



Oifig an Ard-Rúnaí
An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna



Office of the Secretary General
Department of Education and Skills

Ms Margaret Falsey
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

17th December 2014

Our Ref: S1411555

Dear Ms Falsey

I refer to your letter dated November 7th 2014 regarding the school building project for Gaelscoil an Ghoirt Álainn.

The following are the details of the costs associated with the project, with a breakdown of the figures involved as requested, *i.e.* rent, design fees.

The following is breakdown of costs associated with the project:

(i) Fees associated with taking the project through design and planning stage

Design team fees totalling €209,980 comprised as follows:

Architect fees	€109,248
Civil Structural Engineer fees	€34,375
Mechanical & Electrical Engineer fees	€40,511
Quantity Surveyor fees	€25,845
TOTAL	€209,980

As outlined in correspondence dated 22 October 2014, these are standard costs which would be incurred in the course of any building project in order to bring the project through the relevant design stage. As the Committee will be aware, the project was subject to several appeals throughout the planning process, and the fact that the appeals were upheld by An Bord Pleanála is indicative of the fact that the planning applications in themselves were not flawed. The design team fees are standard fees incurred in progressing a project through the design process.

In addition to the above, a total of €32,946 was spent on site surveys and fees related to planning appeals. These fees were deemed reasonable in the circumstances given that objections were raised in the course of the statutory planning process.

(ii) Fees associated with temporary accommodation

Land rental

The total grant aid provided by the Department for site rental from April 1999 to end September 2014 is **€386,471**.

This amount is broken down as follows:

1999 to 2001 £27,787.50 (Irish Punts) equivalent to €35,283 (€1= 0.787564 Punts)

2002 to Sept 2014 €351,188

The initial annual rent was £13,000 (punts, equivalent to €16,507) in 1999. In July 2004, the rent increased to €32,000 per annum and has remained at that rate since then. A local contribution applied up to 2010, prior to this date the Department grant aided the rent at 95% (*i.e.* €30,400 from 2004 to 2010 and €15,681 prior to this).

Prefab costs

a	Prefab rental from 1999 to 2001 (£140,713.97 Punts)	€178,670
	Prefab rental from 2002 to 2009	€902,567
b	Prefabs purchased outright in 2009	€239,825
c	Additional prefab purchased in 2011 and installation works to provide additional accommodation	€149,254
d	Additional prefab purchased in 2013 and installation works to provide additional accommodation	€116,073
	TOTAL	€1,586,389

As outlined, the rental fees were necessary to provide for temporary accommodation pending delivery of the permanent school building. The school has remained in temporary accommodation for considerably longer than the Department would have liked or indeed expected. Given that the school requires temporary accommodation, the requirement for land rental and additional prefab accommodation (or alternatively building rental) would continue irrespective of the location of the school. Therefore the amounts paid were, and continue to be, deemed necessary until such time as a permanent building is developed.

With regard to your request for a note on the history of the Tank Field, the land in question is in the ownership of Cork City Council and a portion of the Tank Field is currently leased by Cork City Council to Brian Dillon's GAA Hurling and Football Club. We are aware that there are 2 leases in place, one dating from 1979 and a second dating from 1990, each for 99 years at nominal rent of £200 (punts) and £156 (punts) annually. Subject to the agreement of Cork

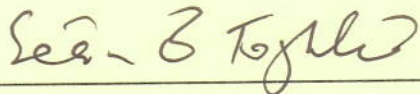
City Council, we can arrange to forward copies of the leasing arrangements if the Committee would find that helpful.

The history of the site ownership is not a matter for this Department.

With regard to the grant aid paid annually by this Department to the school authority for rental purposes for temporary accommodation, the subsequent use by the ultimate recipients of such funds is not a matter in which this Department has any role. The Department does not have a copy of the lease agreement between the school and the GAA club. Department records show that the initial agreement between the school and the GAA club was for annual rental of £13,000 (punts) in 1999 with provision for annual rent review. The current rent payable by the school to the GAA club is €32,000 per annum. The increase was sanctioned in 2004 by the Department and has remained unchanged since then.

I trust that this response clarifies the situation in relation to the payments made to date.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Seán Ó Foghlú", positioned above a horizontal line.

Seán Ó Foghlú
Secretary General