Dear Jonathan,

RE: Treasury Minute response – Academy accounts and performance

I am writing to put on record my dissatisfaction with the response to the Committee’s report on Academy accounts and performance.

I am disappointed with the overall weakness of the response and your apparent reluctance, in several areas, to make changes to address the Committee’s recommendations. I expect that Members will want to return to these matters when we take evidence on the Academy Sector Annual Report and Accounts for 2017/18 later in the year.

There are two areas that are more pressing, and I am therefore writing to raise these with you now:

- **Recommendation 2**: The Committee has recommended twice – in our reports in March 2018 and January 2019 – that you should include in the academy sector annual report and accounts an analysis of the financial performance of academy trusts of different sizes and geographical locations. We have also now asked for an analysis of in-year deficits alongside the material on cumulative deficits.

I note your general commitment to seek to incorporate additional analysis in the 2017/18 accounts “where this is available” and to look to build on this for the subsequent year. However, I was disappointed that you did not commit to include the specific analysis that the Committee asked for. I would be grateful if you could provide the analysis that we requested in the forthcoming annual report and accounts if at all possible; if this proves not to be possible, please could you let me know when and how this analysis will be published.

- **Recommendation 7**: As you know, we have been following closely your efforts to compile better information on the extent of asbestos in schools. I was disappointed that, although the latest deadline for responsible bodies and schools to provide data was in February 2019, we will have to wait several more months to see your analysis of the results. I would be grateful to see this analysis before the summer parliamentary recess.
I have also recently been contacted by individuals concerned that the Department may be rowing back from its commitment to publish information from the asbestos management assurance process at school-level, as you stated in your letter of March this year. Please could you confirm that it remains your intention to publish information at school-level.

- In addition, I would grateful if you could you let us know: what action you propose to take with those responsible bodies and schools which have still not replied to your repeated requests for information; and why you do not consider it would be appropriate to name and shame them, as the Committee recommended.

I would be grateful if you could write back to me by 27 July 2019 I am copying this letter to Eileen Milner at the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Treasury Officer of Accounts and the Comptroller and Auditor General.

MEG HILLIER MP
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS