



Infrastructure  
and Projects  
Authority



Ministry  
of Justice

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John Laverick, Senior Responsible Owner HMCTS Reform  
Programme – Crime

*[By email]*

07 March 2025

Dear John,

## **APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE HMCTS REFORM PROGRAMME - CRIME**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as joint Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the HMCTS Reform Programme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2024. The issuance of this letter had been delayed due to an internal review of the SRO Letter approvals process within the Department. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from HM Courts and Tribunals Service, the Ministry of Justice and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

As SRO, you are directly accountable to the HMCTS Chief Executive Officer, in line with the [HMCTS Framework Agreement](#), under the oversight of the Permanent Secretary as Principal Accounting Officer for the Ministry of Justice, the HMCTS Board (with supervision delegated to the HMCTS Change Portfolio Committee, as set out in the HMCTS Delegations Framework), and Sarah Sackman KC MP, Minister for Courts and Legal Services.

The HMCTS Reform Programme 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 (agreed by HMCTS Investments and Commercial Governance Committee and Change Portfolio Committee). The programme is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You, and Jason Latham - your counterpart SRO leading on Civil, Family and Tribunals (CFT), have joint responsibility for delivering the remainder of the HMCTS Reform Programme through to closure

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 overall Programme as well as the Crime sub-Programme.

You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the Crime sub-Programme and overall Reform Programme and recommending their pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise that you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to the HMCTS Executive Team and Change Portfolio Committee, and the Ministry of Justice's Portfolio and Investment Committees.

You will take primary responsibility for the delivery of the Crime sub-Programme and provide peer support, expertise and leadership resilience to Jason Latham on the CFT sub-Programme, particularly regarding digital and technology support in line with your Chief Digital and Information Officer responsibilities. Jason Latham will have the primary responsibility for the delivery of the CFT sub-Programme and provide peer support, expertise and leadership resilience to you on the Crime sub-Programme, particularly regarding implementing and embedding changes in the Crime Live Services. The person who has primary responsibility for a sub-programme, project or associated benefit is considered 'first among equals' for that. Benefits responsibilities are noted later in this letter. As all their delivery pre-dates your appointment, responsibility for formal closure of the Property elements of Reform will sit with the Property Director and is not part of your or Jason Latham's SRO responsibilities.

As an HMCTS official you remain jointly accountable to Ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and to the Senior Judiciary through the HMCTS Board and should deliver the programme in accordance with the objectives and policy intent as set under the HMCTS Framework Agreement.

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 HMCTS Reform Programme.

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's Portfolio Management Office.

### **Time commitment and tenure**

This role will require at least 30% of your time to enable effective delivery of the role and execute your responsibilities in full.

You are required to undertake this role until achievement of Reform Programme closure, planned for May 2025. 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 the HMCTS Reform Programme is to modernise the infrastructure and deliver a better and more flexible service to court users; modernise and transform the courts and tribunal services to increase efficiency, improve service quality and reduce the cost to the taxpayer. Simpler processes for simpler cases will free up time for more complex ones, allowing better access to justice for all.

This will be delivered through:

- Reducing admin required on cases by removing manual data entry and automation. This is the largest driver of benefits.
- Reducing judicial costs by improving the efficiency of hearings and delegating some tasks, making better use of judicial time.

Reform Programme benefits are expected to be realised primarily in the form of reduction in admin costs, as a result of removed or more efficient procedures, and reduced judicial costs as a result of less judicial activity required on certain tasks, totalling a net £1,485m over the life of the whole Reform programme, based on the latest forecasts. As joint SRO you will be responsible for progress towards realisation of these benefits, particularly those benefits that are forecast for the remainder of the programme or come directly from services within your programme, ensuring that, where benefit realisation is reliant on other stakeholders, for example the judiciary, appropriate collaboration is in place to achieve these benefits.

This responsibility extends to ensuring that appropriate systems for realisation are in place and there is activity to test the robustness of benefits, including the identification of any new or additional benefits that might not have been captured in original Reform planning. As SRO you will also be responsible for the further identification and delivery of the wider economic benefits of Reform.

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by the HMCTS Change Portfolio Committee and may be subject to further levels of approval. In addition, for any identified deviation away from the expected benefits it is the SROs responsibility to escalate these to the relevant forum with proactive actions that could be taken to realise those benefits.

The vision of the Crime sub-Programme is to modernise and upgrade the criminal justice system so that it works even better for everyone, from judges and legal professionals, to witnesses and vulnerable victims of crime.

Common Platform is now live in 227 criminal courts across England and Wales.

There are three main interrelated objectives:

- Enhance the product we have, delivering new features and functionality to manage different case types, supporting legal and court processes – and ultimately allowing us to decommission our legacy systems, Libra and Xhibit;
- Fix defects and deliver enhancements to improve user experience;

- Improve the overall performance, stability and efficiency of the platform.

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to both the Reform Programme and the Crime sub-Programme are:

- Act as the champion for the Reform Programme with personal accountability for its delivery. Build strong relationships across HMCTS, the Ministry of Justice, and wider to secure commitment and manage interdependencies;
- Provide leadership and strategic direction throughout the life of the Crime sub-programme, creating an open and honest culture. Ensure government project delivery standards are adopted, applying lessons learned from other governmental departments and similar programmes;
- Bear responsibility for securing budget against the business case throughout the life of the programme; and
- Ensure plans are in place with clear ownership that deliver the business case benefits, both cashable (reduction in operating costs) and non-cashable (reduction in risk), escalating any changes and updating the Reform business case accordingly.

You are expected to run your project in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#) and other [Functional Standards](#) as applicable to this programme and the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework and the guidance and requirements for project delivery in HMCTS as set by the HMCTS Change Portfolio Office and Project Governance & Assurance Team.

## **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 HMCTS Reform Programme 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 the Reform Programme have been agreed as part of the Programme Business Case approval process. You will be expected to deliver within these tolerances and report quarterly on these as part of overall GMPP reporting on the Reform business case.

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

## Delegated authority

The total cost of delivering the remainder of the Crime sub-Programme (from April 2024), as presented in the Reform Programme Business Case 6 (PBC 6) and agreed for the 24/25 financial allocation, is £8.8m for the remaining programme (£5.7 CDEL, £3.1m RDEL), noting that spending requirements for 24/25 will be tracked on a monthly basis to monitor any pressures arising through the year.

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 Financial Officer, Catherine Blair.

You are also authorised to:

- Agree project rescheduling in the Crime sub-Programme within two months of agreed milestones, but rescheduling beyond that must be agreed with the HMCTS Change Portfolio Committee; and
- Recommend to the HMCTS Change Portfolio Committee and MoJ InvestCo the need to either pause or terminate the Crime sub-Programme and (in partnership with Jason) the overall Reform 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 relevant HMCTS fora as well as the Ministry of Justice's Investment Committee and Portfolio Committee, and directly to the HMCTS Chief Executive and the MoJ Permanent Secretary, where appropriate.

## **Appointments**

You should ensure there continues to be a full-time Programme Director to support you in the management of the Crime sub-Programme and make other appointments as required for the control and delivery within your delegated authority.

## **Governance and assurance**

You should pay attention to ensuring effective governance, including the continuation of the Crime Programme Board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that both the Crime sub-Programme and the overarching Reform Programme remain aligned to the strategic outcomes, costs, timescales, and benefits in line with the approved Reform business case as well as monitoring the context within which they are being delivered to ensure they remain valid.

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

Although you are directly jointly accountable for this programme with Jason Latham, 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 HMCTS Change Portfolio Office and the Ministry of Justice's 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 for the Crime sub-Programme and overall Reform Programme through the maintenance of an Integrated Assurance and Approvals Plan. You should develop this plan and its maintenance in collaboration with the HMCTS Project Governance and Assurance Team, the Departmental Assurance Coordinator and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

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

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

You are jointly responsible for ensuring the honest and timely reporting on the position of the HMCTS Reform Programme to the Lord Chancellor, Lady Chief Justice, the Senior President of Tribunals and the HMCTS Chief Executive; the Infrastructure and Projects Authority while it remains on the GMPP; and for providing reports and information to the HMCTS Change Portfolio Office and Ministry of Justice Portfolio Management Office as required and for submitting any business cases and reports to the keyholder process and relevant boards in line with Reform assurance and approvals thresholds. Where appropriate, governance will include reference to the HMCTS Investment and Commercial Governance Committee, Change Portfolio Committee and the Ministry of Justice's Investment Committee and Portfolio Committee. Information on the HMCTS Reform Programme 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 programme, you are required to complete the Major Projects Leadership Academy, and you are enrolled on Cohort 40.

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 HMCTS Reform Programme and Crime sub-Programme, 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 Programme's time on the GMPP.

The HMCTS Change Portfolio Committee and Ministry of Justice Portfolio Committee will continue to 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,



**DAME ANTONIA ROMEO DCB**

Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice



**NICK SMALLWOOD**

Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure and  
Projects Authority

**Appointment endorsed by:**

**Nick Goodwin, Chief Executive of HM  
Courts and Tribunals Service: 16/01/2024**

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**CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT**

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



**John Laverick**