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William Humphrey, Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Via Email: Committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear William

Public Accounts Committee Evidence Session – Request for follow-up information

Many thanks for your letter of 29 July 2020 requesting follow-up information following my attendance at the Public Accounts Committee on 8 July 2020.

Please find my response below to provide the list of information requested:

1. With reference to the 42% estimated overrun in costs, a breakdown of the costs in relation to the £10 million already incurred to date?

May I clarify, that when Mr Beggs referred to a "... 42% overrun in costs", this related to the £110 million that is the current project cost estimate, relative to the £77.5 million approved project budget. A cost overrun of this quantum has not been incurred, as the figure of £110 million that was quoted remains an estimate and has not been expended.

I explained during the Evidence Session that the cost to the public purse was in the region of £10.5 million up to March 2020. I can confirm the precise figure to be £10,512,253. A breakdown of this cost is provided at Annex 1.

2. How much of this £10 million was incurred by the public purse and how much by the GAA?

The two components of the total Casement Project expenditure are as follows:

Ring-fenced Executive Expenditure by the Department	£10,512,253
UCGAA Expenditure	£449,513
Total	£10,961,766

3. In relation to the capital oversight programme, details of the Department's capital underspend and the reasons for it?

The DfC Capital budget for the Financial Year 2020-21 was £195.7million. An underspend of £36.7 million (18.8%) was reported at provisional outturn in mid-May 2020. Please note that this figure is subject to audit and it is possible that it may change.

£31m of the capital underspend arose within the Departments New Build Housing programme and is due to a number of COVID-19 related issues such as:

- The early closing of Land Registry which prevented solicitors to be certain of good title before land transfers;
- The decision by some Councils to cancel planning committees leaving schemes without planning; and
- Advice from the Law Society for members not to complete new contracts and developers not being prepared to commence new building projects.

A further £1.4m of an underspend arose in a number of Public Realm Projects where the Contractor was off-site due to Covid-19 lockdown. These include:

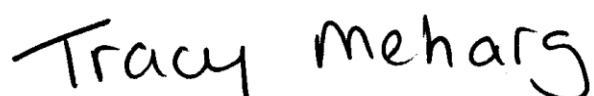
- St Patricks Barracks Development (£156k);
- Regional Towns projects: (Lower Hill Street Newry- £270k, Downpatrick Irish Street - £66k, Fountain Street Revitalisation - £51k, Dromore Outer Square - £108k, Armagh Shutter Scheme - £62k); and
- A number of Education Authority capital schemes which include a range of works such as play equipment, soft surfaces, soft landscaping and boundary treatments. The works improve the aesthetics of areas on the frontage of roads and therefore meet the criteria for Public Realm and Environmental Improvement Works.

4. A copy of the current Casement Park Project drawings.

There are 121 'plans, maps and drawings' on the Planning Portal supporting the current Casement Park planning application. I was concerned that choosing which Planning Drawings to share with the Committee could risk omitting some information which members may find useful. On the other hand, having tested the option of attaching voluminous amounts of digital copies of drawings to this reply, it proved not feasible and impractical. Instead, all of the relevant, up to date planning drawings are contained within the NI Planning portal, which is convenient to access. To assist this access, I have summarised instructions (Annex 2) on how all the Casement Park design drawings on the NI Planning Portal can be accessed online.

I trust that this reply provides the information you seek to your satisfaction. If you have any queries or follow-up requests, I will be happy to assist.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy Meharg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

**TRACY MEHARG
PERMANENT SECRETARY**

Cc: Treasury Officer of Accounts

Annex 1

Breakdown of the Casement Park Project Grant Award from DfC

ITEM	Grant Award from DfC
Integrated Supply Team (IST) /Main Contractor	£2,022,507
UCGAA Salaries	£1,558,488
Legal Fees	£907,237
Surveys	£117,847
DOE / BCC Planning	£171,784
Admin Costs	£208,158
Integrated Consultant Team (ICT) Contract	£5,526,232
TOTAL	£10,512,253

Annex 2

Instructions on Accessing the Casement Park Planning Application Drawings on the NI Planning Portal

Step 1

Main NI Planning Portal page:

<http://epicpublic.planningni.gov.uk/publicaccess/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=externalDocuments&keyVal=OMEBLQSV30000>

Step 2

Navigation of the portal is then required as follows:

- Select: “view associated documents”

Step 3

- Select: PLANS, MAPS AND DRAWINGS

Step 4

- Scroll down the page
- View individual drawings by clicking on the “view” command for any individual drawing (taking care to avoid the “measure” command, which may not open a drawing, depending on your Adobe software)

Step 5

- Individual drawings may be saved locally using the icon at the top right of the screen