back from a week on the Norfolk Broads on a barge, which was great and I would highly recommend.

I know it is a bit of a long shot, but has there been any movement on the state-funded autonomous school bids that were submitted. I am conscious that the years are rolling on and also that the other two bids have been on hold "pending feedback on how the financials were presented on the first three bids". I would be happy to meet up with you for an informal chat re what else I have been up to, or to show you some of the schools.

Also, any idea when there will be some outcome from the Governance Review?

Kind regards  
Bill

Bill Nicol  
Director, Hometown Foundation  
Mechanics Workshop  
New Lanark, ML11 9DB

Mobile : [REDACTED]  
Email : [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk

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Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 June 2017 15:33  
**To:** '[REDACTED]tiscali.co.uk'; 'Bill Nicol'  
**Subject:** ([REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk)' Glasgow Steiner School

Dear [REDACTED] and Mr Nicol

I attach a letter regarding your proposal for Government funding of Glasgow Steiner Community School.



Glasgow  
Steiner.pdf

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Empowering Schools Unit | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government | Victoria Quay |  
Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

Tel. [REDACTED]

Please note I work Tuesday to Thursday



T: [REDACTED]  
E: [REDACTED]

Bill Nicol  
Hometown Foundation  
By Email: bill.nicol@hometown.co.uk

[REDACTED]  
Glasgow Steiner School  
By Email: [REDACTED]@tiscali.co.uk

15 June 2017

Dear Mr Nicol and [REDACTED]

As you are aware, a decision on your request for Government funding for the Glasgow Steiner Community School has been delayed in order that it could be taken in the context of the Governance Review. It was important that your proposal – one of several that the Government received seeking funding to become a state funded autonomous school – received careful consideration, and that this analysis took into account the wider issues that were part of the Governance Review, and its conclusions. Today we have published *Education Governance: Next Steps – Empowering Our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Deliver Excellence and Equity for Our Children*, setting out our response to the Governance Review consultation and our vision for Scotland's schools.

A full version of the Next Steps paper and accompanying reports can be found here:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/thegovernancereview>

As you will be aware, the Governance Review raised a series of questions around the direction of education in Scotland, including how to empower parents and communities to play a greater role in our schools. It has considered carefully how that empowerment should best be delivered. One way of doing this might have been to support a new series of autonomous, state funded schools, and consideration of this option was assisted by studying the four proposals that the Government received. However, the Governance Review consultation responses made it clear that parents generally do not have an appetite to take on the management of their local school, nor was there a view that this would help deliver our priorities of excellence and equity. The Government is determined to improve the education and life chances of children and young people, and that everything it does should support that aim.

We believe that what must be consistent across Scotland are excellent school leaders and teachers, strong curriculum and improvement support, more transparent measures of progress, and engaged parents and communities. We need a system that supports as well as empowers those teachers, and that means building a strong, collaborative, joined up system where schools work and improve together. There needs to be clear accountability

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)



from schools to government, at whatever level. Looking at the proposal you submitted, and those from the other schools, the Deputy First Minister was not persuaded that providing direct funding to the Glasgow Steiner School would help deliver the improvement we need to achieve.

Instead, we will empower parents by giving them a crystal clear understanding of who is responsible for their child's education: their children's teachers. Parents have a right to expect their local school to engage with them fully throughout their children's education. With more consistent information than ever before available to parents, they will be empowered to demand and see delivered the education that their children rightly deserve.

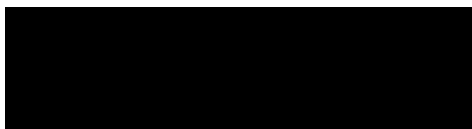
More specifically, we have considered advice from Education Scotland on each of the four proposals to directly fund schools and whether these offer educational benefits. Education Scotland noted the recent history of the Glasgow Steiner School and Kindergarten since the major fire in March 2013, including the support provided to the school to re-register during 2016. Education Scotland advised that the Seedlings Kindergarten provision did re-open, but closed in December 2016 due to falling numbers, and that the junior, primary-aged classes of the Glasgow Steiner School never re-opened. They noted the difficulty the school had had in recruiting and retaining qualified and experienced Steiner staff for the Kindergarten, and that it would be more challenging to seek to staff, as envisaged in the proposal, a larger school and offer an appropriately broad curriculum, as well as meet the requirement for all teachers to be GTCS registered. Education Scotland also noted the significant difficulties the school had had in identifying appropriate accommodation.

We understood your ambitions to offer a Steiner education in Glasgow, and to serve a wider range of families without fees. However, it was difficult to quantify the educational benefits that would accrue from your proposal, or to conclude that these justified receiving public funding. Our priority is to support and enhance the local authority provision in Scotland, building a strong, joined up collaborative system with greater participation and involvement from parents. It would be a very significant change for Government to step in and fund an independent school, and there was no detail in the proposal to suggest how this public funding would interact with local authority schools in the area, and why this was appropriate for this school and not other independent schools.

Therefore, following careful consideration of your proposal, and taking into account the Governance Review consultation, the Government cannot agree to your request to directly fund Glasgow Steiner Community School.

If you wish to consider re-registering as an independent school, I would encourage you to discuss this with the Registrar of Independent Schools so that they may support you in this process.

Yours sincerely



**[REDACTED]**  
People and Infrastructure Division

[REDACTED])

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 15 June 2017 15:35  
**To:** 'Bill Nicol  
**Subject:** [REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk)' Al  
Qalam and St Joseph's

Bill,

As discussed just now, I attach copies of the letters to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] regarding Al Qalam and St Joseph's respectively.



Al Qalam.pdf



Empowering  
Schools Unit - G...

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Empowering Schools Unit | Learning Directorate | Scottish Government | Victoria Quay |  
Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

Tel. [REDACTED]

Please note I work Tuesday to Thursday



T: [REDACTED]  
E: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Curriculum Leader  
Qalam Academy  
159 Nithsdale Road  
Glasgow G41 5QS

By Email: [REDACTED]@qalam-academy.org

15 June 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

As you will recall, the Deputy First Minister wrote to you on 28 September 2016 to indicate that he would take a decision on your request for Government funding for Al Qalam Community School in the context of the Governance Review. It was important that your proposal – one of several that the Government received seeking funding to become a state funded autonomous school – received careful consideration, and that this analysis took into account the wider issues that were part of the Governance Review, and its conclusions. Today we have published *Education Governance: Next Steps – Empowering Our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Deliver Excellence and Equity for Our Children*, setting out our response to the Governance Review consultation and our vision for Scotland's schools.

A full version of the Next Steps paper and accompanying reports can be found here:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/the-governancereview>

As you will be aware, the Governance Review raised a series of questions around the direction of education in Scotland, including how to empower parents and communities to play a greater role in our schools. It has considered carefully how that empowerment should best be delivered. One way of doing this might have been to support a new series of autonomous, state funded schools, and consideration of this option was assisted by studying the four proposals that the Government received. However, the Governance Review consultation responses made it clear that parents generally do not have an appetite to take on the management of their local school, nor was there a view that this would help deliver our priorities of excellence and equity. The Government is determined to improve the education and life chances of children and young people, and that everything it does should support that aim.

We believe that what must be consistent across Scotland are excellent school leaders and teachers, strong curriculum and improvement support, more transparent measures of progress, and engaged parents and communities. We need a system that supports as well as empowers those teachers, and that means building a strong, collaborative, joined up system where schools work and improve together. There needs to be clear accountability from schools to government, at whatever level. Looking at the proposal you submitted, and



those from the other schools, the Deputy First Minister was not persuaded that providing direct funding to your school would help deliver the improvement we need to achieve.

Instead, we will empower parents by giving them a crystal clear understanding of who is responsible for their child's education: their children's teachers. Parents have a right to expect their local school to engage with them fully throughout their children's education. With more consistent information than ever before available to parents, they will be empowered to demand and see delivered the education that their children rightly deserve.

More specifically, we have considered advice from Education Scotland on each of the four proposals to directly fund schools and whether these offer educational benefits. It was difficult to quantify the educational benefits, if any, that would accrue from the Al Qalam proposal, or to conclude that these justified receiving public funding.

We understood your ambitions to deliver sector-leading learning and teaching in digital technology, however, there was no evidence of Al Qalam's ability to deliver this model of learning and teaching in practice, particularly in the secondary stages. We are aware that other Scottish independent schools are already offering very high quality provision in the area of digital learning and evidencing this, for example, through the Digital Schools Award Scheme. We also noted your intention to develop a bespoke Muslim approach to Curriculum for Excellence. There are several other very small independent faith schools in Scotland, all of whom have developed bespoke curriculums incorporating their faith, and your proposals do not appear significantly different to those of these other small faith schools, who could also argue for public funding to expand and grow their provision.

Therefore, following careful consideration of your proposal, and taking into account the Governance Review consultation, the Government cannot agree to your request to directly fund Al Qalam Community School.

I expect you will want to give further consideration to the future of Al Qalam. There are many successful, sustainable small independent schools in Scotland, and there is no reason that Al Qalam should not be one of these, particularly if you manage to secure more appropriate premises.

An alternative approach which you may want to consider, and which would recognise the desire you identify among parents at Al Qalam and in the wider Muslim community for a distinctively Islamic education based on Curriculum for Excellence, would be to work with a local authority to seek to establish an Islamic primary school. This could operate along the same lines as other denominational schools operated by local authorities, sharing the strengths of state funding and local authority input with developing a unique culture and faith ethos. Of course, there are a wide range of statutory provisions governing denominational and non-denominational schools, which would apply, and a local authority would have to consider that there was appropriate demand in their area to support the initiative.

I am copying this letter to Bill Nicol of the Hometown Foundation, given his involvement in this proposal.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

People and Infrastructure Division

Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ  
www.gov.scot





F/T: 0300 244 4000  
E: dfmcse@gov.scot

[REDACTED]  
Save St Joseph's Campaign Group

By e-mail: [REDACTED]@sky.com

15 June 2017

Dear [REDACTED],

As you will recall, I wrote to you on 19 December 2016 indicating that I would take a decision on your request for direct Government funding to operate St Joseph's Primary School in the context of the Governance Review. It was important that your proposal – one of several that the Government received seeking funding to become a state funded autonomous school – received careful consideration, and that this analysis took into account the wider issues that were part of the Governance Review, and its conclusions. Today I have published *Education Governance: Next Steps – Empowering Our Teachers, Parents and Communities to Deliver Excellence and Equity for Our Children*, setting out our response to the Governance Review consultation and our vision for Scotland's schools.

A full version of the Next Steps paper and accompanying reports can be found here:  
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Education/thegovernancereview>

As you will be aware, the Governance Review raised a series of questions around the direction of education in Scotland, including how to empower parents and communities to play a greater role in our schools. It has considered carefully how that empowerment should best be delivered. One way of doing this might have been to support a new series of autonomous, state funded schools, and consideration of this option was assisted by studying the four proposals that the Government received. However, the Governance Review consultation responses made it clear that parents generally do not have an appetite to take on the management of their local school nor was there a view that this would help deliver our priorities of excellence and equity. The defining mission of this Government is to improve the education and life chances of all our children and young people, and everything we do will support that aim.

I believe that what must be consistent across Scotland are excellent school leaders and teachers, strong curriculum and improvement support, more transparent measures of progress, and engaged parents and communities. We need a system that supports as well as empowers those teachers, and that means building a strong, collaborative, joined up system where schools work and improve together. There needs to be clear accountability from schools to government, at whatever level. I recognise and applaud what you and your



fellow parents are trying to achieve for your children and your community but I am acutely conscious that schools need support. Looking at the proposal you submitted, and those from the other schools, I am not persuaded that providing direct funding to your school would help deliver the improvement we need to achieve.

Instead, we will significantly increase the autonomy of all our schools and the parental involvement in them. Crucially, however, our reforms deliver this within a clear national and local framework of policy and support. That collaborative and collective approach is a key strength of the Scottish system and critical to improving attainment and closing the attainment gap.

In considering your proposal, I have taken advice from Education Scotland on whether the proposal offered educational benefits. This advice concluded that it was difficult to gauge the educational benefits, if any, that would accrue from the proposal for St Joseph's, and also highlighted a number of risks to children's education from the proposal. Despite the sincere intentions of you and your fellow campaigners, there were significant concerns about the sustainability of your proposed model, both immediately and in the longer term, relying as it did on maintaining significant parental input and voluntary effort. It was difficult to see that any benefits could outweigh these risks.

I know that your proposal also sought to provide wider community services alongside the school, and I am sympathetic to innovative approaches that join up public services. These types of arrangements flourish in many areas. However, to establish and deliver them requires strong collaboration between the public service providers and your proposal did not demonstrate how this would be secured.

On balance, I have concluded that your proposal to establish St Joseph's as an autonomous community school is not in the best interests of the current pupils of St Joseph's. They deserve to benefit from being part of the strengthened education system we are determined to deliver, collaborating with other schools in their cluster, local authority and region. The surest way to deliver this is for them to transfer to the new primary school that is being built, or to other local schools in their area. Therefore, following careful consideration of your proposal, and taking into account the Governance Review consultation, I cannot agree to your request that the Government directly fund St Joseph's Primary School.

I know that you will be disappointed by this decision and the time it has taken to reach it. I understand that East Dunbartonshire Council's plans to build a new primary school in Bearsden for the pupils of St Andrew's and St Joseph's RC primary schools are making good progress. I would urge you and your fellow parents to consider working with the Council on its plans to integrate the schools, to ensure that the best possible new school is delivered to continue to provide high quality denominational education to the area.

I am copying this letter to Bill Nicol of the Hometown Foundation given his involvement in this proposal.

*Y. Smith*



JOHN SWINNEY

[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bill Nicol  
**Sent:** <[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk> 15  
**To:** June 2017 13:09  
**Subject:** [REDACTED]  
Conference call at 15.00

Thanks for the message earlier [REDACTED] would it be possible to call [REDACTED] at 15.00pm, better reception.

Kind regards  
Bill

Bill Nicol  
Director, Hometown Foundation  
Mechanics Workshop  
New Lanark, ML11 9DB

Mobile : [REDACTED]  
Email : [\[REDACTED\]@hometown.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk)

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[REDACTED]

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**From:** Bill Nicol <[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 10 March 2017 11:00  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Your recent call - independent school statistics/data

[REDACTED], thanks for looking into this one, much appreciated. Your findings are roughly what we expected. I am assembling a team just now and will work our way through the registration process.

Kind regards  
Bill

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 10 March 2017 09:52  
**To:** [info@hometown.co.uk](mailto:info@hometown.co.uk)  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]@gov.scot  
**Subject:** Your recent call - independent school statistics/data

Bill

You'll recall we spoke on the phone a week or so ago – you asked about the statistics/data we held on independent schools, in particular whether we had anything on latent demand. I said I'd make some enquires & get back to you though my expectation was that we probably wouldn't hold such information.

The only statistics we hold on independent schools relates to the "Annual Census of Independent Schools" – I'm sure you'll be aware of these and but details can be found on the SG website: entering "Independent Schools" into the search facility on the site will take you to what we have. However, we stopped holding this information around 2010 with more recent data now held by Education Scotland – this includes the statistics gathered through the annual census on maximum roll and other related data. That said, ES has informed me it has no requirement for collecting financial data or per pupil costs for each school; nor does ES have any measurement of latent demand.

One possible suggestion is that given each independent school is likely to be a limited company it will be obliged to lodge accounts with Companies House. Accessing the accounts from CH may provide some insight for you.

Hope that's of some help.

Kind regards

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
Empowering Schools Unit | People and Infrastructure | Learning Directorate | 2A South | Victoria Quay | EH6 6QQ  
[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

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Tha am post-d seo (agus faidhle neo ceanglan còmhla ris) dhan neach neo luchd-ainmichte a-mhàin. Chan eil e ceadachd a chleachdadh ann an dòigh sam bith, a' toirt a-steach còraichean, foillseachadh neo sgaoileadh, gun chead. Ma 's e is gun d'fhuaire sibh seo le gun fhiosd', bu choir cur às dhan phost-d agus lethbhreac sam bith air an t-siostam agaibh, leig fios chun neach a sgaoil am post-d gun dàil.

Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 13 February 2017 12:06  
**To:** Bill Nicol  
**Subject:** RE: FYI, same article going into the Scotsman

Hi Bill

Thanks for sending this on, and I hope that you are well.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | Empowering Schools Unit | People and Infrastructure Division | 2A South Victoria Quay |  
Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ | Tel: [REDACTED] | Ext: [REDACTED] | Blackberry: [REDACTED]

Please note: I work Monday - Thursday

**From:** Bill Nicol [mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 13 February 2017 11:58  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** FYI, same article going into the Scotsman

[REDACTED], FYI,

[http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkliving/articles.html?read\\_full=13021 &article=www.thinkscotland.org](http://www.thinkscotland.org/thinkliving/articles.html?read_full=13021&article=www.thinkscotland.org)

Kind regards  
Bill

Bill Nicol  
Director, Hometown Foundation  
Hometown Education Learning Partnerships  
Mechanics Workshop  
New Lanark, ML11 9DB

Mobile : [REDACTED]  
Email : [\[REDACTED\]@hometown.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@hometown.co.uk)

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T: [REDACTED]  
E: [REDACTED]@gov.scot

Mr Bill Nicol  
The Hometown Foundation  
Mechanics Workshop  
New Lanark  
ML11 9DB  
E: info@hometown.co.uk

20 December 2016

Dear Mr Nicol,

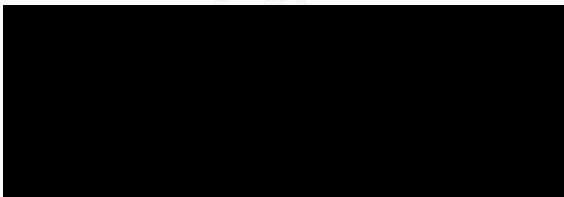
The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills has asked me to thank you for your letter of 22 November 2016 which followed your meeting with Colin McAllister on 21 November. Mr Swinney has noted your comments about the various proposals you have submitted for state-funded autonomous schools, and that you seek clarification of the Government's position on them.

As you are aware, a consultation is currently underway into the organising system of education in Scotland – the "Governance Review". The Government is looking at how it might change the balance of responsibility in education to move a presumption of decisions being taken in schools. This consultation will conclude on 6 January 2017, and will be followed by a period of analysis prior to a government response.

In light of this, the Deputy First Minister is clear that a decision on your proposals, including those for St Joseph's Primary School and Al-Qalam, can only be taken in the context of the Governance Review. Taking a decision now on your proposals would be pre-empting the outcome of the consultation, which the Deputy First Minister is not prepared to do. He has written to Paula Speirs directly to advise her of this.

The Deputy First Minister is fully aware this is not the response you were hoping for but he hopes that you will understand that considering specific proposals in isolation, and before the conclusion of the Governance Review, would be unhelpful.

*Yours sincerely*



John Swinney MSP  
Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary  
for Education and Skills  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

**The Hometown Foundation**  
**Mechanics Workshop**  
**New Lanark ML11 9DB**  
**Tel. 0845 686 4646**  
**[info@hometown.co.uk](mailto:info@hometown.co.uk)**

22 November 2016

Dear John

**Clarity over Scottish Government's position on state-funded autonomous school submissions**

I am writing to express my extreme disappointment and frustration with regards to the various school business plans, which have been submitted to the Scottish Government. Following my meeting yesterday with your senior advisor Colin McAllister, I understand that a decision on the bids will not be made, as promised, within the period of the Education Governance Review. These plans could, with no risk, be progressed as pilots, pending the conclusion of the Governance Review, as is accepted practice elsewhere. As we have said all along, we see no reason why the Government is unable to allow these pilots to progress alongside the Governance Review, to inform the consultation process and wider education reform in Scotland. It would be a logical approach to pilot a carefully thought-out, independently evaluated scheme or schemes from which lessons could be learned. The 'lockstep' approach - i.e. making the change mandatory for every school at the same time is not practical and will not work.

To date, we have been professional and patient in waiting for the Government to consider and provide feedback on the various proposals. We believe it is unacceptable that plans can take in excess of 20 months to be considered, as in the case of St Joseph's Primary, and over a year with Al-Qalam - with no substantive feedback. The whole process has been a series of false dawns. [REDACTED], Scottish Government, Strategy and Performance Unit, informed me on 24 February 2016 that "although timing was tight, we could get a decision on the first two business plans before the recess". This came and went, as did he. I was then informed by [REDACTED], Scottish Government, Learning Directorate, on 17 May 2016 not to submit the next two business plans, pending "feedback on how the financials were presented on the first three plans". Again we have received no feedback and she is also no longer involved with the business plans.

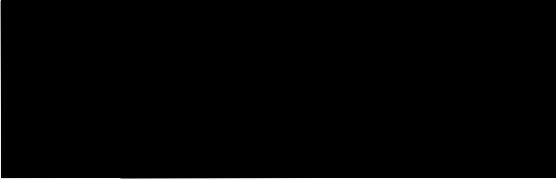
The parents group at St Joseph's were informed that they would get a decision within a six-month period, which was confirmed again by you in your letter of 4 October 2016. [REDACTED] of Al-Qalam was informed by one of your officials at the Governance Review consultation on 10 November 2016 that a decision on his school would be taken in the same time frame as St Joseph's and that is before the Christmas break.

Following my request for a meeting on 31 May 2016, I eventually met with you on 25 October 2016, at which time you said you would give some thought to the pilot proposals and how we should deal with the business plans, which have been on hold. Despite three reminders sent to your officials since then, I have yet to receive any feedback, apart from my discussion with Colin yesterday, which came about at my instigation.

You will gather that we have somewhat lost our patience. This is really not a great demonstration of meaningful engagement with stakeholders or a good start in trying to empower teachers, parents and communities to achieve excellence and equity in education.

I look forward to early written clarification on the situation, so that the schools and wider communities involved can be informed of the Government's position on this and to enable them to take appropriate action.

Yours sincerely



Bill Nicol  
**Director, Hometown Foundation**

**Cc** Colin McAllister, Special Advisor  
[REDACTED], Empowering Schools  
Unit