



Department
for Education



Infrastructure
and Projects
Authority

Peter Mucklow
2, St Paul's Place
125 Norfolk Street
Sheffield
S1 2FJ

September 2020

Dear Peter

Appointment as SRO for completing the Apprenticeship Reform Programme

This letter confirms your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the Apprenticeship Reform Programme. It sets out your responsibilities, and the support you have the right to expect from the department.

The appointment is made with effect from 1 May 2020. In this role, you are directly accountable to Eileen Milner, Chief Executive, Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) with oversight from the Permanent Secretary and the Secretary of State for Education.

Thank you for taking on this important role – you have my full support in executing your responsibilities and in drawing on the support and resources of the department as set out in this letter.

You should be aware that SROs of projects on the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) will now be held personally accountable to, and could be called to attend Parliamentary Select Committees. You will be expected to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the project (or specific milestones).

It is important to be clear that your accountability relates only to implementation: it will remain for the Minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

Guidance on “Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants” is available online and can be accessed [here](#) and Infrastructure & Projects Authority (IPA) guidance on management of major projects is available [here](#).

A signed copy of this letter will be published on the DfE website. This is a requirement of all projects that are part of the GMPP.

Summary of responsibilities

As SRO you have personal accountability for delivery of the Apprenticeship Reform Programme. You are responsible for:

- setting the long-term vision for the programme;
- the delivery of agreed objectives and policy intent over the lifetime of the programme (see below);
- putting in place effective management for the programme to ensure work is appropriately defined, planned, monitored and controlled, and quality managed to maximise success;
- ensuring that a business case is developed and updated throughout the programme lifecycle;
- identifying and securing the necessary investment and approvals for the programme internally and externally, for example HM Treasury (HMT) clearance and Cabinet Office (CO) controls;
- managing the resources allocated to the programme;
- realising the benefits of the programme as outlined in the agreed business case;
- putting in place effective governance for the programme;
- understanding how risk is managed within the [ESFA](#) and the wider department (the risk management framework, which can be found on the [intranet](#), sets this out), setting up and embedding processes to identify and escalate risks and issues in your area, and actively managing risks where you are the owner; and
- influencing the context, culture and operating environment of the programme so as to maximise its chances of success.

Executing your SRO role

SROs are generally expected to remain in position for the lifetime of a major programme, to see it through to its successful conclusion. You should make sure that you have appropriate knowledge management arrangements in place and could manage an orderly handover to a new SRO if required.

This role will require approximately 80% of your time.

Before signing this letter, you should have established in discussion with Eileen Milner how managing your SRO responsibilities is going to be feasible alongside your other responsibilities. You will be expected to carry out this role alongside your other work and are responsible for making sure that you allocate sufficient time to the effective delivery of your SRO role and responsibilities.

If you find that you are not able to allocate sufficient time and attention to your role, you should escalate the issue to Eileen Milner in the first instance, and in doing that you have the right to expect the issue to be resolved satisfactorily. If that is not possible, you should escalate, and have the right to require resolution of, the issue through the organisation's formal governance structures.

Support for you in your role

I am fully committed to making sure that DfE SROs have access to the corporate services, support and resources they need to execute their responsibilities. As SRO of a major programme, I will invite you to a quarterly meeting with all the major project SROs where we can discuss common concerns and issues.

Eileen Milner is your senior sponsor for this programme. In that role you can expect her to offer you support, advice and oversight on my behalf. This should include help with escalating unresolved risks and issues to the Leadership Team where necessary, dealing

with strategic blockers to delivery, and supporting you in obtaining the resources and support you need to execute your SRO responsibilities.

As part of the major projects portfolio, you will have access to:

- support and expert advice from DfE's corporate functions including finance, legal, commercial, transformation, digital, project delivery and analysis. Where the requirement is significant, you should request the nomination of a named, accountable individual who will provide the required services and support
- help to bring in essential external expert support and services if the organisation is not able to meet the need internally
- support from your Portfolio Lead in the Major Projects Directorate
- a growing network of delivery and programme specialists to act as contacts, mentors or sources of assurance at critical stages of the programme
- the [Project Delivery Capability Framework](#) which describes the job roles, capabilities and learning for all Government Project Delivery Professionals across government
- the right to be involved in decisions in the department that may affect your ability to deliver

Objectives and Performance Criteria

The long-term policy intent of the Apprenticeships Reform Programme is to create a world-class, sustainable apprenticeship system offering quality employer-led apprenticeship opportunities to a diverse range of individuals and to meet the skills needs of employers. The objectives are:

1. To create higher quality apprenticeships - through campaign work and by creating a sustainable funding system and a high quality apprenticeships offer.
2. To meet the skills needs of employers - and the country by providing high quality, relevant programmes that result in apprentices becoming fully competent in their occupation.
3. To create opportunities for apprentices that result in apprentices becoming fully competent with transferrable skills in an occupation that offers opportunities to study at higher levels.
4. To widen participation in apprenticeships - from defined priority groups as a result of comprehensive strategies, to support social mobility.

The benefits associated with apprenticeships consist of the following elements:

- Increased wages
- An increased chance of being employed
- Benefits captured by employers (e.g. higher profits), other learners and other employers (e.g. through the mobility of labour)

A full list of the end benefits are below:

- Improved rates of retention of apprentices following completion
- Increase in the proportion of employers benefitting from skills that are relevant to their business
- Higher proportion of apprentices progressing to sustained destinations in employment
- Improved earning outcomes for apprentices

- Increasing proportion of starts from priority groups
- Increasing proportion of achievements by priority groups
- Maintaining the rate of achievement (across an increasing apprentice population)
Increasing volume of starts

Reform programme implementation timeline is from financial years 2015 - 2016 to 2020 - 2021.

Programme benefits realisation has been forecasted out to 2061/2062 (as full benefits accrue over the career lifetime of an individual, which for this programme has been benchmarked as 40 years).

The governance is (and has been) dynamic; updated over the lifetime of the programme to ensure it remains fit for purpose as the implementation moves through different stages. The focus now is on transitioning to live running, ensuring continuous service improvements (e.g. scaling up the digital service and extending user functionality) and deploying system and policy levers to maximise growth and achieve value for money.

Proposed changes to the programme's scope which would affect the policy intent or benefits realisation must be authorised by Eileen Milner.

The objectives and vision of the programme should be regularly reviewed and also agreed with Eileen Milner.

Financial, Commercial and Project Delivery authority

Your financial and commercial delegated authority are set out separately from this letter, in your budget delegation letter. You may have been delegated financial and commercial authority and so be authorised to approve expenditure in accordance with the published scheme of delegation. You are responsible for seeking authority from relevant budget holders for spend on this programme, where it is in excess of your own delegated financial authority. The whole life cost for the Apprenticeship Reform Programme is £10,475.7m

You are also responsible for recommending to Eileen Milner and the Apprenticeships Programme Board the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.

You should operate at all times within the rules set out in [Managing Public Money](#). HMT spending controls including any [CO spending controls](#) will apply on the basis set out within the [department's delegated authority letter](#). Where the programme exceeds the departmental delegated authority limits set by HMT and/or regardless of the value if it is novel, contentious, repercussive or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply.

All cases that need Accounting Officer and HMT formal approval will first be referred to your finance business partner for initial advice who in turn will involve Central Strategic Finance for final consideration and clearance and including liaison and clearing approval with HMT spending team.

Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to Eileen Milner and the Apprenticeships Programme Board. When you do that, you have the right to expect the issue to be resolved satisfactorily. If not you should

continue escalating it through the organisation's governance structures until you are satisfied it has been resolved.

Governance

The [ESFA's](#) and wider department's [governance structure](#) are there to support you if you have a risk, delivery or performance issue that cannot be managed within your directorate, or that would benefit from further assurance.

The programme detailed in this letter is part of the DfE major projects portfolio and will have oversight from the Performance and Risk Committee (PRC). PRC is responsible, on behalf of Leadership Team, for regular oversight of the department's top tier risks, major projects and programmes.

Your Portfolio Lead Mark Frisby can advise and support you in working with the appropriate committees including specialist advice from the risk team on escalating risks to the department's top tier risk register. When you do that, you have the right to expect a joint conversation about how the organisation can support you to reduce or mitigate the escalated risk.

Assurance

You will be required to undertake internal and external assurance reviews which are an essential part of successful programme delivery. The reviews are often required for formal HMT approvals or business case approval points and they also provide support and constructive challenge to SROs. Further advice and support on assuring your programme is available through your Portfolio Lead.

You are responsible for making sure that you are appropriately skilled and able to execute the functions outlined in this letter. If you need additional support or training, please contact your Portfolio Lead in the first instance.

Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA)

As a student of the MPLA, we both expect – and will support – you to continue your ongoing professional development, and will encourage you to take an active part in MPLA alumni activities.

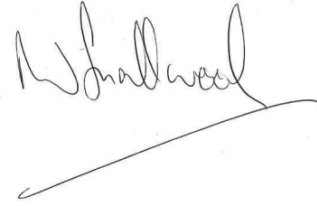
To widen experience and understanding of the role, MPLA graduates are expected to become accredited major project reviewers and to lead or participate in such reviews for other government departments, the wider public sector or other areas of the department. You will be required to participate in such reviews at least once every 12 months to maintain your accreditation.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely



Susan Acland-Hood
Acting Permanent Secretary
Department for Education
Authority

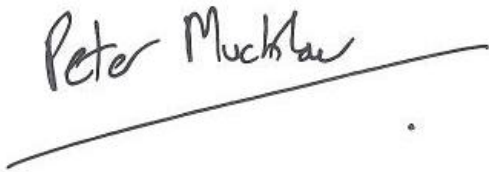


Nick Smallwood
Chief Executive
Infrastructure & Projects

I confirm that I accept the appointment including my personal accountability for implementation of the Apprenticeship Reform Programme as detailed in the letter above.

Name of SRO: Peter Mucklow

Signature of SRO:



Date: 16 October 2020