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3 July 2020

Dear Joan,

I hope you are well.

As the UK edges ever closer to fully withdrawing from the European Union, we are now less than six months away from the end of the EU Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF). Made up of both the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), these programmes have had a significant role in developing Scotland's economy for many years.

It is now some three years since the UK Government announced it would be replacing these programmes with the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Since then, as you know, there has been little information shared with us about the fund and limited engagement with Scotland on developing plans and policy.

In recent weeks this lack of engagement has been compounded by information being published in other places. This includes for example, further information on the skills elements and start date for the fund in an [article](#) on the Conservative Party Website and just yesterday a [report](#) in The Times regarding plans by the UK Government to develop a Union Implementation Committee which could oversee the roll out and admin of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

I am therefore writing to let you know that I have contacted Simon Clarke, Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local Government at Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to express my concerns about all of this and to assure you that despite the lack of information from UK Government, Scottish officials will continue policy development under the assumption that these funds will be fully available for the Scottish Government and our partners to utilise at our own discretion. Our approach will be based upon the Scottish Government's recent [consultation](#) exercise which allowed citizens, business and communities the opportunity to input their experience and expertise.

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Finally, given the impact of COVID-19 upon the Scottish economy and the significance of these funds to Scottish communities, a stable transition to the UKSPF is more critical than ever.

Yours sincerely

IVAN MCKEE

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