



Public Accounts Committee

Catherine Little CB, Permanent Secretary, Cabinet Office
Emran Mian, Permanent Secretary, DSIT

By email

4 June 2026

Government's relationship with digital technology suppliers

Dear Permanent Secretaries

Thank you for your letter of 18 May 2026 providing an update on progress implementing the recommendations in our June 2025 report. We note the progress made in several areas, including clarifying roles and responsibilities between functions.

However, based on your response, we are not yet reassured that some of the recommendations marked as closed have been fully addressed. We are therefore writing to seek further detail on how the stated implementation ensures that the intended improvements are fully realised.

Digital commercial capability planning (Recommendation 3a)

We note that your response refers to a strategic approach, baselining of current capability, and a phased programme of training and capability uplift. We also recognise the progress made in delivering training to a large number of staff. However, it is not clear from your response how these elements are brought together into a single, comprehensive plan that sets out priority capability needs, current capability levels and identified skills gaps in a coherent way.

Please write to the Committee with more detail on:

- **how your existing approach constitutes a comprehensive plan for securing the digital commercial skills government needs**
- **how priority capability requirements and skills gaps have been identified and assessed across government**
- **how the planned interventions, including the phased approach to capability uplift, will help target those gaps**



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Digital suppliers' playbook (Recommendation 3b)

We welcome the production of a Digital Suppliers Playbook and that responsibility for maintaining it within the Market Sourcing and Suppliers Team is now clearly established. However, your response provides limited detail on how the playbook meets the recommendation that it should be of sufficient practical detail and cover the full commercial lifecycle.

Please write to the committee with more detail on how the playbook has been designed to provide practical, end-to-end guidance across the commercial lifecycle for digital procurements, including how you have assured yourselves that the playbook is sufficiently usable in practice.

Departmental capability and senior expertise (Recommendation 4a)

We note the progress made in delivering training and establishing the Commercial Digital Capability Board to provide oversight of capability development. We also recognise that the Board is intended to provide direction on additional capability requirements across departments. However, it is not yet clear how this approach will translate into assurance that departments have the digital commercial skills and expertise they need, including clarity on the role of senior specialists.

Please write to the committee with more detail on:

- **how the work of the Capability Board will inform decisions on the need for senior digital commercial specialists in departments**
- **how you will ensure departments have sufficient capability in practice and that it will be maintained over time**

Role and influence of digital commercial experts (Recommendation 4b)

We note your response that training, governance structures and cross-government working groups are being used to strengthen the role of digital expertise within the commercial function, and that examples such as the National Cloud Infrastructure Procurement demonstrate joint working in practice. However, the recommendation asked for an explicit statement of how the balance of digital commercial expertise within the wider function will be addressed, alongside assurance that digital expertise is consistently given due prominence throughout the commercial lifecycle.



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Please write to the committee with more detail on:

- **the current proportion of digital commercial experts within the commercial function and how you assess and intend to change the level over time**
- **how governance and decision-making processes will ensure that digital expertise is systematically incorporated at each stage of the commercial lifecycle**

Data and capability for strategic supplier management (Recommendation 5)

Your response highlights progress in improving pipeline data and establishing an observability function. However, it is not clear from your response how these developments combine to provide a complete and reliable capability for informing strategic decisions about government's spending with technology suppliers.

Please write to the committee with more detail on how pipeline data and spending data are being brought together to support strategic decision-making, and the systems, processes and people in place to support this capability.

I would be grateful if you could provide an update to the Committee on these areas by **July 2nd**. I am copying this letter to the Comptroller and Auditor General and to the Treasury Officer of Accounts.

Yours sincerely

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