



Public Accounts Committee

Dr Jo Farrar
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By email: permanent.secretary@justice.gov.uk

21 April 2026

Ministry of Justice - Accounting Officer Assessments

Dear Permanent Secretary

In February, your department published four Accounting Officer Assessment summaries, including one relating to Future Voice Service, a project to supply, instal and support the department's telephony services.

Based on its sign-off date, this assessment is over a over a year old. Your department has previously written to the Committee on 9 May 2024 regarding the timeliness of assessments, setting out that you do not publish AO assessments until the business cases are signed off by all relevant parties. Could you please advise whether this accounts for the delay in publishing this assessment, and if so, on what date the business case was signed off?

I also noted that your assessment gave the normal assurances relating to the four standards from Managing Public Money, but that the NISTA assessment for 2024-25 downgraded this project from green to amber due to timing risks resulting from the complexity of the procurements. It also noted a substantial increase in the whole life cost of the project from £206 million to £385 million. Please could you therefore provide the Committee with an update of the progress of the project and its main risks?

I request that you respond to this letter by 5 May 2026.

Yours Sincerely

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP
Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts