INQUIRY INTO THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND REPORT - THE GATHERING 2009

Please find below my response to your letter of 7 December 2010 in which you ask for information relating to the above inquiry.

I can confirm that EventScotland was verbally advised of the Scottish Government’s loan to The Gathering 2009 Ltd. on or around 18th May 2009 by Mrs Vicky Carlin of the Scottish Government. As this information was received verbally, we have no formal record of it. I can also confirm that there was no discussion about whether EventScotland should, or should not disclose information about the loan, as this was a matter between the Scottish Government and the Directors of The Gathering Ltd.

As stated in the Auditor General’s report, the role of the Steering Group was to provide public partners with a forum to assess the progress of The Gathering 2009 against the key performance indicators set by each funder.

EventScotland reviews as a matter of course its procedures in awarding grants to events and in the light of the Audit Scotland report into The Gathering, has further reviewed the governance arrangements around the support of major events like The Gathering 2009. Included in the review was the role of public partners in scrutinising the financial arrangements of the events they support, and additional robust measures have since been put in place to identify with partners any similar potential problems in the future. These have been agreed by both the EventScotland subcommittee as part of the VisitScotland Board and the VisitScotland Audit and Risk committee.

I hope this information is helpful to the Public Audit Committee’s inquiry and I look forward to reading the Committee’s report in due course.

LETTER FROM THE CONVENER OF THE PUBLIC AUDIT COMMITTEE TO PAUL BUSH OBE, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, EVENTSCOTLAND, 7 DECEMBER 2010.

INQUIRY INTO THE AUDITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND REPORT - THE GATHERING 2009

At its meeting on 1 December 2010, the Public Audit Committee took oral evidence from the First Minister and Michael Russell MSP, the Cabinet Secretary for Education on The Gathering 2009.

I attach the relevant weblink to the Official Report for that meeting:
http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/committees/publicAudit/or-10/pau10-2101.htm
At that meeting the Committee sought clarification from the First Minister and Cabinet Secretary as to who had been told about the Scottish Government loan of £180,000 to The Gathering 2009 Ltd. The First Minister and Cabinet Secretary confirmed that EventScotland had been informed of the loan at that time but that it had been the decision of EventScotland not to inform the Gathering 2009 Steering Group of the loan. The Steering Group was an advisory group established by the three principle public sector funders of the Gathering 2009 – namely The City of Edinburgh Council, VisitScotland and EventScotland together with the Directors of The Gathering 2009 Ltd – Lord Sempill and Jenny Gilmour.

I would be grateful if you could confirm when EventScotland were informed of the loan of £180,000 to The Gathering 2009 Ltd and by whom.

The Committee would welcome confirmation as to whether EventScotland were advised by the Scottish Government not to disclose to the Steering Group that a loan of £180,000 had been made to The Gathering 2009 Ltd and if so, by whom.

If Event Scotland was not advised in this way by the Scottish Government, then I would be grateful if you could provide further information as to who, in EventScotland, decided did not disclose to the Steering Group that a loan of £180,000 had been provided to The Gathering 2009 Ltd. It would helpful if you could provide the reasons for this decision.

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter no later than Wednesday 5 January 2011.

Our normal practice is to publish relevant evidence that is sent to us on our website and we may also include it in the hard copy of any committee report. Therefore, if you wish your evidence to be treated as confidential, or for your evidence to be published anonymously, please contact the Clerk to the Committee, before you submit your evidence. Further information on the publication of written submissions is contained in the enclosed policy on the treatment of written evidence by committees. Please take time to read this policy. We welcome written evidence in English, Gaelic or any other language.

Should you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact the Clerk to the Committee, Jane Williams on 0131 348 5390 or by email at pa.committee@scottish.parliament.uk.