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**By e-mail and by post**

Mr Bob Jack  
Chief Executive  
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Dear Mr Jack

I refer to your email of 14 September and subsequent discussion in which you sought clarification of the Scottish Government's position on the issue of Kings Park.

Scottish Government agrees with the cross-party view of the House of Commons Scottish Affairs Committee that the historic land at Kings Park should be given back at zero consideration. Kings Park is an ancient possession of the Crown in Scotland and as such carries strong historical connections to the people of Scotland. Scottish Government believes that scarce public money should not be used to buy something which already belongs to the people of Scotland and is disappointed that Stirling Council has been forced into the position of having to consider using precious public resources to acquire land which already belongs to the people of Scotland. However, that said, it is, and has always been, entirely a decision for Stirling Council as to whether or not they enter into a deal with the Crown Estates to purchase the land.

On 3 May and following discussions with the Council, Ruth Parson's (the then Chief Executive of Historic Scotland) wrote to Gareth Baird, the Scottish Commissioner, to request a meeting at which she wanted to highlight the powerful associations Kings Park carries and to explore whether the land should be transferred at zero consideration as recommended by the Scottish Affairs Committee. We have not received a formal response to this letter although one has been repeatedly promised.

Since then, the UK Government has published its response to the Scottish Affairs Committee report. Whilst not endorsing the Scottish Affairs Committee's recommendation on Kings Park, the UK Government's response did make clear that the Crown Estate is willing to consider scope for decentralising ownership of assets and clarified its discretion in the commercial management of its assets, including making free transfers where there are "powerful associations attached to these ancient assets". The UK Government's response also said that The King's Park cannot be among ancient assets that could be transferred because "the Crown Estate recently agreed a market price for its sale to Stirling Council." Thus implying that the existence of the offer might be an impediment to discussion on free transfer.

Officials from the Crown Estates agreed recently to consider historic importance attached to the land further before responding formally to Historic Scotland.

The Scottish Government remains hopeful that once the Crown Estates Commissioners properly understand the importance attached to this ancient asset, they will wish to transfer it at zero consideration, as they did with some other 25 castles and cathedrals in 1999. That said, it is not possible to provide certainty as to the outcome as such a decision is a matter for the Crown Estates Commissioners and the UK Government to whom they are accountable. Should it be possible to secure the land at zero consideration, we will enter into discussions with the Council and other parties on how best to devolve the management of the land back to the local community.

I hope this letter provides the clarification you seek and I remain happy to discuss the matter further should you wish.

Yours sincerely



**ANDREW FLEMING**