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Senior Responsible Owner
Geological Disposal Facility Programme (GDF)



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Date: 10 March 2016

APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER (SRO) FOR THE GEOLOGICAL DISPOSAL FACILITY PROGRAMME (GDF)

This letter formalises your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Geological Disposal Facility Programme (GDF). These responsibilities form part of your role as Director, Office for Nuclear Development, for which you are accountable to Katrina Williams who is accountable to Stephen Lovegrove. The responsible Minister for your programme is Andrea Leadsom. The work of the programme is overseen by the Department's Executive Committee and its three sub-committees. Your role as SRO will be reflected in the objectives you agree with Katrina Williams. You will be expected to commit no less than 10-25% of your time to this role alongside your other responsibilities, depending on the phase of the project, and are accountable for ensuring that the programme is governed in line with DECC's governance framework. The principles set out in the revised Osmotherly Guidance, published in October 2014 will also apply from the date of this letter.

The revised Osmotherly Guidance establishes that SROs for major projects will be directly accountable to Parliament for the implementation of the project. Once the project is in its implementation phase, you will be expected to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the programme, for which you have personal responsibility, against the business case, within the context of the Department's corporate objectives and as a member of the Department's senior leadership team. It will remain for the responsible Minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development, including accounting for decisions that materially affect the programme's business case, though the guidance makes clear that as SRO you are expected to be able to explain such decisions.

A description of generic SRO roles and responsibilities is attached at Annex A and you are expected to follow the principles it sets out. You will also want to familiarise yourself with the guidance "Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants" and with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

(IPA) guidance on management of major projects:

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/policy-teams/major-projects-authority>).

Your accountability to Parliament sits alongside your accountabilities under the Civil Service Code, your role in supporting the Accounting Officer, and your membership of the DECC Senior Leadership Team.

Tenure of position

You are expected to remain in post at least until the end of the Initial Actions Phase of the programme (circa. early 2017) as described in the 2014 White Paper, Implementing Geological Disposal. In preparation for the next phase of the programme, Community Engagement and Site Evaluation, a full review of the governance of the programme will be carried out in the lead up to the end of the first phase. This may result in the decision to transfer the role of SRO to the appropriate delivery body if that body is assessed as capable of carrying out it out in accordance with IPA guidelines.

Your tenure in this post will be regularly reviewed with Katrina Williams, taking into account the benefits of continuity, the capability needed to lead this programme through its development, planning, delivery and evaluation phases; the length of these phases, your development as a member of the project delivery profession within the Civil Service, and the Department's ability to deploy its senior leadership team appropriately. You should ensure that you have agreed with Katrina Williams appropriate succession planning for key personnel in the programme.

Objectives and Performance Criteria

The policy intent supported by this programme is to site and construct a permanent geological disposal facility (GDF) as the safe, secure and environmentally responsible solution to the long-term management of higher-activity radioactive waste in the UK, excluding Scotland. The programme also supports the delivery of the UK's nuclear new build programme because before development consents for new nuclear power stations are granted, the Government needs to be satisfied that effective arrangements exist or will exist to manage and dispose of the wastes they will produce.

Proposed changes to the project scope which impact on this intent or benefits realisation must be authorised by Katrina Williams and may be subject to further levels of approval. Your objectives and performance criteria with respect to this programme are reflected in your performance agreement form, agreed with Katrina Williams.

Extent and limit of accountability

Finance and Controls

The overall budget for the Geological Disposal Facility Programme is set out in your letter of Delegated Authority; this is issued to you annually by the Department's finance team and may be updated from time to time. This letter is the means by which you are held to account for the budgets and other resources for which you are responsible.

The allocation of departmental resources is subject to review each year during business planning and as SRO you are expected engage actively in the business planning process. The Department explicitly recognises that you will need to balance your responsibilities in respect of the programme with your responsibilities relating to the wider work of the department as part of DECC's cadre of senior leaders. Decisions on resource allocation will reflect the need to strike a balance across the entirety of DECC's portfolio of programmes.

HMT spending controls will apply on the basis set out within DECC's delegated authority letter. Where the Geological Disposal Facility Programme exceeds the delegated authority set by HMT, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply and the details of each approval process must be agreed with your HMT spending team. You should consult departmental finance colleagues on how to go about this.

You should also note that where expenditure is considered novel, contentious, repercussive or likely to result in costs to other parts of the public sector, HMT approval will be required, regardless of whether the programme expenditure exceeds the delegated authority set by HMT. If in doubt about whether approval is required you should, in the first instance, consult departmental finance colleagues before raising with the relevant HMT spending team.

You should operate at all times within the rules set out in [Managing Public Money](#). In addition, you must be mindful of, and act in accordance with, the specific Treasury delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to the Geological Disposal Facility programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

Delegated departmental/project authority

You are authorised to approve expenditure in line with your delegated authority letter.

You should use your programme's governance framework, in conjunction with the Department's governance framework, as the means by which any necessary authorisation is sought for any changes to your programme's scope, milestones or scheduling. This may include recommending the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary in a timely manner.

Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve within delegated responsibilities, you are responsible for escalating these issues to Katrina

Williams, the Accounting Officer and to the Executive Committee or its supporting committees as appropriate in a timely manner.

Project Status

The Project Status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the programme to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority. This is the agreed position as you assume formal ownership of the programme. Programme progress is reviewed regularly by the Department's Executive Committee or its supporting committees. You should take active steps to ensure you escalate in a timely manner any significant issues that will materially affect the delivery of the programme for which you are responsible as set out in the business case.

Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA)

As SRO of a GMPP project, you will be required to enrol on the MPLA. You will be contacted shortly by a member of the MPA Leadership and Capabilities team to discuss this.

As an MPLA graduate you will be 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 DECC as appropriate. You will be required to participate in such reviews at least once every 12 months to maintain your accreditation.

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

Yours sincerely,



Tony Meggs
Chief Executive,
Infrastructure and Projects Authority



Stephen Lovegrove
Permanent Secretary, DECC

I confirm that I accept the details of my role, including my personal accountability for implementation of the project during the Initial Actions Project, as detailed in the letter above.

Name of SRO: Lee McDonough

Signature of SRO:



Date: 16 March 2016

The Role of the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)

You are personally accountable for ensuring the ongoing delivery of the Geological Disposal Facility Programme (GDF) Initial Actions project. You are responsible for securing the resources necessary for the success of the project within those available to DECC and for ensuring that the related implementation and transition activities realise the agreed objectives and benefits. In doing so you should balance the need to support the Accounting Officer to help DECC reach an affordable settlement which reflects the department's priorities and to deliver value for money across DECC.

You will be personally accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees and be expected to explain the decisions and actions you have taken. This could include where a Minister has intervened to change the project during the implementation phase in a way which has implications for the cost and/or timeline of implementation. You will be able to disclose your advice about any such changes.

You must ensure the effectiveness of the governance, assurance and project management arrangements and maintain them throughout the life of the programme. You should adopt best practice and be prepared to justify any deviation from it, in line with guidance published by the Cabinet Office.

An SRO will:

- Be a visible, engaged and active project leader, not a figurehead;
- Deliver the agreed outcomes and benefits;
- Create an open, honest and positive culture committed to delivering at pace;
- Challenge senior officers and Ministers when appropriate and escalate quickly;
- Provide appropriate support, steer and strategic focus to the Project Director and ensure that they have a clear and current letter of appointment; and
- Have sufficient time, experience and the right skills to carry the full responsibilities of the role.

Specific SRO accountabilities:

Ensure that the project is set up for success

- Ensure that the project is set-up to make an unambiguous and demonstrable link to strategic policy;
- Translate this policy intent into clear deliverables which are established and agreed with senior stakeholders;
- Carry out a robust and commercially viable options appraisal, which balances risk with opportunity, as part of initial project feasibility;
- Establish a firm business case for the project during the initiation/definition phase and ensure that any planned change continues to be aligned with the strategic need;

- Identify and secure the necessary investment for the business case (this includes both budget and operational resource);
- Design and implement robust, appropriate and transparent project governance;
- Build strong and effective relationships with key stakeholders, justifying their trust and retaining their confidence, and obtain their commitment to benefits realisation.

Ensure that the project meets its objectives and delivers the projected benefits

- Gain agreement to the project objectives and benefits amongst stakeholders, including Ministers where appropriate;
- Understand the broader government perspective and its impact on the project;
- Ensure the strategic fit of the project objectives and benefits;
- Agree a clear and simple approach to performance management and monitor delivery of the objectives and benefits, taking appropriate action where necessary to ensure their successful delivery.

Develop the project organisation structure and plan

- Ensure that there is a coherent organisation structure and appropriately detailed project plan;
- Build the right team, securing necessary resources and skills and providing clear lines of accountability;
- Provide appropriate support, steer and strategic focus to the Project Director.

Monitor and take control of progress

- Monitor and control the progress of the project at a strategic level, being honest and frank about project progress, risks and issues; Ensure that any changes to agreed project benefits are flagged appropriately within project governance and that the business case is updated accordingly (throughout project life-cycle);
- Ensure that the integrity of the project is maintained and speak truth to power – including to Parliamentary Select Committees;
- Communicate effectively with senior stakeholders regarding project progress and provide clear, appropriate and delivery-focused decisions and advice to the Project Director.

Ensure problem resolution and referral processes are appropriate and effective

- Identify, understand and drive the successful mitigation of project risks;
- Escalate serious issues quickly and with confidence to senior management and/or Ministers;
- Develop strong and effective engagement between the project team and its stakeholders and sponsors;
- Ensure that communication processes are effective and that the project's objectives and deliverables continue to be consistent with the organisation's strategic direction.

Ensure that the project or programme is subject to review at appropriate stages

Classification if appropriate

- Recognise the value of robust project review and ensure it occurs at key points in the project lifecycle, particularly at the initiation stage;
- Make certain that any recommendations or concerns from reviews are met or addressed in a timely manner;
- In the event of a “red” or “amber-red” review or a red or amber-red quarterly GMPP review rating, ensure that the Finance and Business Committee has been made aware of the situation.

Manage formal project closure

- Formally close the project or programme and ensure that the lessons learned are documented within the final evaluation report and disseminated to key stakeholders;
- Ensure that the post implementation review takes place and that the output is communicated to the appropriate stakeholders;
- Ensure a plan for both long term benefits realisation and on-going sustainability is agreed with key stakeholders as part of the process of moving the project to “business as usual”.