

Document 1

Writing and Publishing – Society of Young Publishers – conference programme for Society for Young Publishers, 9 March – email 19 February 2018

First Minister's speech at Society of Young Publishers, 9 March 2018

[redacted]

3. Sandstone Press, Dingwall received advice and guidance from the HIE XpoNorth industry network and is an active participant in the International Publishing Fellowship. This has resulted in Sandstone Press gaining the global English language rights to a German detective series. HIE's XpoNorth industry network provided guidance on international licensing and provided funding for the major initial translation work. As a result, not only have Sandstone just released the third novel, the series has been televised by Sky Atlantic and Sandstone have now licensed the novels to Picador for the United States and are selling into Australia, New Zealand and back to Germany in English! Sandstone now has a dedicated HIE account manager and is working to broaden both its international portfolio and geographic reach further.

[redacted]

Document 2

SLIC Board Papers 22nd April 2020

Literature Working Group.PDF

**LITERATURE WORKING GROUP POLICY
February 2010**

CONTRIBUTORS AND ADVISORS

[redacted], Birlinn
[redacted], Mainstream
[redacted], Head of Literature, Irish Arts Council
[redacted], Historic Scotland
[redacted], writer and academic
[redacted], BBC
[redacted], Scottish Island Writers
[redacted], Gaelic Editor, The Scotsman
[redacted], Two Ravens Press Ltd
Bòrd na Gàidhlig
[redacted], Creative Scotland 2009
[redacted], Mainstream Publishing
[redacted], Canongate
[redacted], Scottish PEN 46

[redacted], Historic Scotland
[redacted], VisitScotland
[redacted], Gaelic publisher and lecturer
[redacted], Saint Andrew Press
[redacted], head of libraries, information and learning, Glasgow City Council
[redacted], writer
Robert Davidson, Sandstone Press Ltd
[redacted], Bookspeed
[redacted], Serafina Press
[redacted], writer
[redacted], Culture Ireland
[redacted]
[redacted], BBC
Edinburgh UNESCO World City of Literature
[redacted], Fraser Ross Associates
[redacted], architect
[redacted], Director of Scottish Library and Information Council and CILIP in Scotland
[redacted], University of Aberdeen
[redacted], Literature Forum for Scotland
[redacted], writer
[redacted]
[redacted], Dangerous Ink
[redacted], Geddes & Grosset Ltd
[redacted], 47

[redacted], Wordfringe
[redacted], Chair, Scottish Arts Council
[redacted] Saraband
[redacted], writer
[redacted], [redacted] and Scottish Book Trust
[redacted], Napier University
[redacted], Scotland on Sunday
[redacted], Scottish Writers Centre
[redacted], Society of Authors in Scotland
[redacted], Scottish Book Trust
[redacted], Woodarts
[redacted], Stanza Poetry Festival
Lomond Books Ltd
[redacted], The New Iona Press
[redacted], Scottish Poetry Library
[redacted], Stirling Centre for International Publishing & Communication
[redacted] Neil Macdonald, BBC
[redacted], Gaelic Books Council
[redacted], Luath
[redacted], writer
[redacted], Christian Focus Publishing
[redacted], BBC
[redacted], translator and writer 48

[redacted], Floris Books
[redacted], Acair Books
[redacted], writer
[redacted] [redacted], East Lothian Local History Centre
[redacted], writer
[redacted] Readers & Writers Network
[redacted], writer and illustrator
[redacted], Nicolson Maps
[redacted] [redacted], Bookspeed
[redacted], Scottish Qualifications Authority
[redacted], University of Glasgow, ASLS
[redacted], Principal, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and former chair Gaelic Books Council
[redacted], writer
[redacted], Argyll Publishing and Scottish Review of Books
[redacted], Fraser Ross Associates
[redacted] Royan, School of English Studies, University of Nottingham
[redacted], Publicity and the Printed Word
[redacted], Saltire Society
The Scottish Government
Scottish Writer's Centre
[redacted], Freight Design
[redacted], writer
[redacted], Publishing Scotland 49

Document 3 - Team £185m – Full Awards List published 27-08 – PERF – CTHEHF (Va44366120)

[redacted]

Sandstone Press Ltd	Highland	Creative industries	£70,000	IV2 7PA
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[redacted]

Total	£121,816,066
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Document 4

**Books purchased by SG Library for staff working from home due to COVID-19
– March 2020 onwards, 20 July 2020**

In a separate Excel document.

Document 5

Xmas and NY Core Briefings – Dec 2018

Creative Industries – Core Brief - December

CORE BRIEF: CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

[redacted]

Literature in Scotland

[redacted]

HIE support for the book sector

Top line

[redacted]

Background

3. Sandstone Press, Dingwall received advice and guidance from the HIE XpoNorth industry network and is an active participant in the International Publishing Fellowship. This has resulted in Sandstone Press gaining the global English language rights to a German detective series. HIE's XpoNorth industry network provided guidance on international licensing and provided funding for the major initial translation work. As a result, not only have Sandstone just released the third novel, the series has been televised by Sky Atlantic and Sandstone have now licensed the novels to Picador for the United States and are selling into Australia, New Zealand and back to Germany in English! Sandstone now has a dedicated HIE account manager and is working to broaden both its international portfolio and geographic reach further.

[redacted]

Document 6

HIE Management Team Meeting 2018 051 4

Formal Item 05 Creative Industries – XpoNorth and network procurement

APPRAISAL PAPER

[redacted]

Appendix 4: Sample of expected XpoNorth speakers 2018

Political

Fiona Hislop

International

[redacted]

Robert Davidson, managing Director, Sandstone Press

[redacted]

Document 7

20200066170

Undisclosed conflict of interest – Sandstone

Tue 21/07/2020 17:40

[redacted]@gov.scot>; on behalf of; First Minister
zzzfirstminister2016to2021@gov.scot

FW: Undisclosed conflict of interest with potential to impact the First Minister

To Public Engagement Unit CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot

Cc First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair
Work and Culture <CabSecEFWC@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>;
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot

MACCS case for MR for the relevant portfolio Minister please

Thanks

[redacted]

Office of the First Minister

Scottish Government

5TH floor/St Andrews House/Regent Road

Edinburgh EH1 3DG

[redacted]

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Document 8

202100208101

HIE/Sandertone Press – referral to Police Scotland

Tue 01/06/2021 09:36

Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>

FW: HIE/Sandstone Press - referral to Police Scotland

To [redacted]@gov.scot

Good morning

Please see email below which is a follow up to a previous case.

Would you like this to be added to MiCase.

Kind regards

[redacted]

Document 9

From: [redacted]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of First Minister
Sent: 25 May 2021 09:09
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: HIE/Sandstone Press - referral to Police Scotland

OR please

[redacted]

Office of the First Minister

Scottish Government

5TH floor/St Andrews House/Regent Road

Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Tel [redacted]

Mobile [redacted]

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Document 10

202200297763

Sandstone Press/HIE – suspected fraud

Thu 28/04/2022 13:54

[redacted]@gov.scot

RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; First Minister
<firstminister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot

To Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; First Minister
<firstminister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot

Thanks [redacted]

Documents are in the attached email.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development
Division

The Scottish Government | Tel: [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted]

Document 11

From: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 April 2022 13:18

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi,

No problem, can we be sent the correspondence so it can be added?

Thanks

[redacted]

Public Engagement Unit

CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot

Document 12

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 April 2022 12:05

To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi all

Sorry for the earlier confusion. Following discussions we'd like to provide a response to a specific new point he has raised. PEU can you add this to MiCase and allocate to me as AO? I think this should be an Official Response rather than MR.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development Division
The Scottish Government | Tel: [redacted] Mobile: [redacted]

Document 13

From: [redacted]

Sent: 28 April 2022 10:40

To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

Copying my colleague [redacted] for info. Thanks for your steer. This afternoon we're discussing the allegations made in his latest letter to ensure we're duly considering everything. I'll be in touch once we've done that.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development Division

The Scottish Government | Tel: [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted]

Document 14

From: [redacted]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of First Minister

Sent: 28 April 2022 10:28

To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>;
[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

I have attached the correspondence passed on by [redacted] to [redacted].

One of the pieces of correspondence is suggesting a breach in the Ministerial code by a former Minister who had funding responsibility for the sector, so I am not sure if that would deem enough to warrant a response.

Kind regards

[redacted]

| First Minister's Ministerial Private Office | 5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [redacted]

Please note, I work a part time flexible working pattern over Tuesday-Friday. My mailbox is not monitored on a Monday.

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Document 15

From: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2022 18:54

To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

We have [redacted] on our list of fixated correspondents for this matter i.e. it's been agreed he shouldn't receive any further response in relation to these subjects, and instead communications from him sent to the colleagues outlined in the attached email. It would seem unusual to go back on that at this stage - is there any particular reason why this piece of correspondence is different? Unfortunately the letters weren't attached to your email so couldn't see for myself, grateful if you could pass on.

Thanks

[redacted]

Public Engagement Unit

CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot

Document 16

From: [redacted]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of First Minister
Sent: 27 April 2022 18:27
To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: FW: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

PEU

Grateful if this can be added to Micase as outlined below.

Kind regards

[redacted]

| First Minister's Ministerial Private Office | 5th Floor | St Andrew's House | Regent
Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | 0131 244 6314 |

Please note, I work a part time flexible working pattern over Tuesday-Friday. My mailbox is not monitored on a Monday.

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Document 17

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 27 April 2022 17:53

To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

Thanks yes please if it could be added and I'll pick up as AO.

[redacted]

Document 18

From: [redacted]@gov.scot> On Behalf Of First Minister

Sent: 27 April 2022 17:20

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Subject: FW: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

Further correspondence received from [redacted], are you content for the attached to be added to MiCase as an OR and you as AO.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted]

Office of the First Minister

Scottish Government

5TH floor/St Andrews House/Regent Road

Edinburgh EH1 3DG

Tel [redacted]

Mobile [redacted]

All e-mails and attachments sent by a Ministerial Private Office to any other official on behalf of a Minister relating to a decision, request or comment made by a Minister, or a note of a Ministerial meeting, must be filed appropriately by the recipient. Private Offices do not keep official records of such e-mails or attachments.

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Document 19

Writing and publishing – catch up with Jenny Todd – email 8 October 2019

Fri 03/01/2020 11:22

[redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot

Writing and publishing - catch up with Jenny Todd - email 8 October 2019

To [redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot

From: Jenny Todd <[redacted]>

Sent: 08 October 2019 09:18

To: [redacted] <[redacted]>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: Re: Catch-up

Perfect. See you there.

Sent from my iPhone

On 8 Oct 2019, at 09:08, "[redacted]@gov.scot" <[redacted]@gov.scot> wrote:

Hi Jenny

Yes no problem at all. How about meeting in the café/atrium on the ground floor in Waverly Gate? I think the coffee there is OK

[redacted]

Document 20

From: Jenny Todd <[redacted] >
Sent: 08 October 2019 08:59
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: Catch-up

Hi [redacted]

Would it be possible to rearrange our meeting from Weds at 11am to Friday at the same time? I now have a work commitment in Inverness that day, I'm afraid.

Thanks so much,

Jenny

Sent from my iPhone

On 30 Sep 2019, at 18:20, "[redacted]@gov.scot" <[redacted]@gov.scot> wrote:

Hi Jenny

Let's go with 11 am 9 October in central Edinburgh and we will have a think about where's best to meet.

Thanks a lot

[redacted]

Document 22

From: [redacted] <[redacted]>
Sent: 30 September 2019 16:31
To: [redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: Re: Catch-up

Hi [redacted]

I'm in London from tomorrow for the rest of the week. Would the 9th work around 11am in central Edinburgh? We could meet at the Publishing Scotland offices, or somewhere with better coffee!

All best

Jenny

Sent from my iPhone

On 30 Sep 2019, at 16:06, "[redacted]@gov.scot" <[redacted]@gov.scot> wrote:

Hi Jenny

Thanks for coming along to CIAG last week, I hope you found the meeting interesting. We touched on FM's publishing round table and that it would be good to have a catch up around this. Are you free any of these times:

4 October am

7 October all day

9 October am

10 October pm

11 October until 3 pm

Are you still Leith based? If not happy to meet centrally if that's easier.

Kind regards

[redacted]

[redacted] | Scottish Government

Culture and Historic Environment Division | Area 2-G South | Victoria Quay |
Edinburgh | EH6 6QQ

[redacted]

Document 23

Writing and Publishing – [redacted] – correspondence about Jenny Todd – confirmation from Jenny Todd – 28 July 2020

Tue 28/07/2020 13:23

Jenny Todd [redacted]

[redacted]

To [redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot

Dear [redacted]

Hopefully this will be my final email regarding this.

I now have in writing confirmation from both [redact] at CS and [redact] at HIE that the funding awarded to Sandstone was not conditional on my job title or registration as a director at Companies House. They have both double-checked the paperwork for reassurance.

Therefore his accusation of fraud or poor governance holds no ground.

I have decided not to spend any more time or legal expense on this but you may wish to clarify the above in your next correspondence with him. You will know better than I if that is advisable.

So sorry this has taken up so much of your time and thank you for all your help.

Jenny

This email has been scanned by the Symantec Email Security.cloud service.

Document 24

202200316040

Creative Industries Leadership Group – investigation

Tue 16/08/2022 16:35

[redacted] [redacted]@gov.scot>; on behalf of; Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine MinisterCEID@gov.scot

FW: Creative Industries Leadership Group - investigation [SENSITIVE]

To Public Engagement Unit CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot

Good Afternoon,

For micase, OR please.

Can this be fast tracked.

[redacted]

Private Secretary to Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine, Neil Gray

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG | [redacted]

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Document 25

From: [redacted]

Sent: 28 April 2022 13:54

To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]<[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Thanks [redacted]

Documents are in the attached email.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 26

From: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>

Sent: 28 April 2022 13:18

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>;
Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; [redacted]
<[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted]>

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi,

No problem, can we be sent the correspondence so it can be added?

Thanks

[redacted]

Public Engagement Unit

CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot

**In the service
of Scotland**



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Document 27

From: [redacted]

Sent: 28 April 2022 10:03

To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted]

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

Sorry, can you hang fire on any standard reply to the correspondent. We're just looking at some more of the letter detail and will discuss this afternoon if there's any follow up needed.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 28

From: [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 28 April 2022 09:19

To: Public Engagement Unit <CorrespondenceUnit@gov.scot>; First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted]

Subject: RE: Sandstone Press/HIE - suspected fraud

Hi [redacted]

Yes you're correct he was. It was a while ago and I may have confused the subject with another I handled at the time last night. I've had a look and there's nothing new being raised so I'm happy it should follow the same process. I can share the docs with you if that's helpful.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Regional Economic Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 29

From: [redacted]

Sent: 02 March 2022 11:13

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: PQ - support for independent publishers deal with rising costs for items such as printing and materials - request for contribution

Thanks.

I'm not sure if [redacted] will be sighted. I don't recall if she was involved in Sandstone previously. On the PQ itself, it sounded on the call that HIE and SOSE have been approached for this but not SE?

I'll check with [redacted]; I suspect HIE will be careful in their return around that topic but I'll have a quick chat with her.

[redacted]

Document 30

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 02 March 2022 10:08

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot] [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: PQ - support for independent publishers deal with rising costs for items such as printing and materials - request for contribution

Hi [redacted]

Thanks, Sandstone have had plenty of support from HIE.

[redacted], I think [redacted] is fully aware of the Strident / Sandstone background?

Regards

[redacted]

Document 31

From: [redacted] [redacted] @gov.scot>

Sent: 01 December 2021 12:23

To: Central Enquiry Unit <CEU@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: COMPLAINT re handling of case 202100189422 - [redacted]

Thanks [redacted]

Who is the policy lead for the Suspected Fixation process that [redacted] is referring to and have they responded to [redacted]? In [redacted] email on 5 July, he commented on this part of his complaint that *"On 4 June we received an email chain from SG stating that I was 'fixated' and that any subsequent correspondence would merely be filed"*.

This appears to be a separate complaint to the previous points regarding Sandstone Press that had seen his earlier complaint being added to the "suspected fixation" process for.

Going by the existing published guidance on Saltire for the "Persistent Correspondent" process (no new guidance has been published following the change of process) it says: *"customers considered unreasonably persistent for one issue can still raise other issues which should be treated as new and follow normal reply procedures."*

It reads to me that [redacted] has raised a new issue regarding the "Persistent Correspondent" process and the email chain he says he received on 4 June. As far as I'm aware that email didn't come from us as I don't recall having seen the term "Persistent Correspondent" being used in any contact we've made with [redacted]. I assume this must have originated from whoever responded to advise of the process being put in place and it feels to me like something that area should pick up in relation to this second complaint he has raised. Our last contact with [redacted] on 4 June through MiCase 202100208101 made no reference to "Suspected Fixation" and explained future letters on the same matter would be filed.

I feel we've covered off the points raised by [redacted] on our side regarding the original issues raised and have nothing to add and have filed his subsequent correspondence as per the process. The second point regarding the email chain he received on 4 June, isn't from us so we wouldn't be able to comment on that.

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Rural Economic
Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 32

From: [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 15 November 2021 11:00

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: Media update

Hi

Just for info – Media piece published yesterday on “Today UK News” site. Makes a link between Sandstone and a recent Val McDermid book launch at Bute House. I couldn’t access the link below so the article text is below if you need. Some quotes from Labour, Conservatives and SNP in the article though these are regarding the use of Bute House for book launches and not Sandstone.

Cronyism Claim After Val McDermid Launches Book At Sturgeon's Official Residence - Todayuknews

Todayuknews

... claims rules were broken after cash was given to prop up Inverness-based Sandstone Press by government body **Highlands and Islands Enterprise**.

Cronyism claim after Val McDermid launches book at Sturgeon’s official residence

A crime writer who is friends with Nicola Sturgeon was allowed to hold a book launch at the First Minister’s official residence.

The SNP leader has been accused of cronyism after hosting the Val McDermid event at Bute House in Edinburgh.

McDermid is one of Scotland's most successful authors and has sold more than 17million books around the world.

She is a vocal supporter of Sturgeon and spoke out in her favour in a TV show about her battle with Alex Salmond earlier this year.

The pair are often described as close friends and appeared together discussing books at a crime writing festival in Yorkshire.

A Labour source said: "If you are the First Minister's pal, you get to launch your book – a commercial enterprise – at Bute House. I somehow don't think this privilege is extended to Joe Public so it seems like cronyism." McDermid has insisted the event was paid for by her publisher.

She said: "The book launch for My Scotland, held at Bute House, was paid for in its entirety – room hire, staff costs, drinks and canapes – by my publisher, Little, Brown and Company.

"They asked for this because Bute House features in the book. I imagine the Scottish Government made a profit on the night."

Marketing material for My Scotland states McDermid "takes readers to the places where her stories and characters reside". Last week we revealed Sturgeon's book publisher is facing a fraud probe after the firm was handed £295,000 of public money.

Detectives are looking at claims rules were broken after cash was given to prop up Inverness-based Sandstone Press by government body Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The book Women Hold Up Half The Sky – a collection of the First Minister's speeches – was promoted in the run-up to the May elections and includes a foreword from McDermid.

The firm, run by SNP supporter Robert Davidson, denies any wrongdoing.

Labour MSP Neil Bibby said: “Serious questions need to be asked about why a public building, sustained by taxpayer money, has been used to launch a commercial novel.

“We can’t have one rule for supporters of the First Minister and another for the rest of us.”

Val McDermid’s book *My Scotland*.

Scottish Conservative culture spokesman Donald Cameron said: “This seems to be yet another event relating to book promotion that the SNP has failed to be upfront about. There are serious questions for the SNP to answer over why this well-known supporter of the party was allowed to promote her book at the official home of the First Minister.”

A spokesman for the First Minister said: “These comments are utterly pathetic. The book event in question was funded by the publishers, not the taxpayer – and it was held at Bute House because it features in the book.

“The First Minister is a longstanding champion of Scotland’s thriving literary scene and ... has been involved in countless events celebrating a broad spectrum of Scottish authors – regardless of their political persuasion.”

Val McDermid is a vocal supporter of Nicola Sturgeon.

The Scottish Government did not respond when we asked if it was normally possible to book Bute House for corporate events, how much it would cost or who Val McDermid’s agent paid for the event in June 2019.

Sturgeon’s Cabinet Secretary for the Constitution, External Affairs and Culture Angus Robertson was criticised after he was handed a spot to promote his tome at Borders Book Festival – funded through the Scottish Government department he runs.

He cancelled after the Sunday Mail highlighted his appearance.

Document 33

From: [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 12 November 2021 16:20

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: FMQ - Sandstone - date of hearing

I'm literally just updating that as we speak. ☐ I plan to send an update to the team I don't believe there are any other updates at the moment. Would you like to review the FMQ again before I send it through?

Document 34

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 12 November 2021 16:18

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: FMQ - Sandstone - date of hearing

SANDSTONE PRESS: A HEARING HAS BEEN SCHEDULED FOR THURSDAY 18 NOVEMBER IN THE COURT OF SESSION TO CONSIDER STRIDENT PUBLISHING LTD'S REQUEST FOR A JUDICIAL REVIEW OF FUNDING DECISIONS MADE BY HIE IN SUPPORT OF SANDSTONE PUBLISHING LTD. THIS DATE IS PUBLISHED IN THE court rolls ONLINE. The hearing will deal with whether permission to proceed should be granted, and secondly whether the time limit should be extended.

Please can you update the FMQ.

Thanks,

[redacted]

[redacted] Regional Economic Development Division | Scottish Government
5 Atlantic Quay | 150 Broomielaw | Glasgow G2 8LU

Email: [redacted]

Mob: [redacted]

Document 36

From: [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 09 November 2021 17:41

To: First Minister FMQs <FirstMinisterFMQs@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted]

[redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted]

[redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: UPDATE: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Hi

Please find attached an update to address your feedback. With thanks to colleagues copied for input.

Anything further, please let us know.

<< File: FMQ - Claims re Publisher of FM speeches (003).docx >>

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Rural Economic
Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 37

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot] **On Behalf Of** First Minister FMQs
Sent: 09 November 2021 15:13
To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]
Cc: First Minister FMQs <FirstMinisterFMQs@gov.scot>; [redacted]
[redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted]
[redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]
Subject: RE: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Good afternoon [redacted],

Grateful if you could take a look at the comments attached in the brief and return a revised version by COP today.

<< File: Claims re Publisher of FM speeches.docx >>

Many thanks,

[redacted]

[redacted] | FMQ Officer

Scottish Government | [redacted], St Andrew's House, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG |
[redacted]

Document 38

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 08 November 2021 17:24

To: ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox <ETFMQPQ@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; First Minister FMQs <FirstMinisterFMQs@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; RED Deputy Director <REDDD@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Importance: High

Hi

Thanks for your earlier extension. With thanks to colleagues copied for their contributions, please find attached FMQ. We may look to add material regarding allegations surrounding the ministerial code, tomorrow.

<< File: FMQ briefing - Sandstone Press - 8 November 2021.docx >>

Thanks

[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Rural Economic Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 39

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 08 November 2021 15:43

To: ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox <ETFMQPQ@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Cc: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; First Minister FMQs <FirstMinisterFMQs@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Hi [redacted]

Yes, that's fine, but grateful for sight of it by 5.15 please. If you need to update further/provide supplementary info beyond that, we can get that thereafter.

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

----- Find out more on Preparing First Minister's Questions (FMQs) -----

Document 40

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot] **On Behalf Of** ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox

Sent: 08 November 2021 15:40

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Cc: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox <ETFMQPQ@gov.scot>; First Minister FMQs <FirstMinisterFMQs@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Hi [redacted]

Copying in the FMQ team who will be able to confirm.

Many thanks

[redacted]

Document 41

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 08 November 2021 15:38

To: ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox <ETFMQPQ@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Hi [redacted]

I'm trying to pull together some final pieces of information to include. Is it possible to get an extension please?

[redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Rural Economic
Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 42

From: [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 08 November 2021 11:04

To: ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox <ETFMQPQ@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Thanks [redacted]

I thought you might be in touch, I'm already working on one and we'll aim to hit your 4pm deadline.

Thanks

[redacted]

Document 43

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot] **On Behalf Of** ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox
Sent: 08 November 2021 11:02
To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]
Cc: ET FMQ/PQ Mailbox <ETFMQPQ@gov.scot>
Subject: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Hi [redacted],

We have an FMQ brief request that I think will sit with your area.

The FMQ team consider that your policy area may feature in FMQs this week and have asked that you prepare a brief for the First Minister on:

Sandstone press claims

7 Nov:

Sunday Mail 1 **STURGEON BOOK FIRM PROBED BY FRAUD COPS** Nicola Sturgeon's book publisher is facing a fraud investigation after the firm was handed £295,000 of public money. Detectives are looking at claims rules were broken after cash was given to prop up Inverness-based Sandstone Press by government body Highlands and Islands Enterprise. The book Women Hold Up Half The Sky - a collection of the First Minister's speeches - was promoted in the run-up to the May elections. The

Nicola Sturgeon's book publisher probed by fraud cops over award of £295k taxpayers' cash - Daily Record

8 Nov

The Daily Telegraph (Scotland) 2 **Calls to investigate Sturgeon publisher** POLICE have been urged to investigate after a publisher that released a collection of Nicola Sturgeon's speeches was handed £295,000 of public funds. Sandstone Press is run by an SNP supporter and hailed the First Minister as a "significant world leader" when it released the collection earlier this year. It has been accused by [redacted], managing director of Strident Publishing, of falsifying documents. Sandstone released the collection days after

Could you please confirm this has been picked up?

The deadline is 4pm today.

If you do not have a previous FMQ a blank template is attached for reference.

We have also attached some helpful guidance on formatting your FMQ brief together with a handy checklist to use before you return your brief. Please use the checklist when updating your FMQ brief to ensure that it follows FMQ guidelines

<< File: FMQ Template.docx >> << File: FMQ checklist.docx >> << File: FMQ FORMATTING.docx >>

You can also find further guidance at the following link -<http://saltire/my-workplace/ministerial-preferences-and-support/best-practice/Pages/Preparing-FMQs.aspx>

Thank you in advance for your contribution and if you have any questions please get in touch with either [redacted] ([redacted]), [redacted] (tbc), [redacted] ([redacted]) or [redacted] ([redacted]).

[redacted]

First Minister Questions & Parliamentary Questions

[redacted] | St Andrew's House | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

[redacted] [redacted] [redacted]

Before you print think about the ENVIRONMENT

<< OLE Object: Picture (Device Independent Bitmap) >>

You can find more detailed information on answering PQs here [Answering Parliamentary Questions \(PQs\)](#)

You can also download the PQs desk aid to print out and keep. It summarises the process and important timings to remember for delivering PQs each week.

If you or anyone in your team require any training/awareness in PQs please get in touch

Document 44

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 09 November 2021 16:17

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: FW: FMQ Brief Request - Sandstone Press Claims - Due 4pm today

Hi

I've started to try to update a local copy.

Some lines under the first bullet on Perf I've added are pasted below. Part in red I'm unsure of and need to check with [redacted] or someone else.

- PERF Criteria, available on the FindBusinessSupport website stated that firms needed to demonstrate they are vital to the local, regional or national economy.
- The criteria shows the definition of a pivotal enterprise to include one of *Local economic importance which would include areas such as, employee numbers relative to place, delivery of essential services, wider economic and community value, plus the socio-economic importance of the business in remote and rural areas;* and with *Leverage on wider business community by demonstrating the impacts of your business on supply chain at a local, regional and national level*
- The criteria for the award of PERF funding was set at national level **by the Scottish Government Covid Business Support Unit** and enterprise agencies were given discretion at regional level to assess an applicant's local economic importance.

Document 45

From: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Sent: 29 October 2021 10:02

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Cc: Directorate for Economic Development FOI <DEDFOI@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: DED - FOI - 202100249470 - Policy Request for Information

Hi there [redacted],

Thanks for this.

I think my first observation is that there is a lot of information here that would not be in scope. Unless email chains directly mentioned Sandstone Press then they should be omitted in my view. An example is this one Highlands and Islands Enterprise Briefing - 2021 02 12 - Flash Briefing issued to Fergus Ewing details - Objective ECM (scotland.gov.uk). The email does not mention Sandstone. The attachment does mention Sandstone but it does not fit into the parameters the requester has set out below as it is not correspondence with the relevant parties of interest.

Sorry to hear you won't make the initial deadline for return. I will be on leave for 2 and half weeks from Wednesday of next week so someone else from the Hub will pick up on this for you now. What the Hub will need though is quite different from what you have provided so just to be clear please provide them with the following:

- A schedule of documents (you have provided the links which is useful for us but we need these in Word or PDF format with highlighted areas of redaction and in a schedule format). I have provided what other policy areas have provided to us in the past to give you an idea of what I mean. Do not concern yourself with the "Redactions Applied" column, that's for us to do.
- Colour-code what you wish to redact as instructed below so we know what should be removed.
- To answer your question below. If there is information contained within a document that is not in scope then highlight this as well and we can have it removed from release on that basis.

I hope this clarifies.

Thanks very much

[redacted]

[redacted] DED FOI and Resourcing Lead|Governance and Business Support|Directorate for Economic Development|Scottish Government|**Tel:** [redacted]|**Mob:** [redacted]

Document 46

From: [redacted] <[redacted] @gov.scot>

Sent: 29 October 2021 08:46

To: [redacted] <[redacted] @gov.scot>

Cc: Directorate for Economic Development FOI <DEDFOI@gov.scot>; [redacted] [redacted] @gov.scot>; [redacted]< [redacted] @gov.scot>

Subject: RE: DED - FOI - 202100249470 - Policy Request for Information

Hi [redacted]

Just a quick update on this case. I've completed the eRDM search, and looked at the documents returned. See attached search template. Most of these are not from our policy areas, but relate to one of the board members of Sandstone attending meetings of the Creative Industries Advisory Group. They fall within the scope of the FOI as Jonathan Pryce was copied to emails they were attached to. Could you provide some advice on these items – can we redact all parts of the document not relating to Sandstone as being outside the scope of the FOI request? Or would we normally approach the relevant policy area asking them to redact as appropriate? Not sure what the usual practise is here.

I'm waiting for a couple of mailbox searches to be completed, the team are working on other FOIs at the moment too which are taking up a lot of time this week. I am now in meetings most of today, so won't be able to provide all this info to you by the end of today. I would hope to get this to you by the middle of next week. Let me know if there are any problems with this.

Regards

[redacted]

Document 47

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Sent: 22 October 2021 10:56
To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Cc: Directorate for Economic Development FOI <DEDFOI@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>
Subject: DED - FOI - 202100249470 - Policy Request for Information

Good morning [redacted],

As you are aware, the DED FOI Hub have received the following request:

***“Information held by Scottish Government that mentions ‘Sandstone Press’.
To include correspondence and documents.***

Should it be necessary to narrow the request to keep it within cost parameters, we are particularly seeking correspondence involving the following individuals:

- [redacted], ***Head of Enterprise Sponsorship, Regional Economic Development Division. Period: 1 March 2020 to date of this request. This will include correspondence with Highlands and Island Enterprise and Scottish Enterprise.***
- [redacted], ***Policy Officer, Directorate for Economic Development. Period: 22 March 2021 to date of this request.***
- ***Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister of Scotland, or her office. Period: 1 January 2020 to date of this request.***
- ***Jonathan Pryce, Director for Culture, Tourism & Major Events. Period: 1 January 2018 to 6 May 2021.***

Correspondence with us (Strident Publishing) can be excluded.”

You have been identified as the policy lead for this FOI request.

If we were to take the first line of the request in isolation, I would recommend seeking clarification as the case would likely be costed out on that part alone. However, as the requester has been kind enough to clarify in the request initially, I think it is sensible to approach the request using the parameters in the clarification to answer compliantly and on time within our statutory obligations.

With that in mind, we would be grateful if you could **please complete the search template attached and then provide the schedule of information (documents/letters/emails etc) that your policy unit holds that fall within the scope of the request along with highlighted areas that your policy feel should be redacted.** If you require any guidance on the exemptions from FOI(S)A that you feel may be relevant for the documents found then please do not hesitate to contact me. However, we recommend that you colour-code such exemptions for ease and clarity. An example of this is set out below and has served us well in the past (I have attached a highlighted example document from another policy area as well to illustrate):

Section 30(b)(ii) – Free and frank exchange of views for the purposes of deliberation

Section 33(1)(b) – Substantial prejudice to commercial interests

Section 38(1) Personal Information

I have also attached an example of what a search template should look like when filled in.

This request has been assessed by the FOI Unit as **routine** and as such Ministerial clearance is not required. Clearance will only be sought by a DD. As such I would be grateful for your response to the above by **COP Friday 29 October 2021**.

Many thanks for your time and if you have any questions feel free to get in touch,

[redacted]

[redacted]

DED FOI and Resourcing Lead

Governance and Business Support

Directorate for Economic Development

Scottish Government, 5 Atlantic Quay, Floor 3, 150 Broomielaw, Glasgow G2 8LU

[redacted]

[redacted]

□ [redacted]



Document 48

From: [redacted] <[redacted]>

Sent: 08 November 2021 17:09

To: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE ASAP - FMQ briefing - Sandstone Press - 8
November 2021 (A35282327)

No, looks like a re-run of the other articles

Document 49

From: [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 08 November 2021 17:08

To: [redacted] <[redacted] @gov.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: FOR CLEARANCE ASAP - FMQ briefing - Sandstone Press - 8
November 2021 (A35282327)

Thanks, I don't think there's anything new to mention there compared to the others.

Document 50

From: [redacted] >

Sent: 08 November 2021 11:57

To: [redacted] [redacted@gov.scot]

Cc: [redacted@gov.scot]; [redacted@gov.scot]

Subject: RE: Total funding provided to CS - by noon today if possible

Hi [redacted]– attached is an analysis of successful awards in the last 15 years. There have been numerous unsuccessful applications in this period which are not shown plus some of the awards shown in the spreadsheet have been reduced from that requested.

Please note that we made a £5,000 award last month through our open fund which is to support a single publication i.e., is not support for the wider business or publishing programme. This award will be published by the end of November so is not publicly known yet.

We have had recent correspondence with Mr [redacted] regarding Sandstone which did not mention the alleged police investigation.

Best Regards

[redacted]

[redacted]

T +44 330 333 2000 **D** [redacted]

F +44 131 523 0001 **M** [redacted]

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Document 51

From: [redacted]

Sent: 08 November 2021 11:37

To: [redacted] [redacted]

Cc: [redacted]

Subject: Total funding provided to CS - by noon today if possible

Importance: High

Hi[redacted],

Sending to both of you as I'm aware that[redacted] was involved in previous discussions regarding Sandstone Press. We need to know urgently (by noon if possible) the total amount of funding that CS have given to Sandstone Press. I'm aware that the last funding they received from CS was in April 2019. I've also checked and it doesn't appear that they received COVR funding in either rounds.

Thanks and apologies for the short deadline.

[redacted]

[redacted] | Sponsorship and Funding Branch | Culture and Historic Environment Division | Scottish Government | [redacted]

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[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Rural Economic
Development Division

The Scottish Government | [redacted] | [redacted]

Document 52

From: [redacted]>

Sent: 05 November 2021 17:43

To: First Minister <firstminister@gov.scot>

Cc: Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Economy <CabSecFE@gov.scot>;

[redacted]>; [redacted]; [redacted]; News Desk <Newsdesk@gov.scot>;

Communications Finance & Economy

<CommunicationsFinance&Economy@gov.scot>; Communications First Minister

<CommunicationsFirstMinister@gov.scot>; [redacted]; [redacted]

Subject: FOR AWARENESS: MEDIA QUERY - SUNDAY MAIL - SANDSTONE PRESS FUNDING

FMPO

cc Finance and Economy Secretary

For the First Minister's awareness, we've been approached by the Sunday Mail for comment on a police investigation into HIE funding for Sandstone Press in 2020.

Another publisher ([redacted] of Strident Publishing Ltd) wrote to the FM outlining his concerns about the money going to Sandstone Press – SG replied that we were satisfied with the arrangements. The Sunday Mail are now reporting on the police investigation and will also make reference to a book of FM's speeches that was published by Sandstone Press earlier this year.

Following discussion with HIE, the SG HIE sponsor team and [redacted], given it's a live investigation and we can't say very much, we've agreed to issue the below.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“Given there is a police complaint, it would not be appropriate for the Scottish Government to comment.”

These are the lines HIE intend to respond with:

“We have not been contacted by Police Scotland in relation to any issues concerning Sandstone Press.

An application to commence judicial review proceedings has been made to the Court of Session and HIE intends to defend this robustly.”

Thanks,

[redacted]

[redacted] Scottish Government | St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

t: [redacted] m: [redacted]

[redacted] | [redacted] | Enterprise Sponsorship Team | Rural Economic Development Division

The Scottish Government | Tel: [redacted] | Mobile: [redacted] | [redacted]@gov.scot

Working hours:

Monday – 7-5

Tuesday – 7-5

Wednesday – 9-5

Thursday – 7-2

Friday – 7-2



Document 53

Re: Scottish Publishing and SDS

Thu 09/09/2021 12:20

Jenny Todd [redacted]

Re: Scottish Publishing and SDS

To [redacted]>; [redacted]

Cc [redacted]; [\[redacted\]](#)

Hi [redacted]

That would be great, thanks. We have ended up going with Tuesday 14th at 2pm.

Does that work for you?

Sent from my iPhone. Forgive typos and autocorrects.

Document 54

From: [redacted]

Sent: 08 September 2021 18:20

To: [redacted] [redacted] <[redacted]>

Cc: > [redacted]; [\[redacted\]](#)>

Subject: RE: Scottish Publishing and SDS

Hi both

I'd be keen to attend this meeting too if that would be okay? Sounds like it'll be a useful discussion.

Thanks very much,

[redacted]

Document 55

From: [redacted]>

Sent: 08 September 2021 17:15

To: Jenny Todd <[redacted]>

Cc: [redacted] [redacted]; [redacted]

Subject: RE: Scottish Publishing and SDS

Dear Jenny

Many thanks for your email and clarification, genuinely happy to look at a more collaborative and cross-agency approach with the industry. I very much look forward to talking to you and your colleague ([redacted]) next week.

I can meet at the following times:

Tuesday, 14th of September – 10.00 am to 10.50 am

Wednesday, 15th of September – 10.40 am to 11.40 am

Let me know if one of these works for you both.

Best

[redacted]

Skills Development Scotland Leasachadh Sgilean na h-Alba

Monteith House, 11 George Square, Glasgow, G2 1DY

myworldofwork.co.uk – for all your work, skills and learning needs

ourskillsforce.co.uk – making skills work for employers

apprenticeships.scot – for all the latest on apprenticeships

skillsdevelopmentscotland.co.uk – corporate website





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Document 56

From: Jenny Todd <[redacted]>

Sent: 08 September 2021 14:46

To: [redacted]

Cc: [redacted] [redacted]

Subject: Re: Scottish Publishing and SDS

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the organisation. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi[redacted]

Thanks for your message. A call with myself and another industry colleague would be greatly appreciated. I don't believe the desire to have more connection with SDS was a comment on your level of support. More an example of the potential benefits of a cross-agency approach to certain company-level issues. I do apologise if I failed to express that well enough.

Tuesday or Wednesday mornings next week would be good for me. I'll check others availability.

All very best

Jenny

Document 57

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 April 2021 12:51

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: E - recent correspondence with Scottish Government and partner agencies - 202100189422 - [redacted]

Dear all

We do not have an interests register for CIAG/CILG. [redacted] has never brought up the issue of Sandstone at any CIAG/CILG meeting, nor at any meeting with Ms Hyslop or Ministers.

Best wishes.

[redacted]

Document 58

From: [redacted]@gov.scot>

Sent: 26 April 2021 12:41

To: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: E - recent correspondence with Scottish Government and partner agencies - 202100189422 - [redacted]

Thanks [redacted]

Looping [redacted] in for awareness.

Interesting I think that [redacted] says *'Assurance requires evidence; and we have seen no evidence that Ms Todd's interest in Sandstone has been recorded in respect of meetings that she attended with Ms Hyslop.'* The CIAG minutes do not mention Sandstone because Sandstone was never part of a discussion.

I'll look through the guidance again and see what we need to do on the Persistent Correspondent route. I think [redacted] had all the correspondence collated already – is that right?

Best,

[redacted]

[redacted] | Creative Industries, Screen and Media Unit | Culture and Historic Environment Division | 2-G-South Victoria Quay | Edinburgh EH6 6QQ | [redacted]

Document 59

SBT MICASE – SG RESPONSES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

SG RESPONSES IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER

Our Reference: 202000033252 **03 June 2020**

Dear [redacted],

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2020 to Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for the Economy, Fair Work and Culture regarding Sandstone Press Limited/CIAG member Jenny Todd. I have been asked to respond on behalf of Ms Hyslop.

The Scottish Government recognises the value that the publishing sector brings to individuals, communities and wider society, promoting our rich literary heritage and vibrant contemporary talent.

Decisions on funding, including Open Project Fund (OPF) assessments, are a matter for Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government has no role in this. Yours sincerely [redacted]

Document 60

Literature and Publishing

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Hi everyone

As discussed, I've attached a link to the original submission which sets out the issues raised by [redacted] and an update to the Competitions Tribunal Case which [redacted] lost in the end. There are more documents around this in the two eRDM folders that these two belong to.

Below is also a list of relevant MiCases – best place for the lines to take.

Hope this helps should this come up again

[redacted]

20200010 7559	Scottish Book Trust - CEO's conflict of interest in Muriel Spark deal
20200007 4236	Correspondence between the Scottish Government and organisations/individuals regarding the 'Muriel Spark' celebrations
20200006 8823	Scottish Book Trust - Conflict of interest
20200006 6170	Undisclosed conflict of interest - Sandstone Press/Creative Scotland
20200005 3168	Scottish Book Trust: conflict of interest & possible resultant loss to taxpayers

20200003 false claims by Creative Scotland
3252

20200001 Open Project Fund - Creative Scotland's use of funds
0850 (Competition Appeal Tribunal case 1335)

Document 61

FMQ Brief - media report on police complaint and judicial review re: Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) funding for Sandstone Press in 2020

ISSUE: media report on police complaint and judicial review re: Highlands & Islands Enterprise (HIE) funding for Sandstone Press in 2020.

Sun 7 Nov: *Sunday Mail* (and Monday press) reported that [redacted], MD of Strident Publishing, has questioned how £295k of public funds were used to support Sandstone Press – with that publisher reportedly given £120k in the 12 months leading up to its publication of *Women Hold Up Half the Sky: Selected Speeches of Nicola Sturgeon*.

- [redacted] has applied for a judicial review of HIE's decision to award PERF (Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund) funding to Sandstone Press.
- [redacted] has also filed a complaint with Police Scotland, alleging that:
 - Sandstone Press made false statements about the number of people it employed in order to obtain public funding; and
 - HIE wrongly recorded the location of Sandstone Press which increased its eligibility for PERF funding.
- He has also raised concerns the Ministerial Code has been breached due to the publication by Sandstone Press of a book containing the First Minister's speeches.
- Cons. culture spokesman Donald Cameron told *Sunday Mail*: *"There are serious questions for the SNP Government to answer. The SNP Government was made aware of concerns surrounding this significant amount of public money just before the election period kicked off. They must be fully transparent over what checks were carried out at that time and why they believed it was still appropriate for public money to be given to the company who then published the book of Nicola Sturgeon's speeches."*
- *Sunday Mail* editorial: *"It raises yet more questions over the stewardship of Scotland's enterprise agencies which dish out eye-watering sums of public money with little public scrutiny."*

Background: HIE has dealt with correspondence on this matter through its own complaints process, and is comfortable that its approvals of funding are compliant. It is planning to robustly defend the judicial review of its decision to award PERF funding to Sandstone. HIE expects to hear if permission to proceed has been granted or whether there will be a hearing to consider permission this week (no later than Friday 12 November).

Annex A: Further background info on HIE and Creative Funding to Sandstone Press

TOP LINES

Given a complaint has been made to the police, it would not be appropriate for the Scottish Government to comment in detail at this time.

STRIDENT CONCERN ABOUT HIE FUNDING AWARD

Strident Publishing alleges that HIE wrongly recorded the location of Sandstone Press which increased its eligibility for PERF funding.

(Comment in margin – [redacted]: *Rather than repeating the claim here, can we say "It is not correct that HIE wrongly recorded the location of Sandstone Press"? If not, is the 4th bullet not the key line, and therefore worth bringing higher up? Thx*). [Redacted]: *The JR will address that so best to remain factual.*)

- Pivotal Enterprise Resilience Fund (PERF) funding was available to companies with up to 249 employees, that had been trading for more than 12 months and could demonstrate that funding would support the business to be viable for at least the next 6 months. It ran from 30 April to 18 May 2020.
- The criteria for PERF funding was developed by government and partners in order to support those who need it most, have the greatest impact on the future of Scotland's economy, and administer the funds in line with legislative requirements. The criteria was published on the FindBusinessSupport website.
- Businesses were required to demonstrate that they were pivotal to the local economy, taking into consideration factors such as the number of employees, delivery of essential services and their wider economic and community value.
- The enterprise agencies were given discretion at a regional level to assess an applicant's local economic importance, based on the location of that applicant's business activity rather than the physical location of its premises.
- As HIE's decision is currently subject to judicial review, it would not be appropriate for me to comment on the details of this particular case.

STRIDENT'S SUGGESTION OF MINISTERIAL CODE BREACH

I am aware that Strident publishing raised concerns suggesting the Ministerial Code had been breached due to the publication of a book containing the First Minister's speeches.

- Strident Publishing raised this in correspondence with Officials in February 2021.
- Officials (Comment in margin - [redacted]: *Pls include a line narrated when Strident contacted the SG, before the bullet point about officials considering the matter and getting back. Thx*) considered the matter and (Comment in margin - [redacted]: *when*) confirmed to Strident Publishing in March 2021 that they are satisfied no breach of the applicable Ministerial and Civil Service standards occurred.
- It may also be worth pointing out that the book of speeches was not published until after the election, and the majority of the First Minister's speeches were already in the public domain.

HIE DELIVERY AND PERFORMANCE

HIE is focused on working with a wide range of businesses and other partners, locally and nationally, to promote recovery across the Highlands and Islands and deliver inclusive growth.

- That is quite rightly the agency key focus, and it is a key priority of this Government.
- HIE has been allocated more than £70m in core funding in 2021-22 to support its work – to improve business and community resilience, protect and create jobs and help deliver an economic recovery that is fair, sustainable and green.

Highlands and Islands Enterprise published its annual accounts and report for 2020-21 in Parliament last month, providing a comprehensive account of the agency's performance over the financial year.

- In total, HIE supported 1,865.5 (Full Time Equivalent) jobs – 266.5 of which were in fragile areas.
- Over the same period, the turnover of businesses supported by HIE increased by £117.5m.

Annex A:

HIE funding to Sandstone Press

- Total funding from HIE to Sandstone Press is £313,034, including PERF funding of £70,000 approved in May 2020.
- The table below provides a breakdown of the further HIE £234,034 funding.
- HIE funding combined with CS funding mentioned below totals £678,034 since 2006

Project	Date approved	Approval	Expenditure
Post Covid Resilience and Recovery	07/09/2020	50,000	50,000
Working Capital Support (LOAN)	22/02/2019	175,000	175,000
Support for Non-Executive Director	21/06/2018	10,800	10,643

IHI Go Global - Frankfurt and London Book Fairs 2018/19	05/10/2018	1,764	1,709
IHI Go Global - London Book Fair 2018	26/02/2018	891	682
IHI Go Global - Translation for International Market	30/10/2017	5,000	5,000
Digital marketing strategy	March 2021	3,742	0
		247,197	234,034

Creative Scotland (CS) has also provided funding to Sandstone Press.

- CS funding totalled £365,029 between 2006 and 2019.
- The most recent award of funding from CS to Sandstone Press was on 15/04/2019 for a programme comprising 14 titles, all published pre-April 2020.
- All CS funding has been to cover costs of delivering specific time-limited activity, usually a list of publications, and not to fund its balance sheet as alleged previously by Strident Publishing.
- This fact was stated as evidence in the Competition Appeals Tribunal (CAT) case between Strident Publishing Ltd and Creative Scotland.
- The CAT ruled that CS did not constitute an undertaking for the purposes of the claim and therefore that the CAT did not have jurisdiction.
- Strident Publishing sought permission to appeal this decision. However, this was rejected by the CAT on the basis that:
 - the application was very late in being submitted without any good reason;
 - the appellant (Strident Publishing) did not disclose a point of law;
 - in the view of the CAT the appeal had no real prospect of success and there was no other compelling reason why permission to appeal should be granted.
- Not in the public domain: CS have confirmed they have made a £5,000 award in October 2021 to Sandstone Press through their open fund which is to support a single publication, i.e. not support for the wider business or publishing programme.

Local Note	Requester	Business are	Date purcha	Price	Monthly total
May 2021	[redacted]	SPPA:Policy	28/05/2021	£18.98	
May 2021	[redacted]	EMD: Delivery Unit	28/05/2021	£18.98	
May 2021	[redacted]	HLTWork: Workforce	28/05/2021	£18.98	
May 2021	[redacted]	Planning Medical Devices and	01/06/2021	£18.98	
June 2021	[redacted]	Legislation RPID : Area Office Leadership	03/06/2021	£18.98	
June 2021	[redacted]	Team TS LCE, Low Carbon Economy Support	14/06/2021	£18.98	

Catalogued (Yes)	Initials	Comments
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