RE: Decision by HM Chief Inspector of Probation to chair a short-term review into farm inspection

Thank you for your letter of 24 April regarding Dame Glenys’s decision to chair a short-term review into farm inspection.

In your letter you acknowledge the “weight of the issues currently facing the probation system” and the importance of the work of HMI Probation but conclude that “it is proposed that Dame Glenys will continue to chair the review which is expected to occupy approximately 20% of her time for the duration of the review”. You note that this is deemed to be in the “public interest”.

I have now had the opportunity to discuss your response and that from Dame Glenys with members of the Justice Committee. We remain dissatisfied with the responses we have received and are surprised that your letter does not contain any substantive actions which seek to alleviate our concerns.

We are concerned by the principle that one government department is subsidising costs associated with the work of another government department. In your letter you say that Dame Glenys will be spending 20% of her time working on the farm review. In our view, you should therefore request that Defra reimburses the Ministry of Justice for the sum of £28,000, plus any associated costs (such as National Insurance and pension contributions). Our calculation is based on Dame Glenys having an annual salary of around £140,000, as she stated in oral evidence to us on 17 April, and the farm inspection review lasting for 12 months.

If you do not think this sum accurately reflects the amount of time Dame Glenys is
working on the farm review in the working week (Monday to Friday) then in response to this letter please set out a revised calculation, including the breakdown of salary and any other contribution (separated by each type of contribution).

It would be helpful if you could provide a response to this letter by the end of the working day on Monday 21 May.

Bob Neill MP
Chairman
Justice Committee