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**Public Audit and Post-legislative
Scrutiny Committee**

Room T 3.60
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

24 May 2017

Dear Jackie,

Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny Committee

ARE Futures Fujitsu Technical Assurance Review

Thank you for your letter of 18 May 2017 on the above subject.

In your letter you ask why the Independent Technical Review Report has been assessed as commercially sensitive; you suggest that you would want to publish a redacted version of the Executive Summary; and you ask when the final version of the full Report will be available and published.

Before I address these specific points, I should let you know that, in response to similar concerns from the Rural Economy and Connectivity (REC) Committee, on my instruction, Officials have written to the Committee's Convener (letter attached) offering to have sight of a full copy of the Report and discuss it with officials in private. Key Officials, a senior manager from CGI and the Report author from Fujitsu will provide members with all the relevant facts and answer any questions. The Committee would also be able to consider the joint improvement plan that is being created alongside the detail within the Report, which is just as relevant.

I suggest that the most appropriate way to handle your concerns would be to extend the same offer to Public Audit and Post-legislative Scrutiny (PAPLS) Committee members, potentially as a joint session.

My officials have already spoken to the Senior Parliamentary Clerk for the REC who has stated that the Committee is minded to accept the offer of a private session, and are open to a possible joint session with PAPLS Committee members, should you

wish. I am awaiting written confirmation of this. This will provide both Committees with full visibility of the Report and will ensure a common handling path.

I am absolutely committed to sharing the detail of the Report in a way that protects the sensitive commercial and security information that it contains. My Officials have also shared the detail of the Report with Audit Scotland on a confidential basis to inform their Update Report that is due to be presented to Parliament in June. I have set out the key reasons for maintaining the security classification of the Report below.

Commercial Sensitivity

Although officials have now received a full response from our main supplier (CGI), who has agreed with all the key findings, the detail of the Report has still not yet been finalised (note that the full response from CGI was only received the evening before the REC Committee meeting). Officials have now met with CGI and Fujitsu and have agreed how the detail in the Report should be augmented to reflect CGI's comments. We now await a formal comment from Fujitsu on the CGI Response (expected w/c 22 May). The process of agreeing the Report and the actions that will stem from it will require discussions, some of a commercial nature that will need very careful handling. We are in a strong but nonetheless commercially sensitive position in our relationship with CGI and it is vital that we consider their position regarding publication of any of the detail. We must take care not to prejudice any negotiations.

IT Security Sensitivity

I should also point out that the Report is fundamentally a technical one and therefore provides a level of detail about the RP&S IT Platform architecture and processes supporting it that if disclosed could compromise the security of the IT Platform. The risks of this were sharply brought into focus by the devastating impact that this weekend's worldwide cyber-attack had on critical public IT systems. I am pleased to say the RP&S IT Platform was not affected and we continued to operate efficiently over the same weekend, when SAF 2017 claim submission was at its peak.

Publication

A deadline for completion of commercial discussions has not been set. As a pragmatic first step, prior to consideration of timing and how the whole or parts of the Report might be published I suggest members of the PAPLS Committee take up the offer of a private and joint session with the REC Committee.

I look forward to your response.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fergus Ewing'. The signature is written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end of the last name.

FERGUS EWING