

## Chief Executive

**Eileen Howat**

County Buildings, Wellington Square, Ayr KA7 1DR

LP-32 AYR

Tel: 01292 612612

Email: [eileen.howat@south-ayrshire.gov.uk](mailto:eileen.howat@south-ayrshire.gov.uk)

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If phoning or calling ask for Eileen Howat



Mr James Dornan MSP  
Convenor of Education & Skills Committee  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Dear Mr Dornan

### **Inquiry Into School Buildings Across Scotland**

I acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 15 May 2017. In response to your request I would like to take the opportunity to provide an overview of the actions that South Ayrshire Council has taken in response to the publication of the Cole Report.

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

##### **a) PPP Schools**

6 schools completed by Carillion between 2007 and 2009, namely Belmont Academy, Prestwick Academy, Kyle Academy annexe, Alloway Primary, Barassie Primary, and Monkton Primary. The SPV contracted with is Education for Ayrshire (e4a).

Subsequent to the event in Edinburgh the contractor was asked to provide assurances that the buildings included in the contract were safe to occupy. The contractor arranged to carry out a visual inspection of the buildings through their FM contractor. In addition to this the construction company also carried out a visual inspection of the buildings and confirmed in writing the details of their management system. This system includes the employment of specialist masonry contractors through their supply chain and direct employment of masonry advisers. The construction contractor has confirmed their advisers were onsite during the build period.

Both inspections confirmed that there were no areas of concern. Some minor cracks were reported in the render and blockwork by the FM contractor however these had been highlighted previously in the annual condition survey and were programmed for repair during the summer period.

##### **b) Remainder of School Estate**

In relation to the other buildings managed by the Council, condition surveys of the school estate had recently been undertaken. Two schools were found to have cracks in the external walls however neither related to the build quality and the stability of the brick. One is now repaired and the other is being monitored although it is not considered to be of serious concern.

Condition surveys for all other buildings are being carried out this year however the Council has a team of property officers and technicians who regularly visit the sites and discuss property issues with staff on site and there are no highlighted issues at any of the these properties.

## 2. Quality Assurance Practices

### a) Major Capital Projects delivered using Hub model

South Ayrshire Council has a number of projects at various stages of development with Hub South West:

Dailly Primary School – completed March 2017  
Tarbolton Primary School – completed Mar 2017  
Carrick Leisure Centre – completed March 2017  
Ayr Academy – complete Aug 2017  
Marr College – complete Oct 2017

South Ayrshire Council is currently working with the Scottish Futures Trust and Hub South West on a formal response to the Cole Report. Following the issue of the report, a meeting was held with representatives of all Hub South West Tier 1 Construction Partners. This meeting was aimed at discussing the outcomes of the report and forming a combined response to the same.

The key message to be taken from the review is that no fundamental changes are required to be made to the Hub South West Quality Management processes. There have been some changes proposed to improve communications in relation to their Quality Systems to communicate what already happens to the Participants and multiple recommendations recorded in this forum have been considered for integration into their practices to enhance what they already do. Hub South West is in the process of agreeing these changes with their Construction Partners.

Hub South West has provided a summary of the key actions in their approach to quality management:

- i. We would highlight that we consider there is a significant difference between Quality Assurance and Quality Control. Quality Assurance is a process and system set at a company level. Quality Control is the proper implementation of that process, at a site level, which maintains the required standards and outcomes. The resources and responsibilities allocated as well as the environment created for quality control on site is essential as this generates the correct attitudes, behaviours and culture. We consider that our approach to Quality Management addresses these aspects. Our Construction Partners provide a full Quality Management Plan for all projects that identifies how they will adequately resource, supervise and control all aspects of quality. This is a working document that is "live" throughout the duration of all projects from Stage 2 into construction and beyond into the handover and soft landings process.
- ii. All Construction Partners are assessed on Quality Management and competency prior to being put on our TSN.
- iii. In turn our Construction Partners undertake a similar assessment of any supply chain before they are appointed.
- iv. We are aware of the obligations/ deliverables of Clause 20 Quality Assurance (DBDA/ DBFM).
- v. During the development process every effort is made to design out any risks to quality. Specifically, this includes the avoidance of "traditional" cavity walls, replaced with a structural framing system inner leaf, unless this is unavoidable. If these are required, the controls to be put in place will be agreed, and recorded on our Construction partners Quality Plan.

- vi. The standard Hub South West contractor's progress report requires our Construction Partners to report on Quality Assurance on a monthly basis. This involves the status of any NCR's, Quality Visits in the period and provides an update of the Construction Partners Quality Assurance audit process.
  - vii. Hub South West record on the project progress meeting minutes the date of the last Construction Partner QA audit, the date of the next audit and output of the Audit.
  - viii. All Construction Partner QA audit reports are saved in the EDMS Quality folder and are available for all consortia parties to review at any time. These will also be discussed in the body of the project progress meetings.
  - ix. In addition to the above, we hold a countdown meeting 4 months prior to handover where the snagging intent, methodology and building zoning for inspection is discussed. These are then held on a regular basis as completion is reached, ensuring that all required compliance and quality checks are carried out and closed off. Sample rooms and physical mock-ups are also utilised, where appropriate, to agree quality standards and ensure any user issues can be identified and addressed.
- b) South Ayrshire Council has reviewed our own in house quality management procedures to establish if there are any actions that can be taken forward. A key one of these is the potential introduction of a Clerk of Works role on our major capital D&B projects. This is currently implemented on our smaller projects but we see the merit in introducing this across the board. It is understood that this is a common view from other participants in the South West Hub.
- c) It is our experience that there seems to be a lot more scrutiny of the construction phase on our DBFM projects in comparison to the DBDA. This is as a result of funder scrutiny with the introduction of Funder TA and an independent tester role and there is perhaps an opportunity to harmonise this between DBFM and DBDA projects.

I hope that this provides an adequate response to your letter, but please advise however if I can be of any further assistance.

Yours sincerely

**Eileen Howat**  
**Chief Executive**