



Communities and Local Government Committee

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

Tel 020 7219 4972 Email clgcom@parliament.uk Website www.parliament.uk

Melanie Dawes CB
Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

23 January 2018

Melanie Dawes

Many thanks to you and your colleagues for appearing before the Committee last week in what I thought was an extremely useful session. As I mentioned at the end of the session, we were unfortunately unable to cover all the questions we had hoped to in the time available. I am therefore writing to you now with these additional questions which are provided below. I would be grateful if you could deal with each in turn.

Staffing

1. The Annual Report and Accounts shows that the Department's staff numbers and costs fell compared with the previous year – how has this had an effect on the Department's work?
2. How have you reorganised staff resources in the light of new challenges such as Brexit and also in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy? Has this reallocation of resources impacted the wider work of the Department?
3. The accounts indicate that the Departmental group is now spending over £200 million on "Legal and Professional Services" – and that this has increased by nearly 20% over the past two years – what is this money being spent on?
4. Why is the Departmental group spending more on these services than on permanent staff?
5. The accounts also indicate that the Department has employed 6 staff "off-payroll" for over two years – why are these arrangements needed?

Estimates memoranda

6. The memorandum for the Committee following the publication of both the supplementary and main estimates in 2017 were delayed, in contrast to most other departments – what was the reason for this delay?

Single Departmental Plan

7. The Single Departmental Plan uses limited performance data and the Department's only measurable objective relates to net additional housing supply – how has the Department determined the metrics it uses, and why isn't more data included?

In addition, you kindly agreed to provide further information on a number of issues during the course of the evidence session as follows:

- Real and nominal capital spending figures in each financial year since 2009-10 (Q9), including the additional detail asked for by Mr Blackman at Q12.
- Current and recent consultations and how they relate to the planned revision of the NPPF (Q15)
- Timetable for improving the clarify of Approved Document B (Qq67-68).

I look forward to a timely response on all of these issues, and thank you once again for appearing before the Committee.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Clive Betts', written in a cursive style.

Clive Betts MP
Chair, Communities and Local Government Committee