



To: Mark Robinson, Senior Responsible Owner for the Networks Project

From: Dr Jo Farrar, Second Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice; and  
Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive Officer of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

**May 2022**

Dear Mark Robinson,

**APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE EVOLVE NETWORKS PROJECT**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Evolve Networks project with effect from November 2020. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As SRO, you are directly accountable to Permanent Secretary as accounting officer for the Ministry of Justice, and the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice.

Your project forms part of the Ministry of Justice's Portfolio, under the oversight of the Chair of the Portfolio Committee within the tolerances set by the Investment Committee at each approvals point. The project is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for the delivery of project and will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives, with policy intent and outcomes expected. This encompasses securing and protecting its vision, ensuring that it is governed responsibly, reported on honestly, escalated appropriately and for influencing the context, culture, and operating environment of the project. You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the project and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to the Investment Committee.

You remain accountable to Ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and should deliver the project in accordance with the objectives and policy intent as set by Ministers.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, SROs for GMPP projects and programmes are personally accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. This means that, from the date of this letter, you will be held personally accountable to and could be called by Select Committees to account for and explain the decisions and actions you have taken to deliver the project.

It is important to be clear that your accountability relates only to implementation, within the agreed terms in this letter; it will remain for the Minister to account for the relevant policy decisions and development.

More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees - Guidance for Civil Servants](#), sometimes known as the Osmotherly Rules. Information on the roles and responsibilities of the SRO are detailed in the Infrastructure and Project Authority's guidance on [the role of the senior responsible owner](#). You should also make yourself familiar with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework, and the guidance and requirements for project delivery as set by the Ministry of Justice Portfolio Management Office.

## **Time commitment and tenure**

This role will require 60% of your time to deliver the Evolve portfolio with 20% spent on the Networks Project to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.

You are required to undertake this role until achievement of project close, planned for August 2026. Progress towards this will be reflected in your personal objectives. Any changes to the agreed time commitment or tenure of the role, as set out above, will require both departmental and Infrastructure and Projects Authority consent.

## **Objectives and performance criteria**

The policy intent supported by this project is included in the Innovation, Technology and Data strategic enabler of the Outcome Delivery Plan 2021-22;

The project will enable digital transformation of services for over 1 million users, developing digital services to support priorities and improve access to services. It will drive a user-centred approach to policy design with high-quality data and analytical services helping to ensure strategic, policy, financial, corporate and operational decisions are based on robust evidence.

The vision of the project is to prioritise the systems and services that are most at risk and are business critical. This includes: decommissioning of infrastructure that is end of life; continuing to move services to the cloud; beginning a refresh of end-user devices across the non-prison estate; making improvements in cyber security, data privacy and information management; replacing dated applications; and beginning to disaggregate outsourced services, including end-user computing, networking and voice.

The objectives of the project are to secure continued, fit for purpose network connectivity, infrastructure, support and management across the Ministry of Justice estate. Completing the transition from the current, expiring contract to new contracts and/or in-house provision will ensure continuity of this critical service and support future improvements.

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by Investment Committee and may be subject to further levels of approval.

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to the project are:

- To deliver resilient, secure, value for money Wide Area Network (WAN) and Local Area Network (LAN) services that meet the Ministry of Justice's diverse needs beyond the existing contract end of February 2022.
- Introduce flexibility to procure from different providers, whereby we are introducing competition, driving up performance, removing the challenge of all our connectivity contracts expiring at the same time etc

- Provide a modern secure network service in line with market shifts and market offerings. This will include the requirement to evolve with us as an organisation, replacing aging technology and scaling up, down according to business need over time.
- Ensure legal requirements are met, with the current contract coming to an end in February 2022, there is a need for these services to be re-procured.
- Ensure alignment with interdependent projects and organisational strategy, such as the Ministry of Justice's Outcome Delivery Plan commitments, the Prisons Technology Transformation Programme and Greening Government ICT sustainability Commitments.

You are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), the other [Functional Standards](#) as applicable to this project and the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework, ensuring that the project follows best project delivery practices and effective risk management processes.

## **Extent and limit of accountability**

### Finance and Controls

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

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

The overall estimated budget, resourcing requirements and tolerances for your programme will be agreed as part of the approval process. It is expected that you deliver within the agreed cost, and deliverability tolerances and to report quarterly on these as part of GMPP reporting.

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 HM Treasury delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to the Evolve Networks project. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

### Delegated authority

The total cost of the preferred options as presented in the Outline Business Case is estimated to be £294m. As part of the departmental annual allocations process, you will be authorised to approve a set level of expenditure each financial year. This will be set out in your annual financial delegation letter from the Permanent Secretary.

You are also authorised to:

- agree project rescheduling within tolerance of agreed milestones, but rescheduling beyond that must be agreed with the Chief Digital and Information Officer and the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee; and

- recommend to the Chief Digital and Information Officer and the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.

These authority limits are subject to change and other conditions or tolerances may be set as part of the business case approval and ongoing monitoring processes within which you should then operate.

Where issues arise, which take you outside of these authority limits and which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to the Chief Digital and Information Officer and the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee.

## Appointments

You should appoint a full-time project director to support you in the management of this project and make other appointments as required for the control and delivery of your project within your delegated authority. We note that an experienced full time portfolio director for the Evolve Portfolio is in place.

## Governance and assurance

You should pay attention to ensuring effective governance for your project, including the establishment of a project board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that the project secures business case approval from the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee and Cabinet Office and HM Treasury. You should also ensure that the project remains aligned to the strategic outcomes, costs, timescales, and benefits in line with the approved business case as well as monitoring the context within which the project is being delivered to ensure it remains valid.

Where a change impacts the scope, costs, benefits, or planned delivery milestones agreed as part of an agreed business case, you are responsible for following the agreed change request approval process and setting a new, approved business case baseline.

You should ensure that an accounting officer assessment is completed alongside the approval of the Outline Business Case and that this is published on GOV.UK as part of the government's transparency requirements on major projects. You are responsible for bringing to the attention of the accounting officer any material changes in the project which could require a new accounting officer assessment to be completed and published. [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](#) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.

Although you are directly accountable for this project, you are also expected to support delivery of the department's overall strategic objectives. This means that you are expected to work collaboratively with other SROs and project directors in adjacent projects and programmes and with the Ministry of Justice Portfolio Management Office and Head of Portfolio to manage dependencies, resources, schedules, and funding to support delivery of the overall change the department needs to achieve its strategic objectives.

You should ensure that appropriate and proportionate assurance is in place and agree on the level and frequency of assurance reviews through the maintenance of an integrated assurance and approvals plan. You should develop this plan and its maintenance in collaboration with the Departmental Assurance Coordinator and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

## **Project status, reporting and transparency requirements**

The project status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the project to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and is the agreed position as you assume formal ownership of the project.

You are responsible for ensuring the honest and timely reporting on the position of the project to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority while it remains on the GMPP and for providing reports and information to the Ministry of Justice Portfolio Management Office as required and for submitting business cases and reports to the Key Holder process and relevant boards. Where appropriate, governance will include reference to the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee and Executive Committee. Information on the project will be published annually by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

You should monitor, and report on, status, forecast timescales, costs and benefits, key risks established using the GMPP RAG rating (if appropriate) and dependencies, and ensure that any issues (including any likelihood of exceeding approved tolerances) are reported openly and transparently both within the Ministry of Justice and to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

You are responsible for publishing on GOV.UK a summary of the accounting office assessment completed in line with the approval of the Outline Business Case and summaries of any subsequent assessments should they be required.

## **Development and support**

As SRO of a GMPP project, you are currently enrolled in the Major Projects Leadership Academy.

To widen experience and understanding of the role, SROs are also expected to become accredited assurance reviewers and to lead or participate in such reviews for other government departments, the wider public sector, and other areas of the Ministry of Justice as appropriate. Becoming an assurance reviewer and completing a review will form part of your time at the Major Projects Leadership Academy. To maintain your accreditation, you will be required to participate in a review at least once every 12 months.

The department will assist you in securing the necessary resources to support the project, and will set clear guidance, requirements and standards, which align to the [Government Functional Standard on Project Delivery](#), to enable good governance and effective delivery. You will be part of the department's cohort of major project leaders who will be expected to support each other, share good practice and lessons learned and to collectively develop solutions. You should liaise with the Ministry of Justice's Head of Profession for project delivery to discuss the maintenance and development of your delivery and leadership skills.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority will be available to you for support, advice, and assurance throughout the project's time on the GMPP.

Following approval of the business case and entry onto the Ministry of Justice Portfolio, Portfolio Committee will provide ongoing oversight and support and will take steps to help resolve and escalate risks, issues or constraints that are acting as a blocker to successful delivery.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Dr JO FARRAR**

Second Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice with lead responsibility for project delivery



**NICK SMALLWOOD**

Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and Projects Authority

**Appointment endorsed by:**

**Antonia Romeo, Principal Accounting Officer of Ministry of Justice: May 2022**

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**CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT**

I confirm that I accept the appointment of Senior Responsible Owner for the project, including my personal accountability for implementation, as set out in the letter above.



**MARK ROBINSON**

Evolve Networks Project

[Date]