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To: Carolyn Bartlett, Senior Responsible Owner for Non-Domestic Rating Reforms Programme

From:Jonathan Russell, Chief Executive Officer of the Valuation Office Agency

Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive Officer of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority

[www.voa.gov.uk](http://www.voa.gov.uk) 20/11/2023

Dear Carolyn,

**Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Non-Domestic Rating Reforms Programme**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Non-Domestic Rating Reforms Programme as of the date of this letter. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

You will be directly accountable to me as Valuation Office Agency (VOA) Chief Executive and to VOA Executive Committee (ExCom) as owners of the VOA Change Portfolio, under the oversight of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

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, as set out in Appendix B. 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 successful delivery of the Non-Domestic Rating Reforms 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, and issues are escalated appropriately; for influencing constructively the context, culture and operating environment of the project; and for ensuring that a Post Implementation Review is undertaken.

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.

Like all civil servants, you remain accountable to Ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and should deliver the Non-Domestic Rates Reforms Programme in accordance with the objectives and policy intent as set by them.

In addition to your internal accountabilities, SROs are personally accountable to Parliamentary Select Committees. You will be expected to account for and explain the actions you have taken to deliver the Programme (or specific phases or milestones within it). 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 in respect of the delivery of your Programme.

More information on this is set out in [Giving Evidence to Select Committees – Guidance for Civil Servants](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/osmotherly-rules-statement-on-updated-guidance), 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.

In line with VOA change governance you have appointed a suitably qualified and experienced Programme Director to enable you to discharge some of your responsibilities whilst retaining your overall delivery accountabilities, which you should set out in a formal letter of delegation. The relationship between the SRO and Programme Director role is further detailed at Appendix A.

You may be asked to account for and explain the actions you have taken in discharging your accountabilities to HMRC ExCom or to one of its sub-boards. Therefore, you should provide a copy of the signed delegation letter to the HMRC Change Portfolio.

Detailed SRO roles and responsibilities are set out in the HMRC Briefing Pack for SROs of Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) Programmes and Projects and HMRC Major Change.

The Briefing Pack also includes guidance on giving evidence to Select Committees, Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) guidelines on the management of major projects, and good practice principles in programme and project management. You should become familiar with that guidance and apply it in practice as required.

**Tenure of position**

You are required to undertake this role until managed closure of the programme is achieved or, by agreement, until delivery of a specific milestone, end of phase or gate is achieved. Progress towards this will be reflected in your personal objectives.

The policy intent and delivery objectives of this project are set out in Appendix B. Proposed changes to the project scope which impact this intent or benefits realisation must be authorised via the VOA change request process and may be subject to further levels of approval.

As SRO, you are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-delivery-functional-standard). Further detail on your role and responsibilities as SRO are set out [in IPA guidance on the role of the senior responsible owner](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-the-senior-responsible-owner/the-role-of-the-senior-responsible-owner), and 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
2. HM Treasury (HMT) spending controls will apply on the basis set out within HMRC’s delegated authority letter. The details of each approval point must be agreed with your HMT spending team. VOA internal delegated approval limits for funding will also apply.
3. 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.
4. The current forecast whole life costs for the programme are as detailed in Appendix B.
5. Funding for this programme is also subject to prioritisation of the VOA investment portfolio.
6. You should operate at all times in line with the requirements set out in [Managing Public Money](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/managing-public-money). In addition, you must be mindful of, and act in accordance with, the specific Cabinet Office controls relevant to the programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cabinet-office-controls).
7. Delegated departmental programme authority
8. You are authorised to approve expenditure in line with the funding agreed by VOA ExCom.
9. You are responsible for ensuring that where a change impacts on the scope, costs, benefits or planned delivery milestones agreed as part of an approved Business Case, it is managed via the VOA change request process.
10. You are also responsible for recommending to ExCom the need to either pause or terminate the programme if necessary and to do so in a timely manner.
11. Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve you are responsible for escalating these issues to VOA ExCom as appropriate.
12. Programme status and reporting accountability
13. You are accountable to VOA ExCom, through VOA portfolio governance, for the delivery of the programme within the agreed quality, time and cost envelope.
14. You will be required to report monthly to VOA Change Portfolio in line with central VOA reporting standards.
15. If the programme is part of the GMPP you are required to provide a GMPP quarterly report to the IPA, which will reflect the current programme status. Information on programme status is published annually by IPA at [data.gov](http://data.gov.uk/dataset/government-major-projects-portfolio-data-for-hmrc).

**Developing your personal delivery leadership capability**

As SRO of a GMPP programme you have successfully completed the MPLA, with graduation in September 2023. You have committed to undertake ongoing professional development and will take an active part in MPLA alumni activities.

You understand there is an expectation that SROs will become accredited Major Project reviewers and lead or participate in reviews for other Government departments, the wider public sector or other areas of HMRC as appropriate.

You understand that you will be required to participate in such reviews at least once every 12 months to maintain my accreditation.

You should liaise with the HMRC PPM Head of Profession to discuss maintaining and enhancing your programme delivery skills.

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

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

Yours sincerely

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| Jonathan Russell CBChief ExecutiveValuation Office Agency  | Nick SmallwoodChief ExecutiveInfrastructure and Projects Authority  |

**Confirmation of acceptance of appointment**

I confirm that I accept the appointment as Senior Responsible Owner, including my personal accountability for implementation, as set out above and the enclosed Appendices.



**Carolyn Bartlett**

**Non-Domestic Rating Reforms Programme**

**Date:** 04/01/2024

**Attached**

**Appendix A** - A comparison of the Senior Responsible Owner Programme Delivery Accountabilities with those of the Programme Director

**Appendix B** - Strategic Accountabilities

Briefing Pack for SROs of Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP) Programmes and Projects and HMRC Major Change