



Department  
for Transport

**From the Permanent Secretary**

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Infrastructure  
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**From the Chief Executive**

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**From the Chief Executive**

Highways England  
Bridge House, 1 Walnut Close  
Guildford  
GU1 4LZ

24 May 2021

To: Chris Taylor

**Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Project**

We are pleased to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Project (A303ABD) with effect from November 2015, directly accountable to the Board of Highways England. This will be a part time role which requires a 25% proportion of your time. This will be combined with your wider management and leadership responsibilities within the Department and other responsibilities as SRO of the Complex Infrastructure Programme (CIP).

Regular conversations with your Permanent Secretary and the CEO of Highways England will take place to ensure an appropriate balance is maintained across your portfolio of activities and that you receive support as needed to carry out your responsibilities. This will take place as a minimum annually, but may be more frequently with agreement.

As SRO you have responsibility for delivery of the A303ABD Project and securing appropriate internal resources to manage these activities. This includes:

- Objectives and policy intent;
- Securing and protecting its vision;
- Ensuring that it is governed responsibly, reported honestly, escalated appropriately;
- Identifying and managing risks and issues, as well as coordinating prevention and mitigation where appropriate;
- Leading on resolving integration issues that interact with your A303ABD Project;
- Identification, quantification and management of the agreed project benefits, as well as successful delivery of any benefits due to be realised during the life of the project. You will also ensure that a plan, with appropriate budget and resources, for the ongoing management and realisation of benefits is in place for after project closure; and
- Ensuring a plan is in place for the closure of the project at the appropriate time. This should include transfer of Business As Usual activities to Highways England and capture and dissemination of appropriate lessons.

You are accountable to the Board of Highways England, which itself is accountable to the Secretary of State for Transport. Recognising that you operate within Highways England's corporate governance and internal control arrangements, as SRO you have personal responsibility for delivery of the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Project. You will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives and for securing and protecting its vision, for ensuring that it is governed responsibly, reported honestly, escalated appropriately and for influencing constructively the context, culture and operating environment of the programme.

Where you are asked to undertake a course of action by Ministers which is contrary to your own or others' professional advice and puts outcomes or value for money at risk, you should – if you judge it necessary – discuss with the principal accounting officer what escalation is appropriate. In circumstances where the action may be inconsistent with [Managing Public Money \(MPM\)](#), this may include consideration of whether Ministerial direction is required

In addition to your internal responsibilities, you should also be aware that SROs are accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly Rules. It is important to be clear that your accountability to Parliament relates only to implementation, within the terms agreed in this letter. It will remain for the Minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

Detailed SRO roles, responsibilities and guidance are listed under **Annex A**.

### **Tenure of Position**

We expect you to undertake this role at least until the next major milestone, 'Start of Works – Main Contract', planned for May 2022<sup>1</sup>.

Should the tenure finish earlier due to the long length of the project it is important that you support your line manager in the development of a succession plan at the appropriate time. This will need to be agreed with the Board of Highways England.

### **Objectives and Success Criteria of the A303 Amesbury to Berwick Down Project**

The policy intent supported by this project is to reduce the environmental impact of the current A303 route on the Stonehenge World Heritage Site.

Proposed changes to the project scope which impact on this intent or benefits realisation should be authorised by the Board of Highways England, the Department for Transport and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The objectives and vision of the A303ABD Project are to deliver the following outputs:

- **Cultural heritage:** to contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the World Heritage Site by improving access both within and to the site.
- **Environment and community:** to contribute to the enhancement of the historic landscape within the World Heritage Site (WHS), to improve biodiversity along the route and to provide a positive legacy to communities adjoining the road.
- **Economic growth:** in combination with other schemes on the route, to enable growth in jobs and housing by providing a free flowing and reliable connection between the East and the South West peninsula.
- **Transport:** to create a high-quality route that resolves current and predicted traffic problems and contributes towards the creation of an expressway between London and the south west

As SRO, you are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#).

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<sup>1</sup> Dates subject to review and approval by DfT.

## **Financial Accountability**

### Finance and Controls

HMT spending controls will apply on the basis set out within your organisation's delegated authority letter. Where the A303ABD Project 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.

Further information on finance and controls is provided under **Annex B**.

The overall budget for the project is £2,013m, inclusive of non-recoverable VAT. The current IDC approved expenditure figure is £193.7m, which provides cover for the development phase up to the construction phase. You should be aware of any conditions or controls which have been agreed as part of current agreed financing.

### Delegated Departmental/Project Authority

- Your authorised expenditure is set out in your delegation letter.
- You are authorised to agree project rescheduling, provided you are satisfied that the expenditure can be accommodated under the annual expenditure limit, as agreed with Treasury for RIS2 in which the rescheduled expenditure would now fall. Rescheduling beyond this must be agreed with the Board of Highways England, and may depending on circumstances require wider cross-government agreement.
- Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to Board of Highways England.
- You are also responsible for recommending to Board of Highways England the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner. Again, this may require in certain cases wider cross-government agreement.

## **Professional Development and Wider Support**

It is important that you have the appropriate professional skills and are committed to advancing your own professional development. This includes maintaining and sharing your knowledge and experience with your own and other project teams.

As a graduate of the Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA), we expect and will support you to continue your on-going professional development, and will encourage you to take an active part in MPLA alumni activities.

Support is available to help you discharge your responsibilities as an SRO. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Advice and support from DfT's Project Delivery and Portfolio directorate;
- Access to the various subject matter experts across DfT's Centres of Excellence;
- Being part of a shared community of project delivery professionals across DfT (including being a member of an SRO network comprised of peers and taking part in/supporting key learning activities); and
- Access to the benefits of professional project delivery networks.

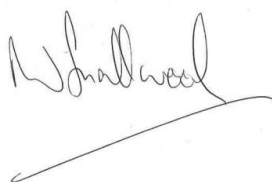
Cross-government specialist support is provided by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) to further help support you and your team.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Bernadette Kelly**  
Permanent Secretary  
Department for Transport



**Nick Smallwood**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Infrastructure and Projects Authority



**Nick Harris**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Highways England

I confirm that I accept the appointment including my accountability for implementation of the project as detailed in the letter above.



**Chris Taylor**  
Director – Complex Infrastructure Programme

## **Annex A – Guidance Documentation**

- [Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants](#)
- [The Role of the Senior Responsible Owner](#)
- [Project Delivery Functional Standard](#)
- [A Handbook for Leaders of Transformation Programmes](#)

## **Annex B – Additional Finance and Controls**

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 your project or programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).