Sir Tom Scholar  
Permanent Secretary  
HM Treasury  
1 Horseguards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ  

27 June 2019  

Dear Tom,  

RE: Treasury Minute response – Improving government planning and spending  

Thank you for your response to the Committee’s report on Improving government planning and spending.  

However, based on the information provided in the Treasury Minute, I do not share your view that two of the recommendations have been implemented. For example:  

- **Recommendation 1**: on writing to the Committee with the action plan to fill gaps in skills, experience and behaviours across the Treasury, Cabinet Office, functions and departments. Your response provides information on work the Treasury and Cabinet Office has underway to reduce turnover and recruit people from outside the Treasury into spending teams as well as wider initiatives across the civil service and government functions, already underway. It does not, however, add up to an action plan and does not provide enough detail to explain how these actions will help to address concerns about operational experience in Treasury spending teams, for example.  

- **Recommendation 6**: on writing to the Committee to explain how the public value framework will be developed and embedded. Your response repeats evidence given in the session around the integration of the framework with SDPs. It does provide an update on how the framework has been revised and will be used in specific areas of delivery. Yet it does not specify how these areas will be prioritised or give detail of plans to over local government and health, as the Committee requested.  

You are due to write to the Committee to explain how long-term sustainability and joint-working will be factored into the spending review process, including how the Treasury and Cabinet Office will work together to challenge the realism of departmental plans. In doing so, we are keen that you set out how when challenging departments’ plans you will assess the effect on local public services and local government financial sustainability. I would be grateful if, at the same time, you could provide me with the further detail we requested in recommendations 1 and 6.
I am copying this letter to the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Treasury Officer of Accounts.

MEG HILLIER MP
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS