

Local Authorities investment in arms

Background

In August 2015 Common Weal South Lanarkshire submitted a Freedom of Information request to all Local Authorities in Scotland about investment in companies that are involved in the design, manufacture or selling of arms. Investments were either made directly in companies involved in the arms industry or indirectly invested in local government pension schemes.

Eight Local Authorities confirmed they had investment in the arms trade. Some replied to say they had “no direct investment”. Further Freedom of Information requests have been submitted to the NHS, Police Scotland, Fire and Rescue Scotland and Strathclyde Pension Fund.

List of Councils and their responses

Council	Response
Aberdeen City	INVESTS IN ARMS
Aberdeenshire	Response states they have no direct or indirect investment in the arms trade
Angus	Responses state they have no arms investments
Argyle & Bute	Responses state they have no arms investments
Comhairle nan Eilean Sair	Responses state they have no arms investments
Clackmannanshire	Responses state they have no arms investments
Dumfries and Galloway	Responses state the majority of the Council Pension Fund equity investments are held in pooled vehicles. Of the portion in direct holdings none are in companies that design, manufacture or sell arms in the UK or worldwide.
Dundee	Responses state they have no arms investments
East Ayrshire	Responses state they have no arms investments
East Dumbartonshire	Responses state they have no arms investments
Edinburgh	INVESTS IN ARMS
East Lothian	Responses state they have no arms investments
East Renfrewshire	Responses state they have no arms investments
Falkirk	INVESTS IN ARMS
Fife	INVESTS IN ARMS
Glasgow	INVESTS IN ARMS
Inverclyde	Response states they have no arms investments. The Council state they participate in the Strathclyde Pension Fund who should be contacted for details of the investments they hold.
Midlothian	Responses state they have no arms investment
Moray	INVESTMENT IN ARMS

	Initially stated they had no “direct” investment but on requesting what “indirect” investments the council had they replied: “We have had replies relating to four funds. One states that they have no exposure to companies in the defences industry. One states that they do not invest directly in companies designing, manufacturing or selling arms but that the investment trust and other vehicles in which they invest may do so from time to time. One invests in Rolls Royce, which makes engines for civil and military aerospace and marine vessels. The fourth fund had detailed 2.15% of its holdings as being with companies which have some connection with the defence industry but for the main part their connection is fairly minor. 0.17% of the current portfolio in Senior plc, which is classed as aerospace and defence”. This does leave the question, which other councils have “indirect” investments that they have not declared?
North Ayrshires	Responses state they have no arms investments
North Lanarkshire	Responses state they have no arms investments
Orkney	INVESTMENT IN ARMS
Perth & Kinross	Responses state they have no arms investments
Renfrewshire	Responses state they have no arms investments
Scottish Borders	INVESTMENT IN ARMS
Shetland Islands	Responses state they have no investments in arms
South Ayrshire	Responses state they have no investments in arms.
South Lanarkshire	Responses state they have no investments in arms
Stirling	Has “no knowledge” of investment in arms.
West Dumbartonshire	Responses state they have no investment in arms.
West Lothian	Responses states they have no investment in arms.

Action you can take

If you feel moved you can write to your local councillor and make your feelings known. Each local council will have a website where you can find the contact details of your councillor or councillors. Alternatively the site [WriteToThem](#) will help you identify and write to your local councillors.

Pro forma

The Parliamentary Liaison Function Group has produced two pro-forma communication below to assist those looking to formulate a response. It is by no means the only way to express your thoughts or feelings, but is intended as a jumping off point for those who feel they may want one.

Dear Xxxxxx

I live in ward xxxxxx of xxxxx Local Authority. I am writing to you as a Quaker, to you as a representative of this ward. Quakers are working to end the arms trade, which has a devastating impact on peace, human rights and security across the world. Large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.

I am concerned to hear from Common Weal South Lanarkshire that xxxxx is investing in the arms trade.

I believe that the trade in arms is morally wrong and a major cause of suffering across the world. Choices made about money and its investment have the power to create positive change in the world, and divestment from the arms trade is one means by which as a community we can effect positive, powerful change.

I would be grateful if you could raise this matter with xxxxx and keep me informed of your progress.

In friendship

Xxxxxxx

Dear XXXX

I live in ward xxxxxx of xxxxx Local Authority. I am writing to you as a Quaker, to you as a representative of this ward. Quakers are working to end the arms trade, which has a devastating impact on peace, human rights and security across the world. Large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to international problems.

Common Weal South Lanarkshire recently submitted a Freedom of Information Request on investment in the arms trades. Xxxxxx said it had no "direct investments" in the arms trade.

I believe that the trade in arms is morally wrong and a major cause of suffering across the world. Choices made about money and its investment have the power to create positive change in the world, and divestment from the arms trade is one means by which as a community we can effect positive, powerful change.

I would be interested to know if xxxxxx has indirect investment in the arms trades, if so I would like the opportunity to communicate further with you on the issue of divestment.

In friendship

Xxxxxxx