



Department  
for Culture  
Media & Sport

**From the Permanent Secretary**  
Department for Culture, Media and Sport  
100 Parliament Street  
London  
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Infrastructure  
and Projects  
Authority

**From the Chief Executive**  
Infrastructure and Projects Authority  
1 Horse Guards Road  
London  
SW1A 2HQ

To: *Dr Tim Littlewood* Senior Responsible Owner  
(SRO) for the NHM Unlocked Programme

Date: 11th July 2023

From: **Susannah Storey** Permanent Secretary  
and  
**Nick Smallwood** Chief Executive, IPA

**Subject: Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the NHM Unlocked Programme**

This letter provides an update to my previous letter of 16 June 2022, appointing you to be SRO of NHM Unlocked as of 15th May 2019. Please use this letter to outline your SRO responsibilities for NHM Unlocked.

This letter reconfirms your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the NHM Unlocked Programme (previously called the NHM@Harwell programme) with effect from 15 May 2019, directly accountable to The Trustees of the Natural History Museum (NHM), under the oversight of Lucy Frazer MP, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. You will carry out this role alongside your other responsibilities and must ensure that you allocate sufficient time to enable the effective delivery of the role and responsibilities, as set out in Annex 1. This will be periodically reviewed to ensure that an appropriate balance is maintained across your portfolio of activities.

As SRO you have personal responsibility for delivery of the NHM Unlocked Programme and will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives and policy intent; 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 project.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, you should also be aware that SROs will now be held personally accountable to 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). In your case this means that from the date of signature of this letter you will be held personally accountable and could be called by Select Committees for delivery of the NHM Unlocked Programme.

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.

Detailed SRO roles and responsibilities are attached at Annex 1. You should follow the guidance in that document. You should also make sure you understand the guidance “Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants”. You should also make yourself aware of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) guidance on management of major projects: (<https://www.gov.uk/government/policy-teams/major-projects-authority>).

### **Tenure of position**

We expect you to undertake this role at least until the Programme’s closure (official closure in financial year 2030/31). SROs are expected to remain in position for the lifetime of a major programme, to see it through to its successful conclusion. Changes to the SRO position are subject to IPA approval and you should ensure that the appropriate succession planning is undertaken should there be any changes to ensure that programme benefits are successfully transferred to the business. Progress towards this must be reflected in your personal objectives.

### **Objectives and Performance Criteria**

The policy intent supported by this project is to:

- Advance the UK’s ambition to be a science superpower
- Establish a world-class research infrastructure
- Help level up economic opportunity by enhancing a key regional cluster
- Leverage the NHM’s global reputation as a trusted scientific and cultural powerhouse to help strengthen the UK's place in the world
- Help to protect the UK against future threats by enhancing the strong research focus at on relevant scientific areas
- Help meet the Government’s commitment to increase public R&D spending
- Adopt an international leadership position to influence and affect national policy and global action on pressing environmental issues
- Deliver on Government digital objectives by accelerating free and open digital access to NHM’s collection
- Deliver on DCMS access and participation objectives by ensuring the national collection is protected and access is secured, and by unlocking galleries and enabling redevelopment of buildings at South Kensington
- Deliver on HMG smarter working and asset efficiency objectives by releasing your current Wandsworth site

Proposed changes to the project scope which impact on this intent or benefits realisation must be authorised by the Trustees of the Natural History Museum and the NHM Unlocked Programme Board and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The objectives and vision of the NHM Unlocked Programme are to work towards and achieve the NHM’s strategic aims. The Programme’s vision is:

*“We create a future where both people and planet thrive by ensuring our unique collection is safe, accessible, and digitally available for research now and in the future.*

*Our irreplaceable collections are more widely shared and highly utilised in the fight to combat the planetary emergency, and we have the facilities and strategic partnerships to increase the impact of our research nationally and globally.”*

The key Programme Objectives are outlined below:

- Increase the long-term impact from sharing NHM's collections and research outputs nationally and globally
- Secure the collections for use by future generations as part of the UK scientific infrastructure, thereby meeting NHM's statutory obligation
- Make the collections and NHM data more accessible for current and future generations of researchers and advocates for the planet
- Enable South Kensington redevelopment by moving collections, unlocking the site's capacity & enhancing public engagement with the natural world
- Improve the NHM's economic resilience and sustainability
- Improve the NHM's environmental resilience and sustainability

Your personal objectives and performance criteria are to deliver the NHM Unlocked Programme in line with the strategic objectives set by the Director and Trustees of the NHM and successful integration of the NHM at the Science and Digitisation Centre at the Thames Valley Science Park owned by The University of Reading as set out in the NHM Science Plan.

### **Extent and limit of accountability**

#### **(1) Finance and Controls**

HMT spending controls will apply on the basis set out within your department's delegated authority letter. Where the NHM Unlocked Programme exceeds the delegated authority set by DCMS and HMT, the Treasury Approval Point process will apply and the details of each approval process must be agreed with the DCMS Finance Team and 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.

The overall budget for the NHM Unlocked Programme is £228.5m capital funding across 10 years. This includes £201m of government funding over the period 2020/21 to 2030/31. The balance of funding is from sale of an NHM-owned site in Wandsworth and NHM self-generated income.

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 NHM Unlocked Programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#)

## (2) Delegated departmental/project authority

- You are authorised to approve expenditure each year in accordance with the profile agreed with the DCMS Finance Committee and HM Treasury.
- You are authorised to agree to project rescheduling which does not prevent the achievement of the Benefits (Key Requirements) of the NHM Unlocked Programme or full operation of the new NHM Unlocked centre by the end of 2031.
- You are also responsible for recommending to the DCMS Permanent Secretary and the Trustees of the NHM the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.

Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to the Museum Director (as the Museum's Accounting Officer), and the Trustees of the NHM.

### **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.

### **Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA)**

- 1) As SRO of a GMPP project, you will be required to complete the MPLA

To widen experience and understanding of the role, SROs 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 for Culture, Media and Sport 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,



Permanent Secretary

Department for Culture Media & Sport




Chief Executive Officer

Infrastructure and Projects Authority

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

Name of SRO: Dr Tim Littlewood

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr. Littlewood'. The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'D' and 'L'.

13 June 2023

## **SRO Role and Responsibilities Annex 1**

### **The Role of the Senior Responsible Owner (SRO)**

You are personally accountable for ensuring the ongoing delivery of the NHM Unlocked Programme. You are responsible for securing the resources necessary for the success of the project and for ensuring that the related implementation and transition activities realise the agreed objectives and benefits. 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 relating to Major Project governance, assurance and control.

#### **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 business;
- 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; and
- 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

- Recognise the value of robust project review and ensure it occurs at key points in the project lifecycle, particularly at the pre-initiation (feasibility) and initiation stages;
- 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 Permanent Secretary has been made aware of the situation and has been briefed accordingly.

#### 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”

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