



Catherine Smyth
Committee Secretariat
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

By email: PAC@oireachtas.ie

14 February 2024

Ref: S1560 PAC33

Dear Ms Smyth,

The large scale capital project at the school referred to is assigned to the Department's ADAPT (Accelerated Delivery of Architectural Planning and Tendering) programme.

Prior to the commencement of the main contract, necessary enabling works under the contract are progressing on site for a number of months. The enabling works contractor completed the ground works for the ESB ducting in October 2023, and remaining works for the diversion of the ESB overhead wires will be co-ordinated by ESB Networks Ireland and the Design Team for the school project.

There are two individual ESB line installation works to be completed at the new site. The first was completed in December 2023. In relation to the second line, the HSE issued the signed and sealed SWA1 (deed of transfer easement for underground cables) to the ESB on 9th January 2024. Following an update received on 31st January from the Design Team, the ESB have outages provisionally booked for the 15th and 16th of February to carry out this diversion.

On completion of the ESB works, the enabling works contractor will have approximately 1 week's work remaining to make the site safe and to decant from the site to enable the main contractor to commence.

The Invitation to Tender for this school project issued in April 2023 and the tenders to build the new school were received in late September 2023. Recent experience has shown that

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a Tender stage can take between 8-12 months from the initial Invitation to Tender, subject to no issues arising.

The Tender Report was received from the Kolbe Board of Management and the Design Team in early November 2023 and the Department's review is currently being finalised. We anticipate issuing the Letter of Intent imminently to the successful contractor which, should the contractor accept, will be followed by a Letter of Acceptance. Only when the Letter of Acceptance has issued is there a contract in place and all the contract terms and conditions apply.

In this particular instance, it will not be possible to issue the Letter of Acceptance until the enabling works contract is completed, and unencumbered possession of the site is available to the incoming contractor for the new school building.

Since 2020, the Department of Education has invested in the region of €4.3 billion in schools throughout the country, including the completion of over 800 school building projects and with projects to a value of approximately €1.2 billion currently under construction.

This is adding capacity and upgrading school facilities across the country for the almost one million students and over 100,000 staff that learn and work in our schools every day.

The Department has a strong track record of delivery of school building projects and this was achieved again in 2023 notwithstanding the wider construction sector environment of high inflation, labour shortages and supply chain issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bernie', with a stylized flourish extending from the end.

Bernie McNally
Secretary General