



**Northern Ireland  
Assembly**

**PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE**

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2 October 2020

Dear Ms Gray

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

Thank you for attending the meeting of the Public Accounts Committee on Thursday 24 September 2020 and for the evidence you provided at that meeting.

There were a number of issues that the Committee felt were not fully answered to enable the Committee to conclude its findings. Whilst you provided assurances that many of the issues, identified in both NIAO reports, are now being addressed, the Committee felt that there was little evidence on what had gone wrong in the past and what lessons have been taken on board to seek improvements in the future. In view of this the Committee would ask you to attend a further evidence session on x date.

In the interim, I would request that you provide the following additional information as outlined below.

You advised the Committee that a central contracts register is now in place for your Department. Can you therefore please provide the Committee with the details of all live contracts (valued at £50m+), to include the following detail:

- Name and type of contract
- Original contract length
- Start date, break dates and end date
- Service provider name

- Details of any extension period and reasons why it was extended
- Original cost versus cost to date
- Whether or not open book accounting forms part of the contract
- Name of current SRO
- Number of SROs since contract start

In relation to the question above, the Committee would like to be sighted on this information for all departments and we would appreciate DoF obtaining the information and sharing it with the Committee.

You referred to research that was being carried out by the University of Ulster into the impact of COVID 19 on the Northern Ireland Economy, in particular the impact on the property market and that this should be completed by October 2021. The Committee would like a copy of the findings when it is completed.

During the evidence session, you advised the Committee that accounts have been received from BT to enable an open book accounting assessment for the NI Direct Strategic Partner Contract – can you clarify for the Committee the form of those accounts and whether or not they have been independently audited. In addition, what work has been done by the Department as a result of having received them and can you provide the accounts and your Department's considerations of them to the NIAO?

I would be grateful if you could respond by **16 October 2020**, by using the email address above.

The Committee would also invite you to attend a further evidence session regarding the LandWeb Project and Digital Transformation reports, to their meeting on **Thursday 22 October 2020 at 2.00 pm in the Senate**. The Committee have further questions following on from the evidence session and also expect an insight into why things went wrong before you took up office.

I would be grateful if you could respond to me on your availability to attend on 22 October 2020 by **Friday 9 October 2020**, by using the email address above.

Yours sincerely,



**William Humphrey**  
**Chairperson**

## Public Accounts Committee