



To: Alan Colston, Senior Responsible Officer, Business Systems Transformation Programme

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

01/04/2024

Dear Alan,

**Appointment as Senior Responsible Owner for the Business Systems Transformation Programme**

This is to formalise, for this financial year, your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the Business Systems Transformation Programme which took effect from 29th July 2023. 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 me as Valuation Office Agency (VOA) Chief Executive, and to VOA Executive Committee (ExCom) as owners of the VOA Transformation Portfolio, under the oversight of the Financial Secretary to the Treasury.

Your Programme forms part of the VOA Transformation Portfolio, under the oversight of the Chair of the VOA ExCom and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for successful delivery of the Business Systems Transformation Programme 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 Programme. You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the Programme and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to VOA ExCom.

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 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/osmotherly-rules-statement-on-updated-guidance), 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-role-of-the-senior-responsible-owner). You should also make yourself familiar with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-delivery-functional-standard), the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework, and the guidance and requirements for project delivery as set by HMRC’s Chief Project Delivery Officer (CPDO).

**Time commitment and tenure**

This role will require 60% 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 programme closure planned for 30/11/2025.

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 & Projects Authority consent.

**Objectives and performance criteria**

Proposed changes to the Programme scope which impact on this intent or benefits realisation must be authorised via the VOA Change Portfolio change request process and may be subject to further levels of approval, specifically ExCom.

The vision of the Business Systems Transformation Programme is to re-design the VOA’s core business processes and replace its outdated and end-of-life core valuation and data IT platforms. It will implement new data structures and streamline the way it delivers valuations and transform the VOA into a more flexible, efficient, and agile organisation. Its objectives are:

* A modern, resilient and consolidated technology estate (including GDPR compliance and disaster recovery capability) that facilitates continuous improvement in our operations and avoids mounting cost and risk of outdated, out of support and end-of-life systems.
* Increased organisational agility to implement changing government policy priorities to underpin key elements of the tax system.
* Improved productivity, through new data structures, systems and tools that allow for increased automation and better operational management, combined with improved ways of working.
* Improved consistency in valuation outcomes through new data structures, systems and tools that provide valuation staff with clear and auditable information for every activity they undertake or need to reference
* Improved services for our customers, with better ways to share information, quicker turnaround times and improved communication.
* Improved staff engagement, as our people are able to focus on the core business of valuations, using improved systems and new tools.

You have 10 performance objectives for the financial year 2024/25. As Chief Valuer, you have responsibility for around 1000 FTE and a mixture of Operational, Technical and Programme deliverables. You have an overarching budgetary responsibility of around £145m of which BST is around £45m.

The specific objective related to this programme is shown below. In addition, there are 3 broader objectives which are also relevant relating to Finance/Efficiency; Leadership and People/Capability.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Transformation- BST**Continue as SRO for BST until roll out of CT and associated infrastructure is completed- circa December 24. Contribute to reorganisation of CT Programmes and set up of separate CT and NDR programmes.Embed CT programme and “enduring team” post BST into CVG operational structure. | **What*** VMS Phase 2 roll out April 24
* CT Phase 1 roll out to network in September 24.
* CT Phase 2 completed by March 25 ready for roll out in Q1 25-26
* Finish NDR reset by June 24; elaborate first processes July-Sep and commence build of first process Oct 24.
* Digitalisation and customer testing of 10 TCTR “non-bulk” requests for information by Dec 24

**How*** Chair programme board and report to ExCom and Board as required.
* Provide effective leadership and appropriate steers/support to BST programme Team.
* Personal contribution as Chair of Programme Board
* Direct enaggement with contractors, suppliers and HMRC CDPO colleagues in various forums e.g. SRO calls, monthly meetings; Transition working group.
* Actively participate in reorganisation of Transformation Portfolio with 3 programmes becoming two more aligned by Product- CT and NDR.
* Weekly SRO calls with BST SMT to drive performance and delivery.
* Support interface with other key programmes including NDRR, Revaluation 2026 and HMRC’s Valuation Procurement.
* Lesson learnt and continuous improvement fed into future programme work.

**Measures*** Feedback from transformation and programme
* User feedback on new system both pre and post roll out via User Acceptance Testing and Model Office.
* People survey measure on “change”
* Programme deliverables for this year outlined above
* Effective financial management of programme and supplier relationships.
 |

* 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), the other [Functional Standards](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/functional-standards) as applicable to this Programme and the requirements of the Government Project Delivery Framework.

**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 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 your project/programme will be agreed as part of the approval process. You will be expected to deliver within these 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](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/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 Business Systems transformation Programme. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/cabinet-office-controls).

In accordance with the guidance on managing public money, the SRO must advise the Accounting Officer of any significant issues relating to regularity, propriety, feasibility and value for money, as well as any significant deviations from the approved business case, which might lead them to reassess the project.

Delegated authority

**You are authorised to:**

* approve expenditure of £5m
* 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 dealt with via the VOA Transformation Portfolio change request process.
* You are also responsible for recommending to ExCom, via its sub-board (the IPC), the need to either pause or terminate a Programme where necessary and to do so in a timely manner.
* Where issues arise which you are unable to resolve you are responsible for escalating these issues to ExCom, via its sub-board (IPC), as appropriate

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 which you should then operate within.

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 IPC and ExCom.

**Appointments**

You should appoint a full-time Programme director to support you in the management of this Programme 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 Programme, including the establishment of a Programme board with appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner, you must ensure that the Programme secures business case approval from the VOA Investment & Portfolio Committee, VOA Executive Committee, Cabinet Office and HMT. You should also ensure that the Programme 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 Programme 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 Outline Business Case 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 Programme which could require a new accounting officer assessment to be completed and published. [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/accounting-officer-assessments) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.

Although you are directly accountable for this Programme, 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 VOA Transformation Portfolio management office and portfolio director to manage dependencies, resources, schedules, and funding to support delivery of the overall change the department needs to achieve its strategic objectives, whilst working within strategic guardrails and aligning to our future operating state.

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 Head of Transformation Portfolio and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

**Programme status, reporting and transparency requirements**

The Programme status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on the Programme 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 Programme to the Infrastructure and Projects Authority while it remains on the GMPP and for providing reports and information to the portfolio management office as required. Information on the Programme will be published annually by the Infrastructure and Projects Authority.

You are accountable to ExCom, through the portfolio governance, for the delivery of the Programme within the agreed quality, time and cost envelope.

You will be required to report monthly to VOA Transformation Portfolio in line with Portfolio reporting standards.

As a minimum, you should formally review the benefits status on a quarterly basis.

**[You are responsible for publishing on GOV.UK a summary of the accounting office assessment completed in line with the approval of the Outline Business Case and summaries of any subsequent assessments should they be required.]**

**Development and support**

The Agency will assist you in securing the necessary resources to support the Programme, and will set clear guidance, requirements and standards, which align to the [Government Functional Standard on Project Delivery](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/project-delivery-functional-standard), to enable good governance and effective delivery. You will be part of the VOA 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 VOA’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.

Following approval of the business case and entry onto the GMPP, VOA Transformation Portfolio and the Investment & Portfolio 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,

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Picture 2, Picture |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **JONATHAN RUSSELL** |  | **NICK SMALLWOOD** |
|  |  |  |
| Chief ExecutiveValuation Office Agency |  | Chief Executive OfficerInfrastructure and Projects Authority |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| **CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT** |
|  |
| I confirm that I accept the appointment of Senior Responsible Owner for the Business Systems Transformation Programme, including my personal accountability for implementation, as set out in the letter above. |
|  |
| Alan Colston  |
|  |
| **ALAN COLSTON** |
|  |
| 05/12/2024 |

**Attached**

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

**Appendix B** - Strategic Accountabilities