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William Humphrey
Chairperson
Public Accounts Committee
NI Assembly
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BELFAST, BT4 3XX

Our Ref: SINV-0109-2020

6 January 2021

Via email – committee.publicaccounts@niassembly.gov.uk

Dear William

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE – INQUIRY ON THE ‘LANDWEB PROJECT AND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION’

Thank you for your letter dated 14 December 2020 in which you requested follow up engagement with BT to seek their consent for the inclusion of ‘Table 1 – BT Original Tender Submission’ as part of forthcoming published correspondence for the Digital Transformation inquiry.

The Department contacted BT to consider this request. Their response indicates that they believe that this particular table forms part of the Financial Model and is therefore classified as BT commercially sensitive information in accordance with the Strategic Partnership Agreement contract. BT have not agreed to full disclosure on the basis that this would be contrary to the public interest and has the potential to prejudice the commercial interests of BT. They would, however, agree to issue the last row of the table “*TOTAL COSTS (Pre Optimism Bias & Risk Adjustment NPC) - 49,284,710*” as this information relates to the original contract value on award in 2012.

BT have asked that in accordance with the Strategic Partnership Agreement contract, DoF would, on BT’s behalf, seek to apply the commercial interests exemption as set out in section 43 of the FOIA to this information because it is BT Commercially Sensitive Information. (Section 43(2) exempts information whose disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (an individual, a company, the public authority itself or any other legal entity).

I am supportive of this exemption request and ask that the Committee agree to exclude the full information table 'Table 1 – BT Original Tender Submission' in any forthcoming publications.

Very happy to discuss.

Yours sincerely

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

SUE GRAY