

Your Ref:

Our Ref:

Date: 9 June 2017

**Dumfries and Galloway Council**

Council Offices

English Street

DUMFRIES DG1 2DD

James S Dornan MSP  
Convenor, Education & Skills Committee  
T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
EDINBURGH  
EH99 1SP

Any enquiries please contact

**Colin Grant**

Dear Mr Dornan,

### RESPONSE TO LETTER 15<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2017

Thank you for your letter dated 15 May 2017 regarding the short inquiry the Education and Skills Committee is undertaking on school buildings across Scotland.

The response with regards to the School Estate within Dumfries and Galloway is as follows:

#### 1. *Inspection and remedial work of the current estate since January 2016*

*To what extent:*

- *has the school estate been inspected;*

Response: There has been a review across the whole school estate, with a focus on the PPP schools as a result of the issues that have arisen in Edinburgh:

- Apr/May-16: Non-intrusive surveys by a structural engineer were carried out - no issues were identified other than isolated settlement cracks (monitors installed confirmed that movement had stopped)
- Apr-16 to Jan-17: Full surveys of fire-stopping were carried out. A number of minor issues were identified which have now been rectified (e.g. fire door adjustments, kite marks on fire rated glass, isolated damage repairs).
- Apr-17: Intrusive surveys were undertaken at sample school sites by independent structural engineers who formally reported concluding that construction had been "*completed correctly, in line with current codes of practice and recommended guidance*"
- Across the wider school estate a desktop exercise by property professionals has been undertaken to define that part of the estate which is of relevant construction and age. This has allowed a more focussed review of key sites.

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- *have faults been identified;*

Response:

- with respect to the PPP school estate any minor issues identified (as described above) have been rectified;
- Across the wider school estate there is an ongoing programme of investment of prioritised work and we will address any relevant items that are discovered. No specific issues have yet been identified which required immediate rectification

## 2. Quality Assurance Practices

- *How quality assurance is undertaken on current capital projects on the school estate;*

Response:

- Current strategic capital projects are procured through the hub southwest framework which has a detailed approach to quality assurance through their inspection requirements and requirements from the Tier 1 partner. This is further tested and reviewed through the appointment of the Independent Tester. Further to this Dumfries and Galloway have an allocated Project Manager who monitors the works on site and adherence to processes which is supported by two Clerk of Works to review building and mechanical and electrical aspects.
- Across the wider capital programme, management of the delivery of school estate projects is led by building professional staff within the Council's Property and Architectural Services team, and works are monitored on site by a Clerk of Works. There is also a Project Manager allocated from the client (Education) Service. The processes followed are assured to ISO9001:2015, are independently certified by a UKAS-accredited body and cover architectural design services, preparation of contract documentation and site inspection of construction projects ranging from new build schemes to refurbishments and extensions, and installation or upgrading of mechanical and electrical services.
- *whether the quality assurance of school capital projects has been reassessed since 2016;*

Response:

- The current investment programme through Schools for the Future which commenced in 2013 undertook to deliver a revised and increased approach to quality assurance, through the hub framework and also as client being proactive in assuring that the contracts are being delivered to the requirements as set out.
- Property and Architectural Services' ISO9001:2015 accreditation was reassessed and recertified in February 2017, the process having been completely reviewed and updated in 2016 to meet the 2015 standard (previous accreditation having been to the 2008 standard)

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- *whether there are, or were, particular issues depending on the funding model and the lessons to be learned?*

Response:

- The approach and processes for quality assurance should be consistent regardless of funding model and this is the approach this Authority takes. There may have been an expectation that more complicated forms of contract may disengage clients from a proactive role, but we are clear that this should not be the case.
- The process of delivering projects and programmes always allows for review and improvement and there are regular reviews to continuously improve processes.

Please find attached a copy of the response to the recent FOI from the BBC for your information.

If you have any queries regarding the response from Dumfries and Galloway, please do not hesitate to contact Claire Renton, Strategic Lead of Physical Learning Environments.

Yours sincerely



Colin Grant  
Director Children, Young People and Lifelong Learning

Q1. Please could you give details of work done to PPP, NPD or design and build schools in the past 18 months to the present day involving wall ties, header ties (wall head restraints), bed joint reinforcement or other significant structural issues? Please include what work was done on what dates.

**R1. There has been no “work done” to these schools in the last 18 months**

Q2. Please outline any planned work to be done to PPP, NPD or design and build schools involving wall ties, header ties, bed joint reinforcement or other significant structural issues. Please include what kind of work is planned and when.

**R2. The “*Report of the Independent Inquiry into the Construction of Edinburgh Schools*” was only published this month and this is currently being assessed.**

**Specifically in relation to PPP Schools, Intrusive surveys are scheduled for Apr - 17**

Q3. Please list any work carried out in schools on fire-stopping over the past two years or planned in the future, including dates.

**R3. For PPP schools, *active* fire protections systems are subject to regular planned preventative maintenance ensuring that everything is in place and operating as intended. With regard to *passive* fire protection, a proactive audit was carried out during 2016 in response to reported issues identified with passive fire stopping in an English NHS project. A number of minor issues were identified and these have been addressed.**

Q4. What surveys have you done on schools since the start of 2016? Please specify if these were intrusive surveys or not.

**R4. For PPP schools, visual (non-intrusive) surveys took place over April / May 2016. Precautionary intrusive surveys are scheduled for Apr-17.**

Q5. Please specify if any of these works had any cost implications for the Council.

**R5. The Council has engaged independent structural engineers for intrusive surveys in PPP schools starting in Apr-17 and will meet the cost of this.**