To: **Imran Shafi** Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for Open Networks Programme

Date: 09 June 2021

From: **Sarah Healey** Permanent Secretary and
Nick Smallwood Chief Executive, IPA

Subject: Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) for the Open Networks Programme

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Open Networks Programme with effect from September 2021, directly accountable to DCMS Permanent Secretary, under the oversight of the Minister for Digital Infrastructure. This will be a full time role.

You will be held accountable for the delivery of objectives and policy intent; for securing and protecting the programmes' vision, for ensuring they are governed responsibly, reported honestly, escalated appropriately, and for influencing constructively the context, culture and operating environments of the programmes.

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 Open Networks 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.

Tenure of position

You are required to undertake this role until achievement of the Programme objectives, set out below, are complete, as currently stands this is March 2025, unless agreed otherwise. Progress towards this will be reflected in your personal objectives.

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. As it is vital to ensure that the appropriate succession planning is undertaken, you should agree a succession plan with the Permanent Secretary to ensure programme benefits are successfully transferred to the business.

Objectives and Performance Criteria

The Open Networks Programme's R&D objectives - which directly contribute to the objectives of the wider Diversification Strategy that have been agreed with Ministers and therefore mitigation of the security and resilience risks - are to:

- **Accelerate open-interface products and solutions -** ensuring they are truly interoperable, performant, and sustainable - to support our long term vision for a more open and innovative telecoms market.
- **Incentivise and derisk accelerated deployment in the UK** - to encourage and accelerate network operators to adopt and deploy open network solutions.
- **Develop an internationally recognised UK telecoms ecosystem** positioning the UK as a leading global market and focal point for research into open network technology.

As and when objectives change, this will be considered to be reflected in this Osmotherley Letter until such time as the letter is updated.

Proposed changes to the project scope which impact on this intent or benefits realisation must be authorised by the Minister for Digital Infrastructure and may be subject to further levels of approval.

As SRO, you are expected to run your programme in accordance with the Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery. Further detail on your role and responsibilities as SRO are set out in Annex 1 and the IPA guidance on the role of the senior responsible owner; you are expected to follow that guidance, and other IPA guidance on the management of major projects.

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 Open Networks 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.

The overall capital budgets (excluding VAT) for the programmes are:

	21/22 (£m)	22/23 (£m) 23/24 (£m) 24/25 (£m) Total (£m) FY 22-25 only
CDEL	38.52	76 86.1 87.4 249.5

The current approved expenditure figure for 22/23 is £82m, including £6m resource budget.

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 all four programmes. 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 HMT and the DCMS Director of Finance and as set out in your separate financial delegation letter.
- You are also responsible for recommending to the Permanent Secretary 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 Permanent Secretary.

Governance

The programmes detailed in this letter are part of the DCMS major projects portfolio and will have oversight from the Major Programmes Committee (MPC). MPC is responsible for regular oversight of the department's major programmes and ensuring there is the appropriate operating environment for delivery. As major programmes, IPA should also conduct assurance reviews at key points during the programme's life cycle.

The Open Networks Programme is also subject to oversight and decision-making by the Delivery Management Board (twice-monthly, chaired by the Programme Director), the Digital Infrastructure Portfolio Board (monthly, chaired by the SRO) and the Projects Assurance Board (as required, chaired by BDUK).

Assurance

You will be required to produce an Assurance and Approvals Plan (IAAP) that includes internal and external assurance reviews which are an essential part of successful project delivery. You will be required to undertake internal and external assurance reviews which are an essential part of successful project delivery. The reviews are often required for formal HMT approvals or business case approval points and they also provide support and constructive challenge to SROs.

Professional Development

You are responsible for making sure that you are appropriately skilled and able to execute the functions outlined in this letter. If you need additional support or training, please contact [project-delivery@dcms.gov.uk]().

As SRO of a GMPP project, you are required to complete the MPLA, and in line with this you are currently enrolled on MPLA (Cohort 31).
You will also be required to attend DCMS Risk Management Training as soon as feasibly practical to ensure risk management is embedded in project delivery at DCMS.
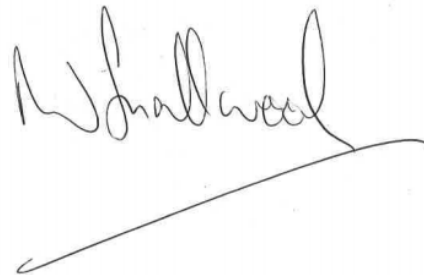
To widen experience and understanding of the role, SROs are expected to become accredited Major Project reviewers and to lead or participate in such reviews for other Government departments, the wider public sector or other areas of the DCMS as appropriate. You will be required to participate in such 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,

Sarah Healey
Permanent Secretary
Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

Nick Smallwood
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: IMRAN SHAFI

Signature of SRO:

Date: 17 / 08 / 22

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 Open Networks 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".