



Committee of Public Accounts

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA

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

25 March 2021

Dear Sir Tom,

Re: The production and distribution of cash

Thank you for the Treasury Minute response to the Committee's report on The Production and Distribution of Cash.

We were pleased to see that the government accepts our recommendations, bar one, and are grateful for the commitments made in principle to address most of our concerns. However, it is disappointing that the government is not planning to publish a detailed action plan by the end of March as recommended, and more detail on your responses to recommendations 1, 2 and 3, on access to cash, would be helpful.

We note that the government disagrees with committing to publish draft legislation by the end of March because it is "important that legislation is not rushed". This is despite the fact that the government first announced its intention to bring forward legislation in March 2020.

We concluded that "unless the government acts quickly, there are clear dangers of hardship for some individuals and groups if we move precipitously towards a cashless society". There is little doubt that the decline in the use of cash has been accelerating during the pandemic, and therefore the need for urgent action is, if anything, increasing.

I do recognise that departments have been asked to keep Treasury Minute responses concise. However, in this case I would be grateful if HM Treasury, in helping frame the government's next steps in safeguarding access to cash, could provide the Committee with more detailed and more specific responses to the Committee's recommendations 1 to 3 as soon as possible. I would be grateful for a response in time for us to consider it before 22 April, when you are due to give evidence to the Committee on public sector pensions.

In addition to the Treasury Officer of Accounts I am also copying this letter to the Comptroller and Auditor General.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Meg Hillier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

MEG HILLIER MP
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS