

Our Ref: JM/LJ
Your Ref:
Contact: Mr James McKinstry
Date: 12 June 2017



James Dornan MSP
Convener
Education & Skills Committee
T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Dornan

Education & Skills Committee – School Buildings across Scotland

With reference to your correspondence of 15 May 2017.

Following the events in Edinburgh in 2016, North Lanarkshire Council, took the decision to carry out visual inspections of the school estate. These were initially prioritised to include recent new build schools irrespective of the procurement route. As an authority we have procured new schools through use of PPP and more recently via our own design build framework, Schools & Centres 21.

Visual inspections were undertaken by the PSV for the 17No PPP Schools and reassurance reports received. The 10No schools procured through our local authority framework were inspected using an in-house team of an architect and structural engineer. The inspections were completed in April 2016 and no faults were identified. On completion, the authority extended the remit to include school extensions completed within the preceding 10 years. These projects were all traditionally procured and designed and overseen by in-house staff. No faults in respect to those found in Edinburgh were detected however, some minor remedial works were required to internal walls to one school.

Following publication of the Cole report, the authority have reviewed our approach and have now initiated an exercise to undertake intrusive inspections across our new build school estate.

To assist with this, the authority have appointed a firm of independent structural engineer consultants to co-ordinate, instruct on the areas of investigation and ultimately produce a report on the findings.

The contractors who undertook the original construction are fully co-operating with us and are providing assistance at no cost to the authority.

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Infrastructure

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The inspections are being approached through desktop study, visual inspections, scope determination and finally intrusive inspections. As determined by the Inquiry it is envisaged that the intrusive inspection will require areas of masonry to be removed and not rely only on a borescope survey. The inspection and desktop work commenced in May and completion of the intrusive surveys is anticipated by September 2017.

In respect to fire stopping due to the magnitude of the schools and wider estate the authority are currently considering our approach. However, where new works are anticipated surveys now include a review of the fire stopping as routine and if required, including any remedial works within the scope of the contract.

In respect to quality assurance practices on capital projects, the authority have for many years utilised Clerks of Works.

For the majority of our projects these are in-house staff who are members of The Institute of Clerk of Works & Construction Inspectorate.

Oversight of the contracts is also supplemented by experienced in-house staff in terms of technical and commercial compliance.

Where the contracts are of the DBFM type through Hub South West the Authority makes use of the Independent Tester in addition to the foregoing practice.

The PPP funding model precluded the use of in-house Clerks of Works however the delivery team made use of technical advisors and the Independent Tester to ensure a high quality of work was achieved.

Since the completion of the PPP programme the authority have incorporated within new school contracts the requirement that Clerk of Works are permitted free access to the site in order to undertake inspection duties. This practice aligns with the authorities standards with all capital works.

I trust the committee find the foregoing useful but if further clarification or information is required please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mr James McKinstry
Head of Corporate Property, Procurement & Resource Solutions