



HM Government

To: Graham Zebedee, Senior Responsible Owner for DRIVE35

From: **Gareth Davies, Permanent Secretary of Department for Business and Trade**; and

Becky Wood, Chief Executive Officer of the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority

[07/10/2025]

Dear Graham,

APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR DRIVE35

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of DRIVE35 (Driving Research and Investment in Vehicle Electrification) with effect from 09/07/2025. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department and the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority.

As SRO, you are directly accountable to Jaee Samant as Director General (DG) for Business Group, under the oversight of the Permanent Secretary as accounting officer for Department for Business and Trade (DBT), and the Secretary of State.

DRIVE35 forms part of the DBT Change Portfolio under the oversight of the Change Portfolio Office and the Chief Project Delivery Officer and the relevant subcommittees under the Executive Board and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for the delivery of DRIVE35 and will be held accountable for the delivery of its objectives, policy intent and outcomes. 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 DRIVE35. You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of DRIVE35 and recommending its pause or termination if appropriate. Where issues arise that you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these to DBT's Investment Committee.

DRIVE35 is a successor programme to the Automotive Transformation Fund; your responsibilities detailed in this letter also extend to the Automotive Transformation Fund as the predecessor to DRIVE35.

You remain accountable to Ministers, as set out in the Civil Service Code, and should deliver the programme 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 DRIVE35.

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 Government Project Delivery's guidance on [the role of the senior responsible owner](#).

You are expected to run DRIVE35 in accordance with the [Government Functional Standard for Project Delivery](#), and the requirements of [other functional standards](#) as required, which is mandated for government departments and arm's length bodies to follow. You should also make yourself familiar with [The Teal Book](#), Government Project Delivery's code of practice for project delivery, and any further guidance and requirements set by DBT's Portfolio Advisory and Capability Team.

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 the end of the current funding round, planned for 31/03/2030. 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 departmental and National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority consent.

Objectives and performance criteria

DRIVE35 is designed to support the creation of an internationally competitive zero emission vehicle supply chain here in the UK. It supports R&D and capital investments across strategically important parts of the electric vehicle supply chain.

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by the DRIVE35 Strategic Board and may also be subject to other levels of approval.

DRIVE35 aims:

- To substantially increase inward investments into the UK automotive sector
- To secure and create high-quality jobs in the UK automotive industry
- To deliver significant emission reductions, meeting our climate obligations
- To strengthen supply chain resilience, anchoring future vehicle assembly
- To help achieve the required battery manufacturing capacity
- To support a decade of R&D investment in UK automotive

Your personal objectives and performance criteria are to:

- Ensure that there is effective identification, quantification, and management of benefits throughout the programme to optimize benefits realisation.
- Ensure that the programme delivers to scope, on time and within budget.
- Ensure there is excellent engagement with the programme across DBT.
- Ensure stakeholder management with colleagues outside of DBT and HMT is regular and timely.
- Ensure the programme focuses on strategically important investments and those that significantly contribute to the programme objectives.

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 DRIVE35 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 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](#). In addition, you must be mindful of, and act in accordance with, the specific HM Treasury delegated limits and Cabinet Office controls relevant to DRIVE35. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

Delegated authority

You are authorised to:

- Approve expenditure up to £50m for CDEL and £5m for RDEL.
- Agree programme rescheduling within six months of agreed milestones. Rescheduling beyond that must be escalated and agreed with the Director General.
- Recommend to the Chief Project Delivery Officer and the Portfolio Office the need to either pause or terminate the programme where necessary and in a timely manner.
- You will keep the business updated on progress via agreed reporting routes with the Change Portfolio Office, which will be escalated to the Performance and Risk Committee (PRC) or the DBT Investment Committee (IC) as necessary.
- You will ensure that all spend that has a reputational risk in the individual or aggregate is signed off appropriately.

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 that you are unable to resolve, you are responsible for escalating these issues to the DG and the Portfolio Office (who will escalate to PRC as necessary).

Appointments

You have appointed a full-time programme director to support you in the management of DRIVE35 and you are able to 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 DRIVE35. For this purpose, you have established the strategic governance board which has appropriate membership and clear terms of reference.

As primary owner you must ensure that DRIVE35 secures business case approval from the DBT Investment Committee and HMT. You should also ensure that DRIVE35 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 DRIVE35 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 DRIVE35 which could require a new accounting officer assessment to be completed and published. [Guidance on completing accounting officer assessments](#) for major projects is available from HM Treasury.

You are responsible for providing assurance to the accounting officer and relevant oversight bodies that the Environmental Principles Policy Statement legal duty has been considered by ministers in policy decisions underpinning DRIVE35.

Although you are directly accountable for DRIVE35, 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 DBT Portfolio Office and Chief Project Delivery Officer 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 through the maintenance of an integrated assurance and approvals plan. You should develop this plan and its maintenance in collaboration with the Departmental Assurance Coordinator and the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority.

The following DBT governance forums are in place to support with the delivery of DRIVE35:

- **DBT Investment Committee:** The IC meets ten times a year, is co-chaired by the Director General Trade Negotiations and Director General Business Group and is comprised of Directors from across all DBT areas. The Board makes key decisions around portfolio spend.
- **Performance and Risk Committee:** The PRC meets ten times a year, is co-chaired by the Director General Domestic and International Markets and Exports and the Chief Operating Officer. The committee monitors DBT's performance and performs deep-dives into departmental risks.

- **DRIVE35 Strategic Board:** DSB meets every four months. It is chaired by you, as the SRO of the programme. The board monitors the status of the entire DRIVE35 programme, including progress, finance, risks and issues.
- **DRIVE35 Innovation and Scale Ups Delivery Board:** ISUDB meets every two months. It is chaired by the Programme Director of DRIVE35. The board monitors the sub-programme status of the Innovation and Scale Up Grants, including progress, finance, risks and issues.
- **DRIVE35 Transformation Delivery Board:** TDB meets every month. It is chaired by the Programme Director of DRIVE35. The board monitors the sub-programme status of the Transformation grant, including progress, finance, risks and issues.

Programme status, reporting and transparency requirements

The DRIVE35 status at the date of your appointment is reflected in the most recent quarterly return on DRIVE35 to the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation 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 DRIVE35 to the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority while it remains on the GMPP and for providing reports and information to the DBT portfolio management office as required. Reporting should include carbon measurement, and other sustainable development goals demonstrating evidence that the programme contributes to an overarching environmental strategy and is aligned with defined Net Zero pathways. Information on DRIVE35 will be published annually by the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority.

As part of the government's commitment to transparency on major infrastructure projects, you are responsible for publishing on GOV.UK:

- A summary of the accounting officer assessment completed in line with the approval of the Outline Business Case and summaries of any subsequent assessments should they be required;
- A summary of the HM Treasury approved Full Business Case; and
- A close out report after the programme has completed.

You are also responsible for registering all planned, live and completed evaluations on the Government Evaluation Registry. [Guidance on using the evaluation registry](#) is available on GOV.UK.

Development and support

The DG Business Group is your senior sponsor for this programme. In that role you can expect them to offer you support, advice and oversight. This should include help with escalating unresolved risks and issues to the Leadership Team where necessary, dealing with strategic blockers to delivery, and supporting you in obtaining the resources and support you need to execute your SRO responsibilities.

As a graduate of the Major Projects Leadership Academy, you are expected to maintain your continuing professional development as a project leader, including your status as an accredited assurance reviewer. 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 DRIVE35 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 department's Head of Profession for project delivery to discuss the maintenance and development of your delivery and leadership skills.

The National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority will be available to you for support, advice, and assurance throughout DRIVE35's time on the GMPP.

IC 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.

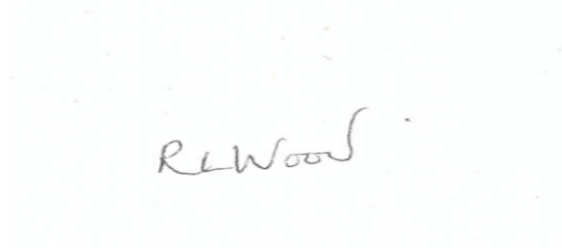
We would like to take this opportunity to wish you every success in your role as SRO.

Yours sincerely,



Gareth Davies

Permanent Secretary, Department for Business
and Trade



Becky Wood

Chief Executive Officer, National Infrastructure
and Service Transformation Authority

CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT

I confirm that I accept the appointment of Senior Responsible Owner for DRIVE35, including my personal accountability for implementation, as set out in the letter above.



Graham Zebedee

7/10/2025