



Public Accounts Committee

Tamara Finkelstein CB
Permanent Secretary
Department for the Environment, Farming and Rural
Affairs
4th Floor Seacole
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
By email: Tamara.finkelstein@defra.gov.uk &
PermanentSecretary@defra.gov.uk

29 November 2022

DEFRA AOA – Workplace and Facilities Management

Dear Permanent Secretary,

I am writing to you about the Summary AO Assessment for the Workplace and Facilities management project which was [published](#) on GOV.uk on 27 September and updated on 27 October. The assessment states that you considered and approved the assessment on 12 January 2022. HM Treasury guidance states that "Whenever an Accounting Officer Assessment is produced for a GMPP project...a summary of the key points from the assessment should be produced and published". I would be grateful if you could write to me to explain why there was a delay of some 10 months between your approval of the assessment and its publication (updated) on GOV.uk.

There have been a number of changes to the economic situation, including increases in inflation, since you approved the assessment in January 2022. HM Treasury requires that assessments should be updated if the project "departs from the four standards or the agreed plan – including any contingency – in terms of costs, benefits, timescales, or level of risk, which informed the Accounting Officer's previous approval". I recommend that you keep this requirement in mind in the coming months so that you can re-assess the project if appropriate.

I request that you respond to this letter before **Friday 16 December.**

Yours sincerely

Dame Meg Hillier MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts