**DCS and DIO Town Hall Meeting Minutes and Q&A Tuesday 16 January 2024**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Present** Rebecca Robinson (RR) – Head TeacherBev Martin (BM) – Head of DCSJerry Denton (JD) - DCS Robin Hall (RH) - DIOAdele Dhese-Biggs (ADB) - DIODebbie Taylor (DT) – DCS**SGC**Brian Lockhart (BL) – Vice ChairGareth Wiggin (GW) – Infrastructure/ParentDuncan Ayres (DA) – Finance/ParentSebastian Nixon (SN) - Safeguarding | **In Attendance**Collette Coates (CC) – SBM Helen Botterill (HB) – Parent Alison Lockhart (AL) – OfficeSam Connell (SC) – Parent Katie Brown (KB) – Parent Katie Wiggin (KW) – Parent Claire Smith (CS) – Parent Laura Hastings (LH) – Parent Thereza Blythe (TB) – Parent Gemma Holgate (GH) – Parent Angela Mattin (AM) – ParentFiona Easton (FE) – ParentRyan Easton (RE) – ParentVictoria Cairns (VC) – ParentLee Connell (LC) – ParentMatt Brown (MB) – ParentAngela Howourth (AH) – ParentNick Howourth (NH) – Parent | Lisa Meade (LM) – ParentTizzy Gianfredi (TG) – ParentAndrew Johnson (AJ) – ParentBen Jewson (BJ) – ParentJo Evans (JE) – ParentLaura Bredenkamp (LB) – ParentIan Pallace (IP) – ParentLaura Pallace (LP) – ParentJo Dodds (JD) – ParentAnu Ale (AA) – ParentShewta Gurung (SG) – ParentNeelam Gurung (NG) – ParentColonel TonkinsPaul Hammond (PH) – SNRSue Newell (SN) – HISOChris Sweeney (CS) – Head of LocationDave Norfield (DN) – Padre |  |
| **1** | RH opened the meeting by running through a presentation on the interim solution for the building issues at BFS Naples. The presentation is available to view on [School Building - British Forces School Naples (bfsnaples.school)](https://www.bfsnaples.school/information/school-building/)Key points RH made were:* The provision for 4 new modular classrooms, an office and breakout rooms has been approved, and is in the process of being ordered with a target delivery date of 30 April 2024, this is the interim solution for the building issues.
* Funding for the interim solution is coming from the DIO housing budget and it will not be EJSU money being used.
* Babcock’s contract is currently due to end in May, after which RH team will then take over.
* Villa V will continue to be used for the hall, office space and library.
* The sunshades that are currently up in the quad area will be relocated to where the classrooms for KS1 will be.
* The play equipment in the grounds of Villa V is covered by the budget, this will be repaired and brought onto the books and there are funding lines in place for maintaining it.
* There are currently 2 proposed sites for where the classrooms will go; the decision of where it goes, however, will not stop the manufacturing of the classrooms.
* They will look like portacabins but will be fully airconditioned.
 |
| **2** | Questions for RH***KW****: Will there be someone on site managing the project?***RH**: Yes, there will be a member of RH team on site for the duration of the project, once work has started on site they will be put into a flat, additionally both ADB and RH will be around intermittently.***AH****: Will work commence in 3-4 weeks?***RH**: We’ve already had people on site measuring, however, when they break ground we do not know. The 30th April is the target completion date.***FE****: Will there be disruption to the children?***RH**: Yes, there will be disruption and there may be noise but what this disruption looks like fully we do not know; however, the children will continue to go to school each day and it may be that they have to use different areas of the school and Villa V while noise is going on but they will continue to be in school.***AJ****: What is the plan for the current school building?***RH**: The long-term plan is to demolish the current school building, but that won’t happen in the short term as we need to get children in the modular building first.***TB****: What happens if the building over runs? Will the children still be in school or will they be home learning?***RH**: They can still be taught in school if the project over runs, we really do not want the project to over run but there will be more information on what happens if that is the case later on.***HB****: You have alluded to the fact that the modular classrooms have not been ordered yet, how confident are you this can be delivered?***RH**: It is in the process of going through, I am just waiting on an email from commercial to say it has been signed. Yes, I am confident with the lead in time needed that this will be delivered.***KW****: What is D-Day for ordering if it is to be delivered by 30th April?***RH**: Now, I really wanted the email yesterday, it should have been here first thing this morning, I haven’t yet seen the email so I can’t stand here and say it has been done but it is very close to being done.***JE****: The school has faced problems in the past with bringing children over to Villa V when the weather is bad etc, if there is a bad weather week how will that affect the children getting over from the modular classrooms to Villa V to use the hall or the library*?**RH**: I don’t know. **RR**: We have contingency plans in place where for example, if it is assembly we can break out in the classrooms, however, as it doesn’t usually rain all day we would hope that there are minimal disruptions. We already manage it well and there have only been a handful of occasions where we can’t get the younger children to Villa V for assemblies etc.***LB****: If the project overruns, will the works be impacted by the Babcock change of contract?***RH**: If it does overrun I am certain that it won’t overrun past May, however, if the wheels come off it will be MacItalia who are delivering the build and the new contract would pick up all existing work if the project were to overrun massively.***JE****: The playground equipment was supposed to be fixed by now, 6 months down the line is has not even been looked at so it is hard to believe the timeframes.***RH**: I understand that, when we came out here in the summer we found that it was a very different situation to what we were led to believe before coming out, yes, we are 6 months down the line but we now have funding in place and a way forward.***LB****: Will you be transparent with updates?***RH**: Yes, if there are delays or hold up, we are going to be having weekly meetings to eliminate any problems and I can’t foresee many issues.***JE****: We were supposed to have received a letter yesterday about today which we never got.***BM**: We have only just been given permission to have ownership of comms to parents, so our intent is that there is a weekly update through myschool app, there will be also a section on the school website for photos and comments. There will also be a weekly project board that JD and ADB will sit on and information that will come out of that will be communicated. As we are now responsible for comms we can communicate differently going forward.***NH****: What about communication to people coming out here, who is taking responsibility to communicate to people coming out here to make their decision?***BM**: We can start communicating that now, we can now communicate the situation more accurately about what the school looks like and the impact it may have on children such as there being no standard hall and an impact on sports etc. We now have permission to share that information.***TB****: A lot of money has been spent on the units, what is the timeframe on delivering the new school?***RH**: Stratcom are in charge of delivering the new school so I am not sure of the timeframes on that.***TB****: How long will the building last?***RH**: The units themselves last 20 years, but this is firmly a 3-5-year plan, however, if it were to extend to 10 years then the units will last, this is a quality product and is robust.***KW****: If the interim solution extends out longer than planned is there an option to add to it and give the school more facilities that meet the requirements of the school?***BM**: That wouldn’t fall to DIO as their responsibility is just ringfenced to classrooms and office space, however, it is possible to add to the buildings and push for better and more if we needed to.***AH****: How are you changing the layout outside so the school can be used efficiently, have you worked with RR to make sure it is practical and that it works?***RH**: Yes, we are planning on moving fencing and gates so it will flow and be functional, we have been very much guided by RR on this.***AH****: Are paths going to be delivered?***RH**: Yes***AH****: Is the placement of the classrooms going to be practical? Staff and children spend a lot of time currently moving between places?***RH**: Yes, this is why we want it as close to Villa V as possible to make sure it works for the school.***AJ****: Could you give us an indication on the size of the classrooms compared to what we have now?***RH**: We are guided by BB103 as to the size of the classrooms, we have 2 classrooms designed for a class of 20 and 2 classrooms designed for a class of 25 children, this is working to requirements of 2 square metres per child. At the minute that is bigger than what we have in Villa V and similar to what the classrooms in the main school building were. There will also be ramped access and all fire risk assessments will be done. Maintenance requirements and the management of the safety checks will fall in line with other schools under DCS.***CA****: What is the contingency plan, if there is a requirement to home school will parents have to stop working?***BM**: It’ll be no surprise that last year we breached heat requirements for our teachers and pupils. The teaching unions are very clear on expectations and if the temperature exceeds 26 degrees over a set duration children will have to be relocated. We have some options here for example, the hall and the library, however, it is important to say that if the modular buildings aren’t in place then we would have to close elements of the school. We have a responsibility that if the children are in an unsafe environment we have to close. We do have an end date in sight, however, we will be giving to parents by the end of February half term an overview of what home schooling would look like if the worst was to happen. If we end up having a heatwave at the end of April before the modular classrooms are ready then parents will have all of the detail they will need of what the school will do, what parents will be required to do and what command would do.***JD****: When would the contingency plan for home schooling come in?***BM**: If the modular classrooms are not built before the temperature exceeds 26 degrees. Last year it was the last week of May when temperatures spike which is why we’re planning for 30 April to have the modular classrooms in place.***JE****: Could portable air con units be put into the classrooms for now?***BM**: Yes, we could, we just want to be completely upfront should we exceed 26 degrees, it is very much a worst-case scenario.***AH****: Can you give us some reassurance that sending children home is the last resort?***BM**: It is our last resort, children in school is the safest place for them to be, if it were to happen the head teacher would have to prove that they had done everything possible to mitigate the heat issue. We have gone through different scenarios and everything that would happen first, but if we cannot mitigate the risk we would have to make the call to send children home.***CA****: Does that mean we would find out the day before? What would I say to my employer if I need to be home? Do we have to pay the consequences?***BM**: We are doing everything we can to get the modular classrooms in place.*Who owns the risk register and what mitigations are in place? Can we be proactive and buy some portable air-conditioning units and how look at how much a decrease that makes on the classrooms?***BM**: I own the risk register, we do have portable air con units. **RR**: We did look at every option last year and the portable units did not work with the rooms and ventilation and the power issue in the Villa V building. Portable aircon units will not solve the problem. *Can we look at sorting the power issues into Villa V if that is the main risk?***BM**: The issue is Villa V is a private building and any works would have to be approved by the landlord. **RH**: To sort the aircon issues we wanted to run a cable from the front entrance down to the villa but as we do not own the building we do not have any lever, we can ask for additional aircon and power but it is up to the landlord.***FE****: Can you look at getting generators?***BM**: I am not able to do that. We can ask Stratcom and DIO; we have raised the risk and generators could be an option but that decision would come from Stratcom.***CS****: If you knew there were issues last year, and I know we now have this interim plan, but has experience not taught us to think of getting generators before now?***BM**: We have been raising the issues since October 2021.***CS****: People are not seeing our children as a priority in that case, I don’t understand why it hasn’t moved forward?***BM**: I am not sure, I have had to be really clear, heat regarding service personnel is an issue so it can’t be okay for children, they are now not okay with that and we now have a plan in place.***AH****: What has happened has happened, it is incredibly frustrating that this risk was here last year and the year before, this solution isn’t temporary for our children as it will be all they see, so there is a lot of frustration in the room.***BM**: I wasn’t in this post after Covid and if I had I would have been asking for this then, I don’t know why you ended up with a house and I would not have accepted that. I understand the accommodation is far from ideal. When I first came out I expected to see poor education and unhappy children but that is not the case, you have a really good provision and the quality of teaching here is very good. I know this doesn’t make up for the accommodation but the education is paramount.***KW****: With the risk of heat, Lamborghini class would be the highest risk, has there been consideration to swap them with another class?***BM**: Yes, further information will be provided by February half term.***JE****: With the classroom sizes of 25, I think we’re down to 26 downstairs (23), is that not keeping things tight?***BM**: Those are DCS classroom sizes, in the UK we would have 33 children in the classrooms we’re getting so we will be okay.***LB****: Will parents coming out here be notified of the situation?***BM**: They can be now, we did not have the authority beforehand to do so but we have that now.***FE****: Will this information go to career managers?***BM**: It will go to the people who do the supportability.***FE****: Can it be passed to the career managers so that they can pass it on to people interested in coming out here?***BM**: I can only go through the team who have approval for people to come, I don’t have the authority to go to career managers. **PH**: We do.***JD****: We came out a few weeks ago and we can tell the amount of effort that goes into everything, but just because the kids are happy and are doing well they are still getting the bare minimum. The career management point is where information can be given to say the post is challenging and that there are issues with the school, that’s not saying people won’t come but they should have the information given to them before accepting the post.****HB****: Are you going to put in writing about the potential school closure as it is usually the head teacher and staff members who end up in the firing line.***BM**: Ultimately the head teacher is the only person who can make the decision, however, the guidance we give will be published in a leaflet provided to parents by February half term.***TB****: If we end up going to home learning are you going to equip families with laptops?***BM**: No because it won’t be online learning.***AJ****: Can we get someone to formally get information on the longer-term solution?***BL**: Absolutely. |
| **3** | BM and RR provided an update to everyone that RR would be leaving to take up a new headship in the UK and would not be here for the interim solution. There is a plan in place to recruit her replacement and they will be seeking to recruit internally within DCS because of the situation as it has to be someone with experience of working within the MoD and dealing with building management issues. Ideally, they want someone in place before RR leaves. |
| **4** | RH advised that he had now had site of an email confirming from commercial that the contract was in place for the modular classrooms. |