



To: Fiona Parker, Senior Responsible Owner for the Prison Retail 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

December 2022

Dear Fiona,

### **APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE PRISON RETAIL PROJECT**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Prison Retail Project with effect from 30 May 2022. 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 the CEO for HMPPS, under the oversight of the Permanent Secretary as Principal Accounting Officer for the Ministry of Justice, and the Minister of State responsible for Prison Operations.

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

As SRO, you have personal responsibility for the delivery of Prison Retail 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 Ministry of Justice 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 Prison Retail 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 50% of your time to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.

You are required to undertake this role until the project transitions into business as usual. Currently this is expected to be quarter 4 2022/23. 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. You should ensure that you notify the Director of the Project Delivery Function in good time of any planned departure and of any proposed transfer of your SRO role to a future SRO.

## Objectives and performance criteria

The policy intent supported by this project is the provision of a Retail Service to prisoners using their own funds to purchase supplemental goods in support of the decency agenda in prisons, as well as providing opportunities for gaining qualifications and employment within prisons, which increases opportunities for employment on release.

The objectives and vision of the project are to commission a Prison Retail Service that:

1. Provides prisoners with consistency in the availability and price of goods across the service which is comparable to that of convenience store retailers for the same goods.
2. Provides flexibility in the delivery and distribution options which can be met within service budgets, and that meet the needs of establishments and their prisoner populations, supporting timely delivery of orders with minimal error or waste.
3. Is an open and transparent service with a clear charging and reporting model which customers and stakeholders can understand, minimising the burden to the taxpayer.
4. Maintains operational security in the delivery and distribution of goods, accommodating both national and local security policies while seeking to safeguard prisoners, to the extent possible, from bullying and/or exploitation in the ordering and consumption of goods.
5. Supports a rehabilitative environment through a solution which provides opportunities to promote normalisation and resettlement.

Your personal objective and performance criteria in relation to the project is to ensure successful delivery of a contract that meets cost and quality considerations, prior to the expiration of the existing Prison Retail Services contract in August 2022.

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 programme 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 project will be agreed as part of the approval process. It is expected to deliver within the agreed cost and deliverability tolerances and 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 Prison Retail Project. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

### Delegated authority

As presented in the Full Business Case, the Whole Life Costs (WLCs), that is from project inception to the end of the new 7-year contract is £598.12m against a Sales income of £589.88, which produces an overall net cost of £8.24m.

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 Chief Executive Office of HM Prisons and Probation Service (HMPPS).

You are authorised to agree project rescheduling within tolerances agreed with the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee. Rescheduling beyond that must be agreed with the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee.

You should recommend to the CEO for HMPPS and the Ministry of Justice Investment Committee the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.

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

## **Appointments**

We note that you have appointed a full-time senior project manager with appropriate qualifications to support you in the management of this project and make other appointments as required for the control and delivery of your programme within your delegated authority.

## **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 OBC 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 programme.

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 keyholder 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.

## Development and support

As SRO of a GMPP project, you are required to complete the Major Projects Leadership Academy, and you are enrolled in cohort 28.

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 department'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 Prison Retail Project's time on the GMPP.

The Investment 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.

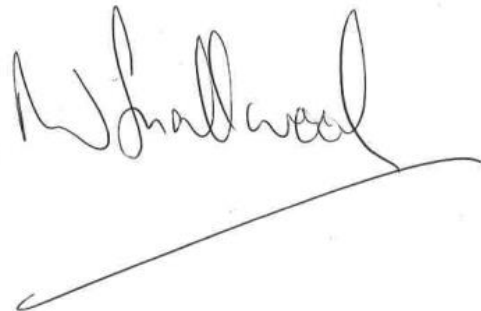
We would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely,



**Dr JO FARRAR**

Second Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice and Accounting Officer for HMPPS



**NICK SMALLWOOD**

Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and Projects Authority

### Appointment endorsed by:

**Antonia Romeo, Principal Accounting Officer of Ministry of Justice: 30 November 2022**

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## CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Fiona Parker', with a large loop at the start of the first name.

**FIONA PARKER**

5 December 2022