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## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

1 July 2013

Sir Peter Housden KBC  
Permanent Secretary  
The Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

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Aberdeen City Council  
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Dear Sir Peter

### **Aberdeen Donside By-election**

At its meeting on Wednesday 26 June 2013 Aberdeen City Council considered and approved a notice of motion in the following terms:

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to Sir Peter Housden, Permanent Secretary to the Scottish Government demanding an investigation into the First Minister's professional conduct during the Aberdeen Donside by-election looking specifically at:-

- i) the First Minister's unannounced visit and lecture on 18 June 2013 to schoolchildren at Bramble Brae School without reference to Aberdeen City Council's Director of Education, Culture and Sport or to the Head Teacher of the said school, noting that the school is currently subject to statutory consultation regarding its future within the wider school estate; and
- ii) the First Minister's unannounced visit to Hazlehead Park on 17 June 2013, a park owned wholly by Aberdeen City Council, again without any reference to the City Council in the middle of a by-election; and whilst welcoming the announcement of a £100,000 Scottish Government donation to the Piper Alpha Memorial Trust, purdah rules seem to have been ignored.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to report back to the Council the response received from the Permanent Secretary, in order for Council to determine its position on this matter.

VALERIE WATTS  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**AGE POSITIVE**  
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Given the above, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss with you how I and my colleagues at the City Council would be able to assist you in progressing any investigation you undertake.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Valerie Watts.

**Valerie Watts**  
Chief Executive

Your Ref.  
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**ABERDEEN**  
CITY COUNCIL

30 July 2013

Sir Peter Housden KBC  
Permanent Secretary  
The Scottish Government

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Dear Sir Peter

**Aberdeen Donside By-election**

I write with reference to my letter of 1 July about the above and the First Minister's conduct in the City during the campaign.

Aberdeen City Council holds its first meeting after the summer recess on Wednesday 21 August and I expect to be asked then by elected members for an update on progress with the requested investigation. I would therefore be grateful if you could let me know how the matter is being progressed.

Yours sincerely



**Valerie Watts**  
Chief Executive

VALERIE WATTS  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE



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Permanent Secretary  
Sir Peter Housden KCB

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The Scottish  
Government  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba



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SCOTLAND

6 August 2013

*Valerie*

#### **Aberdeen Donside By-election**

Thank you for your letter of 1 July following the Council's instruction that you should write to me 'demanding an investigation into the First Minister's professional conduct during the Aberdeen Donside by-election'.

In your letter, you refer to the First Minister's visit to Bramble Brae School, and separately to the announcement of the Scottish Government's donation to the Piper Alpha Memorial Trust.

I have had sight of your letter to the First Minister on these questions, and of his reply of today's date sets out the facts and background on both issues.

As the First Minister indicated, the business of government continues during by-elections – there are no 'purdah' procedures per se. The donation to which you refer formed part of a suite of events and engagements in Aberdeen and elsewhere that ran through the period to the anniversary on 6 July and beyond. It was made to the Piper Alpha Memorial Trust, a body set up to preserve the memory of a tragedy impacting on victims and relatives from many nations and communities.

I hope these points will be of assistance to the Council

[Redacted signature block]