

DOCUMENT 1

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER FOR CULTURE, EUROPE AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND MINISTER WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR REFUGEES FROM UKRAINE

MEETING WITH: EDINBURGH FESTIVAL FRINGE SOCIETY, THURS 20 SEPT, 10:00-10:45

Where does this stem from	A request from the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society for a catch-up discussion with Mr Gray.
Key Messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scotland has an ambition to facilitate a world-leading cultural recovery. We have repeatedly demonstrated our support for festivals as a key pathway for fostering and showcasing Scottish creativity.• Keen to hear reflections on August, especially in the 75th anniversary year of the Fringe, and to learn more about plans for the future.• Since the start of the pandemic until now, we have supported the festivals with approximately £14.1 million in EXPO, PlaCE, Gateway, and Covid emergency funding support, to enable a safe and successful return for Edinburgh and Glasgow's festivals.
Who	Benny Higgins , Chair, EFFS Shona McCarthy , Chief Executive, EFFS
What	A meet and greet allowing Mr Gray to discuss Shona McCarthy and Benny Higgins' future plans for the Fringe, and how SG can work with EFFS to support that vision.
Where	MS Teams - Click here to join the meeting (Link also in meeting invite)
When	Thursday 22 September, 10:00-10:45
Supporting Official	[redacted under section 38(1)(b)], Interim Unit Head, Culture Strategy and Engagement – [redacted under section 38(1)(b)] [redacted under section 38(1)(b)], Policy Officer, Culture Strategy and Engagement
Attached documents	Annex A: Agenda, top lines to take, sensitivities Annex B: Biographies Annex C: Overview of 2022 activity Annex D: EFFS/Fringe key facts Annex E: Festival funding – lines to take Annex F: Cost crisis – lines to take

AGENDA

This is a relatively informal meeting with no set agenda. However, we understand Ms McCarthy and Mr Higgins are likely to wish to discuss the following key issues:

1. Overview of the role of Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society (EFFS).
2. Debrief on 2022 edition of the Fringe.
3. Discuss the challenges EFFS face in 2023.
4. Discuss EFFS' development goals, vision and values.

Top lines for each of these items are included directly below, and further detailed lines to take are in Annex E (festival funding) and Annex F (cost crisis).

Potential sensitivities/challenges are covered on the following page (p3).

TOP LINES TO TAKE

- Congratulations on your successful 75th anniversary year, and thank you very much for your important role in Edinburgh and Scotland's cultural recovery.
- The Edinburgh Festivals continue to be one of Scotland's world-leading cultural brands. We want them to retain their world-class status, as well as continuing to offer widespread accessibility to culture for community and education settings.
- I am keen to hear your perspective on this year's Fringe, particularly in such a special year for the festivals.
- I know these are very challenging times for Scotland's culture sector. I am acutely aware of some of the frustration that has been felt by the sector over the course of the pandemic. We have been pleased to be able to support the festivals with approximately £14.1million of funding to date since the start of the pandemic.
- With regards to the ongoing cost crisis, and the anxiety it is undoubtedly causing for the sector, we have continually urged the UK Government to use all the powers and fiscal headroom at its disposal and we will continue to do everything within our resources and powers to help those most affected.
- I am keen to know your views and vision for the future of the Fringe, and the important role EFFS plays. Whilst I need to acknowledge the difficult financial landscape we are operating in, I would be interested to understand both the opportunities and the barriers you are facing, and where SG involvement could help address these.
- We were reassured to see that EFFS launched a large-scale external fundraising campaign in 2021, aiming to raise £7.5m over 5 years. I would welcome an update on progress.

SENSITIVITIES

[redacted under section 33(1)(b)]

BIOGRAPHIES

Benny Higgins



Benny is Chair of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. In recent years Benny has played a significant role in advising the Scottish Government in recovery from the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. He led the Advisory Group on Economic Recovery and also worked closely with Scotland's Banking Industry to produce a report on Financing Scotland's Recovery in March 2021. Benny began his career in the financial services industry at Standard Life, where he qualified as an actuary, progressing to RBS and subsequently HBOS where he was Chief Executive of the Retail Banking Division. He became CEO of Tesco Bank in 2008 following Tesco's buyout of the RBS share.

Benny has a First Class Honours degree in Mathematics from the University of Glasgow. He qualified as a Fellow of the Faculty of Actuaries in 1986 and is a member of its Council. He is also a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers in Scotland and a member of the Treasury Task force on Financial Inclusion and the Scottish Government's Financial Services Advisory Board (FiSAB).

He is a member of the Glasgow Economic Leadership Board and the Commonwealth Games Legacy Board. He is also Executive Chairman of Buccleuch Estates, a member of the Scottish Government's Financial Services Advisory Board (FiSAB) – now the Financial Services Growth and Development Board - and a Princes Trust Ambassador. As well as his role with EFFE, Benny is a Trustee for the Edinburgh International Culture Summit, Chair of the Fine Art Society (London and Edinburgh), Chair of Sistema Scotland, and Chair of the National Galleries of Scotland.

Shona McCarthy



Shona is the Chief Executive of Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society. Prior to this, she was Director of Shona McCarthy Consulting, founding Director of Culture Trust, Chairperson of Oh Yeah music centre in Belfast, and Walk the Plank in Manchester. She was awarded a prestigious Eisenhower Fellowship for Innovation 2014. She has 25 years' experience in senior leadership positions. From 2011 – 2014 she was Chief Executive of the Culture Company, leading on Derry-Londonderry's year as UK City of Culture, creating and delivering a world class, citywide cultural programme for 2013 and raising and managing a budget in excess of £20 million.

Previously she was Director of the British Council Northern Ireland leading a team of 40 to oversee international programmes of work across schools, arts and Higher Education to build positive international cultural relations.

OVERVIEW OF 2022 ACTIVITY

Overall, 2022 was perceived as a 'recovery year' for the festivals and was key in bringing back confidence to the wider culture sector, especially with regards to returning audiences.

The support provided by Scottish Government over the pandemic (approx. £14.1m, plus a £1m interest free loan to the Fringe Society) has been greatly appreciated by all the year-round festivals, in order for them to return this year without restrictions (with the exception of Celtic Connections in January due to Omicron).

August Audience Numbers And Ticket Sales

[redacted under section 33(1)(b)]

- The Edinburgh International Film Festival presented 91 new features with 42 films in the EIFF 2022 programme by women, agender, and non-binary directors or co-directors. A total of 263 in-person screenings, featuring over 37 languages, took place across 5 venues. EIFF ticket/audience stats are not yet available.
- Figures are not yet available from the Edinburgh Arts Festival or Tattoo.

Economic and Employment Impacts – provided by Festivals Edinburgh

[redacted under section 30(b)]

EFFS / FRINGE KEY FACTS**Overview**

- The Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society was created in 1958 in response to the success of informal, collective performances taking place in the 'fringes' of the official Edinburgh International Festival since 1947. EFFS are a registered charity.
- EFFS formalised the existence of the Fringe, and continues to provide information and support to artists, publish the Fringe programme, and run a central box office.
- EFFS do not vet performers – this is a key policy for the organisation. EFFS state 'we're proud to include in our programme anyone with a story to tell and a venue willing to host them'.
- The three key objectives EFFS work to deliver are: (1) Provide support, advice and encouragement to all participants; (2) Assist the audiences who come to Edinburgh to navigate what's on offer; (3) Celebrate the Fringe and what it stands for all over the world.

Made in Scotland

- The Made in Scotland (MIS) programme is a collaboration between EFFS, the Federation of Scottish Theatre, Scottish Music Centre and Creative Scotland. This year was the 13th iteration of the Made in Scotland showcase, and was supported by £550k of SG funding via our EXPO fund.
- MIS showcases the best in home-grown dance, theatre and music. 2022 was the largest ever Made in Scotland showcase since its inception in 2009. This is because several MiS artists were unable to showcase in 2020 and their work was moved to this year's edition.
- 26 shows in this year's showcase, coming to a total of 267 shows produced since 2009.
- So far, 104 shows have toured to 44 countries with the support of the Onward Touring fund, with some shows even touring year on year since 2009.
- MIS has been a template for other country showcases at the Fringe with 14 happening in 2022 alone.

Pre-pandemic

- In 2019, the Fringe welcomed work from a record 63 countries and featured 3,841 shows, including almost 1,000 from Scotland. In 2018, the Fringe engaged with people from 157 nations, with over 2.8 million tickets sold.
- The Fringe, as an economic powerhouse generates an estimated £144 million for the Edinburgh economy and £173 million for Scotland's economy. Pre-pandemic it provided in excess of 2,840 full-time jobs in Edinburgh and over 3,400 across Scotland.
- The Fringe supports skills development and knowledge transfer, alongside a raft of creative industries across the city, from the trades to lighting and stage craft, costume design and event management. It has previously attracted 1,400 people from the global arts industry to buy work to tour overseas, and 1,000 media to review the work.

- The Fringe Blueprint is a statement of intent that sets out 8 commitments that will inform the work of the Fringe going forward, up until its 75th anniversary in 2022.

Volunteering

- Some campaigners believe that volunteering should not be acceptable at the Fringe in any circumstances.
- Fringe and member producers usually employ a mix of paid fixed-term contractors and volunteers for their programmes for the period of the festival.
- EFFFs are an accredited Living Wage Employer, committed to paying all staff – both seasonal and permanent – the Living Wage or higher.
- The main Fringe producers are Living Wage employers for full time, year round/permanent employment; [redacted under section 30(b)].
- Fringe venues and organisations are run independently of EFFFs and as such operate their own recruitment and employment practices. However, EFFFs' Board Committee On Fair Work includes Equity, BECTU and Volunteer Edinburgh to promote fair working practices at the Fringe, and have established best practice codes for Fringe venues and companies. The resources they have collectively produced, and that are available on their website, are all focused on ensuring people have the right information to make informed choices depending on their objectives. EFFFs also offer support and guidance to Fringe participants regarding employment, including mediation between participants and venues where necessary.

Fair Work and PLACE Resilience Fund

- We will continue to work with Creative Scotland to ensure Fair Work First criteria are applied wherever relevant and proportionate to do so. We strongly encourage all employers to adopt and demonstrate their commitment to Fair Work practices and will continue to strengthen our approach to conditionality. In line with the Bute House Agreement, we will introduce a requirement on public sector grants recipients to pay at least the real Living Wage to all employees and to provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition.

2030 Edinburgh Festival City Statement

- The 2030 Edinburgh Festival City strategy builds on the previous strategies, Thundering Hooves 1 and 2. It looks to the future of the Edinburgh Festivals in a world recovering from Covid-19, dealing with the uncertainties of Scotland's place post EU Exit, and in being aware of the climate crisis.
- The statement, was developed with partners including Scottish Government is now published in advance of the 75th anniversary season, and has a focus on resilience and ambition.
- Scottish Government's role will be maintain stance of non-interference and help facilitate the framework and environment in which creatives and festivals can thrive.

FESTIVAL FUNDING – LINES TO TAKE

- In total we have provided the festivals with approximately **£14.1m** in financial support from the Scottish Government since the beginning of the pandemic.
- We have provided £2 million this year for the EXPO Fund, and £1m for the Platforms for Creative Excellence (PLaCE) Programme.
- In the past two years we have supported the festivals with £7.5 million in EXPO, PLaCE, Gateway, and Covid emergency funding support, to enable a safe and successful return for Edinburgh and Glasgow's festivals, as well as a £1m interest free loan to the Edinburgh International Fringe Society.
- We have made an additional £2.1m available for the 75th anniversary festivals (EIF, Fringe, Film) through the PLACE Resilience Fund (March 2022) subject to them meeting specific criteria, for example, demonstrating plans to strengthen their resilience:

Edinburgh International Festival	£250,000
Edinburgh International Film Festival	£270,000
Edinburgh Fringe (includes support for Fringe producers)	£1,580,000 (of which £1,275,000 for the Producer Venues support fund)
Total	£2,100,000

- Furthermore we have provided £1.5m through the February 2022 Recovery Fund for Cultural Organisations benefitting the Arts, Children's, Science, and Storytelling festivals, as well as Hogmanay/Underbelly and Celtic Connections (via Glasgow Life).
- As well as supporting core resilience, this support has helped allow associated artists freelancers to be paid, and for well-being and inclusion focussed community and education Festival programmes to continue, maintaining their contribution towards Culture Strategy and Cultural Diplomacy Strategy aims.

Funding specific to the Fringe

- We awarded the Fringe £1.58m from our PlaCE Resilience fund to support venues and Fringe Society delivery during 2022, of which £1.275m went to Fringe producers.
- Since 2018, the EFFS has received an annual funding allocation of £166,667, which supports their work around Fair Work, community engagement and educational programmes.
- To support resilience and the long-term viability of the Fringe, the Scottish Government has also provided the EFFS with a £1 million interest-free loan and a grant of £81,000 (through Creative Scotland) to ensure their resilience [redacted under section 33(1)(b)] and develop their digital and ticketing platforms [redacted under section 33(1)(b)].

COST CRISIS – LINES TO TAKE

- The UK currently faces a rapidly escalating emergency that goes beyond simply the cost of living and is now a more general cost of everything crisis – an emergency on a similar scale to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It is essential that the response from government at every level is commensurate, in scale and speed, to the nature and magnitude of the emergency.
- The Programme for Government sets out our response to the cost crisis, as well as our ambition to create a better future in the longer term.
- Specifically, the PfG commits to working with the business community to identify further measures that can assist in addressing the increased costs and economic disruption that they face.
- The First Minister has committed to an emergency budget review to assess all opportunities to target additional resources, and held a summit with energy supply companies and consumer groups on 23 August.
- The powers and resources needed to tackle this emergency on the scale required - access to borrowing, welfare, VAT on fuel, taxation of windfall profits, regulation of the energy market - lie with the UK Government.
- We have continually urged the UK Government to use all the powers and fiscal headroom at its disposal and we will continue to do everything within our resources and powers to help those most affected.
- Within a limited budget and the restrictions of devolution, we have provided significant support for families and the most vulnerable, which will also indirectly support communities and local businesses.
- We welcome the belated announcement of support for businesses, but this should have been made several months ago and much more still needs to be done.
- We will continue to work with businesses in Scotland to press the UK Government for a range of measures to help ease the current pressures, including expansion of shortage occupation lists, a VAT reduction on SME energy bills and an extension of the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme and other loans.

Document 2

Minister For Culture, Europe And International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine

Briefing for Regular Catch Up With HES CEO, Alex Paterson on 29 September 2022

<i>What</i>	These meetings take place every Quarter and allow Historic Environment Scotland to brief you directly on key activities, achievements and relevant issues. You last met on 10 May.
<i>Where</i>	MS Teams
<i>When</i>	13:30 – 14:15, Thursday 29 September 2022
<i>Key Message(s)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An opportunity to discuss HES's current key priorities.• Keen to continue establishing a good working relationship with HES leadership and to develop a good understanding of what Scottish Government priorities mean for HES.
<i>Who</i>	Alex Paterson, Chief Executive, HES Alison Turnbull Director of External Relations and Partnerships, HES
<i>Why</i>	An opportunity to meet a key NDPB, discuss their priorities and set out your vision for the sector.
<i>Supporting official</i>	[redacted under section 38(1)(b)]: Unit Head SFHE [redacted under section 38(1)(b)]: Team Leader SFHE
<i>Briefing contents</i>	Annex A: Agenda Annex B: Summary Page Annex C: High-Level Inspection Programme Annex D: OPiT review/consultation Annex E: Knockando Annex F: Impact of cost of living crisis Annex G: HES AOB Items

AGENDA FOR MEETING 29 SEPTEMBER

1. Welcome
2. HES Update
 - High-Level Inspection Programme Update
 - OPiT review/Consultation
 - Knockando
 - Impact of cost of living crisis
3. Any other Business
 - Towards a Properties in Care (PIC) Strategy
 - New Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leadership Group
 - Consultation for a new Agricultural Bill

SUMMARY PAGE

Alex Paterson will brief you on progress with HES activity since the previous meeting on 10 May.

High-Level Inspection Programme Update

- OPiT Review/Consultation
- Knockando
- Impact of cost of living crisis

High Level Inspection Programme Update

- An Opportunity to hear about the recent positive progress on the HLM programme, [redacted under section 30(b)]. More info in **Annex C**

OPiT Review & Consultation

- As the ten-year historic environment strategy continues, this review ensures it remains relevant and adaptive to the changes across the sector since it began. This offers an opportunity to discuss the planned OPiT review and consultation and reiterate the need to prioritise activity that supports recovery and renewal, that focuses on creating a more resilient and sustainable sector , and helps to communicate the contribution that the historic environment makes not only to Scotland's economy, but to the wellbeing of Scotland's people and our route to net zero. see **Annex D**.

Knockando

- [redacted under section 30(b)] **Annex E**

Impact of Cost of Living Crisis

- An opportunity to discuss with HES the potential Impacts of Cost of Living Crisis, to note the action they are taking and state of play with union discussions about pay. **Annex F**

AOB

- HES also wish to raise the following with the Minister for awareness:
- Towards a PIC Strategy
- New Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leadership Group
- Consultation for a new Agricultural Bill
- Church Closures

HIGH LEVEL MASONRY INSPECTION PROGRAMME

HES's inspection programme has progressed well, and it has now completed the first phase of prioritised inspections. As a result, HES has been able to reopen a number of sites including Dundonald Castle, Doune Castle and Inchcolm Abbey, and increase visitor access at others, such as St Andrews Cathedral. Across the estate, there is full or partial access to 80 per cent of the properties it cares for.

HES is now inspecting the next group of prioritised sites. To ensure it is undertaking this work as quickly as possible, HES has scheduled inspections throughout the winter months in a change to the initial programme. [redacted under section 30(b)].

While HES is continuing these inspections, it has looked at how it can find new and different ways of telling the stories of the sites where access restrictions need to remain in place at present. This includes creating more interpretative signage at sites, as well as exploring the use of innovative technology like 3D modelling and new audio tours, videos and trails to offer alternative visitor experiences.

[redacted under section 30(b)]

The cost of these inspections is currently being met from the existing funding package which the Scottish Government previously delivered to Historic Environment Scotland. [redacted under section 30(b)]

While the inspection programme continues, many of Scotland's most-loved historic visitor attractions, including those generating the most income, remain open to the public: Edinburgh Castle, Skara Brae, Stirling Castle, Fort George and Arnot Blackhouse.

On 6 September HES announced that Burleigh Castle in Milnarthort near Kinross is once again open to the public following inspections by specialist staff from Historic Environment Scotland (HES). One access restriction will remain in place, with the first floor of the North Tower yet to be inspected so upper areas of the castle will remain closed for now.

Speaking Points

- I understand batch 1 of the inspections have been completed. I would welcome some insight into any lessons learned so far and the impacts they have for the rest of the inspection programme?
- [redacted under section 30(b)]
- I am pleased to hear of the innovative thinking used to consider alternative visitor offers at sites with continuing access restrictions. How have these been received so far?
- My Ministerial visits to inspection sites have been useful. I would welcome further opportunities to see the repairs in progress and to view the results of

completed work. I would also welcome viewing some of the mitigations in place at sites such as St Andrews Castle.

OPIT REVIEW/REFRESH

[redacted under section 29(1)(a)]

Speaking Points

- I was pleased to attend SHEF in June, and it was a welcome return to in-person events for the sector. It is good that the sector engagement which began in SHEF was also evident during the workshops.
- Are there any surprising themes emerging? Anything I should particularly be aware of?
- [redacted under section 30(b)]

[redacted under section 30(b)]

ANNEX E

IMPACT OF COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Financial Statement

The first quarter of the current financial year saw a year-to-date surplus against budget, mostly due to a stronger than expected commercial performance. [redacted under section 30(b)]

Energy Mitigation Measures

HES is working to align its organisational plans with the Net Zero targets as set by Scottish Government. HES's commitment to this target along with its key priorities and approach will be further articulated in an updated Carbon Management Plan which is soon to be published.

Within this plan there are several workstreams that will contribute to achieving this objective by mitigating energy use including decarbonisation of heat, energy efficiency, flexibility of consumption and renewable energy generation.

HES is currently in the process of developing a technical appraisal of the decarbonisation options across its estate. Once HES has ascertained available options and priorities to decarbonise the estate, with the associated funding requirements, this will inform a programme of capital work to implement these measures.

Speaking Points

- I appreciate the cost of living crisis is impacting the sector which was already working hard to recover from the pandemic.
- I am pleased to learn that the commercial resilience is continuing - which HES showed so early after Covid restrictions were lifted. I appreciate the hard work behind the scenes, at all levels, which has allowed this resilience.
- In terms of HES's work with Net Zero, it is a source of great pride that Scotland's international reputation is so strong for the research and awareness of the impacts of climate change on our heritage sites and historic places. I look forward to learning more about how the decarbonisation of the estate will be achieved.

Pay Policy

HES are continuing to engage with Trade Union partners whilst working and discussing with Scottish Government their updated pay pro-forma proposing increases within a 5% overall cost envelope. [redacted under section 30(b)]

HES, AOB Items

- **Towards a PIC Strategy –**

This is in regards to the future of our Properties in Care. Previously HES have said that it is inevitable our approach to protecting historic buildings will have to change - we need to reimagine how we manage historic and much-loved places. A range of solutions is needed, including repairs, investment and new and innovative interventions. In some cases reduced physical access and accepting the natural process of decay will need to be considered. Alex will expand on this.

- **New Tourism & Hospitality Industry Leadership Group**

In December 2019, the then Cabinet Secretary asked HES to join the then High-Level Tourism Working Group which was established by VisitScotland.

HES has a key role to play in the sector, have much to bring to its development and in delivering and enabling the national tourism strategy and other related strategies such as economic, net zero and the heritage tourism elements of OPiT.

A group is being re-established post covid and HES are considering how best they can contribute to this group as the membership of the group is being altered. This item is to discuss HES's continued input to the working group.

- **Consultation for a new Agricultural Bill**

SG is consulting on a paper that sets out how a new Agriculture Bill which will provide a new legal framework to support farmers and crofters to meet more of our food needs sustainably and to farm and croft with nature. [redacted under section 30(b)]

CHED colleagues advised they would accept a briefing from HES for our Minister which could then form the basis of a conversation within government to ensure that the historic environment is included within the Agriculture Bill. This agenda item is to make the Minister aware of this forthcoming briefing.

- **Church Closures**

The Church of Scotland is undertaking an ongoing review of its churches as part of its Presbytery Mission Plan Act. In 2019 the Church committed to reduce the number of Presbyteries, and review ownership of some of its land and buildings. This means some buildings will be closed, some congregations will be merged, and new forms of church will be encouraged. The Church of Scotland makes decisions about church closures based on the changing needs of its own membership and it is for the Church to decide which buildings to keep open and which to close.

Although the decisions about which churches to close and which to keep open are decisions for the churches themselves, and not for Scottish Ministers, please be assured that the Scottish Government Faith and Belief team continues to

engage regularly with church leaders to discuss these matters, and to provide advice and support where possible about funding opportunities for faith communities.

Historic Environment Scotland (HES), our lead public body for the historic environment, has been actively engaged with the Church of Scotland concerning the potential closures of some historic and listed churches.

Document 3

Minister For Culture, Europe And International Development and Minister with special responsibility for Refugees from Ukraine

Meeting Notes for Regular Catch Up With HES CEO, Alex Paterson on 29 September 2022

Attending

Minister for CEID

Alex Paterson HES

Alison Turnbull HES

[redacted under section 38(1)(b)] SFHE

[redacted under section 38(1)(b)] SFHE

Minister welcomed HES to the meeting and started discussion by asking HES for an update on the progress on **HLM** inspection programme noting they seemed to be ahead of schedule on this work.

AP confirmed they were ahead of schedule and in relatively good place with the work. AP highlighted improved visitor offers being delivered while inspections continued and flagged up positive community engagement he has undertaken particularly in Linlithgow and Dumbarton. Also commented that HES comms were good keeping public and stakeholders updated.

[redacted under section 30(b)]

AP advised that the inspection of Dumbarton Castle will take place in October and AP plans to meet stakeholders such as the Friends Group in November post inspections. [redacted under section 30(b)]

AP commented that regarding Linlithgow HES are looking at introducing some limited access to the site for the public particularly in the courtyard. The inspection of Linlithgow will be in the coming weeks.

OPiT: Minister commended SHEF as a successful event and that it demonstrated positive committed engagement from the sector.

AT advised the Minister that the recent OPiT review consultation workshops held throughout Scotland had over 500 attendees from over 200 organisations. [redacted under section 30(b)]

[redacted under section 30(b)]

Cost of Living: AP provided an update on the latest pay position and engagement with unions, following the challenges of matching the details in the very recent SG main pay settlement.

[redacted under section 30(b)]

PIC Strategy: AP advised that HES were preparing a paper on the PIC strategy, to consider how to manage the 300+ PIC's and whether we are able to manage them in same way as before.

[redacted under section 30(b)]

Action Point: AP suggested inviting the Minister to continue these discussions in person potentially meeting at Edinburgh Castle. **Completed HES invite sent 30 Sept.**

Minister closed meeting thanking HES attendees.