



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Economy, Energy and Fair Work Committee

Charlotte Wright,
Chief Executive,
Highlands and Islands Enterprise

The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
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Sent by email only

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31 August 2020

Dear Ms Wright,

Timetable for laying Highlands and Islands Enterprise 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts in Parliament – request for information

Thank you for your letter of 20 August regarding the timetable for laying the HIE's 2019/20 Annual Report and Accounts.

I note that these documents will not now be published until the end of September or early October. As HIE is due to appear before the Committee on 22 September, it would be helpful to have information before the Committee to inform its questions at the meeting.

I would ask you to provide the following information:

- Key performance measures (achieved and targets) – 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21 (to date and an indication of whether KPIS for 2020/21 have been modified due to the pandemic)
- Finances for 2018/19, 2019/20 (and estimates for current year 2020/21) broken by:
 - SG grant in aid
 - European funds
 - Income receipts
 - Expenditure (detail on key strands of expenditure)
- Last year's annual report highlighted:
 - Over commitment on RDEL and CDEL budget for 2019/20
 - Financial risks linked to: funicular railway at Cairngorm, potential backdated VAT liability with HMRC, loss of rental income arising from the sale of CfHS (Centre for Health Science), risk regarding the Space Hub Sutherland project due to its novelty and complexity, and loss of EU funding linked to Brexit.

It would be helpful to receive an update on these issues and any data that can be provided around spend.

Last year's report stated that:

'During 2018-19 HIE started to develop new approaches to measuring the value of our investments. These include the development of a model to capture the long-term benefits of investment in infrastructure and community assets, and more effectively monitor and evaluate inclusive growth. Understanding the relative impact of our interventions across our region and among under-represented groups, and their contribution to inclusive growth, is very important to our objectives and place based approach. The evidence base will be enhanced through further evaluations and, in the longer term, through improved data management systems.'

It would be helpful to receive an update on this aspect of the report.

Finally, it would be helpful if you could provide information on how HIE is providing opportunities to young people, especially in the non-Inverness HIE area. Also, how is HIE using its budget to support social enterprises in its area, given the impact of COVID-19 on social enterprises.

I would be grateful to receive a response to the above points within 2 weeks of the date of this letter.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gordon Lindhurst". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Gordon Lindhurst MSP
Convener