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Connétable Mike Jackson  
Chairman Environment, Housing and Infrastructure Scrutiny Panel

**Sent by email only**

09 October 2020

Dear Connétable,

**Bridging Island Plan Scrutiny Review – Written Questions**

Thank you for writing to me on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020, please see the below answers to your questions:

**1. What are your views regarding the proposal for a shorter-term Bridging Island Plan (2022-2024) in relation to your remit for Education? What opportunities and/or challenges could this create?**

CYPES has a comprehensive capital programme to deliver over the next four years. The launch of the Education Reform Programme following the release of the Government Plan will see a strong policy focus identifying future structures for the system as a whole. This policy work will be carried out over the next 2-3 years and it is expected there will be capital / planning implication. Therefore, the additional time to lead into the next long-term island plan will be helpful in this regard.

**2. Considering that the shorter 3-year Plan would ‘decouple’ itself from longer term policies, what impact, negative and positive, might this have in relation to your remit for Education?**

If the key areas of concern to me are addressed in the 3 year plan (which relate to the current CYPES capital programme – e.g. building new schools, providing green space for school children) then the introduction of a shorter term plan does not seem to present any major barriers to the ambitions of the Minister.

**3. Are there any notable challenges in respect of planning and development for education purposes that could potentially be addressed within the shorter term?**

As stated CYPES has a comprehensive capital programme between 2021-24. There will be a number of planning requests to be made during this period. For more information, please refer to the Government Plan.

**4. Regarding the future development of sites for education, for example, the development of larger schools to replace smaller schools which have limited space and facilities, what considerations have been made?**

I am currently developing my policy in relation to school mergers / larger schools etc. This will form part of the policy work to be undertaken within the Education Reform Programme, as stated above.

There is also work being undertaken on an infrastructure capacity study for the island, within which, understanding our future education and community needs is a critical component.

This work is being led by SPPP and will help to inform the future development priorities highlighted in the Island Plan. Officers from CYPES have been directly contributing to the development of this work, which in turn, is helping us to ensure the strategic alignment of the Island Plan with the future priorities for the education estate.

**5. What is your view on incorporating further community facilities as part of future school developments or on the repurposing of schools that are no longer suitable or are under subscribed?**

Providing local community facilities for children, young people, their parents and their carers is an important part of ensuring the right services are provided at the right time. Where possible future developments should seek to benefit the wider community as much as possible. I am a member of the Sports Facilities Strategy Policy Development Board lead by Senator Pallet. The shared use of facilities for school and community benefit is already established and I recognise the need to maximise the use of public assets.

**6. What is the safeguarding guidance with regards to a school making use of public facilities, for example, nearby public playing fields, if the school does not have its own adequate facilities?**

The schools management teams and educational visits coordinator (EVC) follow the department trips and visits policy and procedures.

<https://www.gov.ie/SiteCollectionDocuments/Education/P%20Educational%20Visits%20Policy%2020181025%20NJ.pdf>

All on/off Island trips and visits are sent to the department for review and sign off before the required paper work is completed e.g. activity type, transport, consent forms, contact details and risk assessments. At all times the safeguarding and safety of our students is the number one priority.

I am confident that the Minister for the Environment and his team will continue to keep me briefed, as they have done so well so far. I am also aware of his officers engagement with the Children's Commissioner on understanding children rights impact of the Island Plan, which is another example of the comprehensive engagement taking place.

Yours sincerely,



Senator Tracey Vallois  
Minister for Education

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