

6 July 2026

4th Floor, Thistle House
91 Haymarket Terrace
Edinburgh
EH12 5HE

Michael Knox
By email: mike.knoxy@icloud.com

+44 (0) 131 510 0800

Dear Mr Knox

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (SCOTLAND) ACT REQUEST FOR INFORMATION DATED 18 JUNE 2026

I refer to your request for information dated 18 June 2026 ("Your Request") which stated:

"Dear Freedom of Information Officer,

I write to request the following information under the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

1. Expenditure

Please provide a full breakdown of all expenditure relating to the Host in Scotland programme from its inception to the date of this request, including but not limited to:

- Staff costs and time allocation
- External consultancy fees, including those paid to FarrPoint and TechRE
- Marketing and promotional activity
- Site identification and assessment costs
- Travel and hospitality
- Any expenditure incurred in promoting identified sites to international operators

2. Impact Assessment

Please provide copies of all internal or commissioned assessments conducted prior to, or during, the promotion of identified data centre sites, relating to:

- Cumulative energy demand on the Scottish grid
- Water abstraction and consumption requirements
- Environmental impact
- Cost to Scottish electricity consumers
- Grid reinforcement requirements and associated costs

3. Ministerial Direction

Please provide all correspondence between Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Ministers relating to the establishment, funding and objectives of the Host in Scotland programme.

4. Due Diligence

Please confirm whether any cumulative impact assessment was conducted before the 12 shortlisted sites were publicly identified and promoted to the international data centre market. If such an assessment was conducted, please provide a copy. If no such assessment was conducted, please confirm this in writing.

I would be grateful to receive this information within the statutory 20 working days.

If any information is withheld, please specify the exemption relied upon and confirm whether the public interest test has been applied.

Yours faithfully,

Michael Knox
Scottish Energy Compact
scottishenergycompact.co.uk

Information relevant to Your Request is as follows:

Host in Scotland was an initiative to represent and promote the interests of the Scottish datacentre and subsea sector industry. Host in Scotland was started in 2017 by Scottish Futures Trust and the initiative has not been active since 2023. Since the publication of the [Scottish Government's Green Datacentre and Vision and Action Plan](#) in March 2021, any datacentre work has been run by the Scottish Government and Scottish Enterprise.

In March 2021, the Scottish Futures Trust, together with Crown Estate Scotland and Scottish Enterprise published a report which included a list of sites across Scotland that were potentially suitable for datacentre locations as part of the HIS initiative. We attach the latest version of this report released (dated May 2023) to the covering email (which this letter is attached to).

The site selection report was written and produced for SFT by consultancy firm, [TechRe](#), and was developed in parallel with Scottish Government's Green Datacentres and Digital Connectivity Vision and Action Plan.

The aim of the commissioned report was to provide property developers, datacentre owners and investors with site information and market intelligence to accelerate investment in datacentres into Scotland.

The report identifies that datacentre operators and other interested parties would need to undertake their own site investigations and risk assessments to satisfy themselves of the suitability or otherwise, of a specific location. It is therefore expected that all sites contained in the report would be subject to further due diligence to verify conditions and current status.

In response to your specific questions:

1. Expenditure

Please provide a full breakdown of all expenditure relating to the Host in Scotland programme from its inception to the date of this request, including but not limited to:

- Staff costs and time allocation

In accordance with section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, SFT does not hold this information.

We can confirm that the Host in Scotland initiative formed the majority of a full-time role for an employee from mid-2017 to mid-2023. It was also supported by a part-time role for an employee from July 2021 to March 2023. Employees were at Associate Director grade for which the salary band in 2022/23 was £51,700 to £86,700.

- External consultancy fees, including those paid to FarrPoint and TechRE
Information is included within the attached excel spreadsheet entitled “FOI315 Consultancy Expenditure”.
- Marketing and promotional activity
There were 10 Host in Scotland in person events hosted in Edinburgh or Glasgow. Expenditure (excluding any event related consultancy already captured under the bullet point above) across these 10 events totalled £15,807.
- Site identification and assessment costs
In accordance with section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, SFT does not hold this information, however the costs incurred by external consultants relating to this are encompassed within the external consultancy fees breakdown shown in the attached excel spreadsheet entitled “FOI315 Consultancy Expenditure”.
- Travel and hospitality
SFT holds information relating to travel and accommodation for attendance at datacentre and international connectivity meetings and conferences in the UK and overseas. This includes attendance at conferences in Dublin, London, Amsterdam, Monaco and New Orleans. Expenses relating to travel and accommodation for attendance at meetings and conferences amount to £12,602. All other incidental expenses for Host in Scotland employees total £3,931.
- Any expenditure incurred in promoting identified sites to international operators
In accordance with section 17(1) of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, SFT does not hold this information.

SFT holds the information falling within the scope of your request from 1 April 2019 onwards. Searches undertaken for the purposes of this request have therefore been limited to records held from 1 April 2019 onwards, publicly available information and data held on consultancy expenditure to produce reports. This data is included in the attached excel spreadsheet “FOI315 Consultancy Expenditure”. Information created prior to this date is not held in an accessible format within our current finance system and is held in archive storage. Should you wish us to consider whether relevant information may be held within these archived records, please let us know and we will assess whether the cost of locating, retrieving and providing that information would exceed the upper cost limit set out in section 12 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

2. Impact Assessment

Please provide copies of all internal or commissioned assessments conducted prior to, or during, the promotion of identified data centre sites, relating to:

- Cumulative energy demand on the Scottish grid

- Water abstraction and consumption requirements
- Environmental impact
- Cost to Scottish electricity consumers
- Grid reinforcement requirements and associated costs

SFT confirms that no internal or commissioned assessments were conducted relating to the above.

3. Ministerial Direction

Please provide all correspondence between Scottish Futures Trust and Scottish Ministers relating to the establishment, funding and objectives of the Host in Scotland programme.

SFT confirms that there is no such correspondence between itself and Scottish Ministers.

4. Due Diligence

SFT confirms that no cumulative impact assessments were conducted before the 12 shortlisted sites were publicly identified and promoted to the international data centre market.

If you are unhappy with this response, you may ask that Scottish Futures Trust carries out an internal review by writing to the Chief Executive, Peter Reekie, at 4th Floor, Thistle House, 91 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh EH12 5HE. Your request should explain why you are dissatisfied with this response and should be made within 40 working days of receiving this response. The review will be undertaken by staff not involved with your original request.

If you are unhappy with the outcome of the internal review you have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner about our decision within 6 months of receiving the response to your request for a review. Please note that the Commissioner will generally only be able to investigate the matters raised in the request for review. You can contact the Commissioner at:

The Scottish Information Commissioner
Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road
St Andrews
Fife
KY16 9DS

E-mail: enquiries@itspublicknowledge.info

Telephone: 01334 464610

You may also wish to note that the Scottish Information Commissioner now has an online appeals service, which you can access at www.itspublicknowledge.info/Appeal.

Should you then wish to appeal against the Commissioner's decision, there is a right of appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

Yours sincerely,

P G Moseley

Paul Moseley, Senior Associate Director (Legal & Commercial)