



To: Kara Claxton, Senior Responsible Owner for the CERBERUS Programme

From: Dame Antonia Romeo, Permanent Secretary of Home Office; and

Becky Wood, Chief Executive Officer of the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority and the Senior Accountable Officer for Project Delivery across Government

**13<sup>th</sup> October 2025**

Dear Kara,

## **APPOINTMENT AS SENIOR RESPONSIBLE OWNER FOR THE CERBERUS PROGRAMME**

We are writing to confirm your appointment as Senior Responsible Owner (SRO) of the CERBERUS programme with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2025. This letter sets out your responsibilities and the support you can expect from your department, Government Project Delivery and the National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority.

As SRO, you are directly accountable to Philip Douglas Director General of Border Force, under the oversight of the Permanent Secretary as accounting officer for Home Office, and Minister Mike Tapp.

Your CERBERUS programme forms part of the Home Office Portfolio, under the oversight of the Chair of the Investment Committee (InvestCo) and is included in the Government Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

You have personal responsibility for the delivery of CERBERUS 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 CEBRERUS. You are also responsible for ensuring the ongoing viability of the CERBERUS 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 InvestCo, and/or other Home Office Governance bodies as appropriate.

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

You are expected to run your programme 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 Home Office's Portfolio and Project Delivery Directorate (PPD).

## Time commitment and tenure

This role will require at least 50% 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 CERBERUS is complete, or decision taken to pause/close the programme, or the role transitioned to another, with closure 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 both departmental and National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority consent.

## Objectives and performance criteria

The policy intent supported by the CERBERUS Programme is to strengthen border security and intelligence-led interventions by transforming how data is used at the border. This requires the delivery of the CERBERUS system using advanced analytics and targeting capability that enables integrated analysis of passenger and freight data across all transport modes. By connecting and analysing a wider range of datasets within a single system, CERBERUS will support operational teams and intelligence officers in identifying threats more accurately, increasing detections and seizures, and reducing unnecessary interventions. This will improve the flow of legitimate traffic while enhancing the UK's ability to disrupt organised crime groups and reduce the economic and social harm they cause.

CERBERUS supports net zero objectives by consolidating multiple border security systems into a single cloud-based platform, reducing reliance on physical servers and data centres. Centralised infrastructure enables more efficient resource use without compromising performance. Additionally, by reducing nugatory interventions, such as unnecessary vehicle stops, Cerberus may lower emissions linked to fuel use and engine idling, though this impact has not yet been quantified.

Any proposed changes to scope which impacts on this intent or the realisation of benefits must be authorised by InvestCo and may be subject to further levels of approval.

The vision of the CERBERUS programme is:

A unified, analytical system, powered by the best data and intelligence available, enabling threat agnostic and cross-modal targeting, allowing better deployment of resource to risk while facilitating the legitimate flow of border traffic.

CERBERUS's objectives are to:

- Increase threat interdiction at the border or sustain current interdiction with less resource
- Increase intelligence and operational officer efficiency
- Service continuity and avoidance of disruption
- Reduce technology spend
- Reduce disruption to the UK public and businesses

Your personal objectives and performance criteria which relate to the CERBERUS programme are:

To visibly and actively lead the Programme through the incremental build of the CERBERUS capability, ensuring that all appropriate steps are taken to ensure that the capability is led by business need and is user focused, and that benefits forecast by the project are realised. In particular:

- Monitoring and controlling the progress of the programme at a strategic level, being honest and frank about its progress, risks and issues,
- Communicating effectively with senior stakeholders regarding programmes progress and providing clear, appropriate and delivery-focused decisions and advice to the Project Director
- Escalating serious issues quickly and with confidence to senior management, and
- Ensuring a plan for both long term benefits realisation and on-going sustainability is agreed with key stakeholders as part of the process of transitioning the Programme to “business as usual”
- Support the Home Office’s net zero strategy through digital transformation and operational efficiency

Performance Criteria: Timely delivery of Cerberus capability, but also openness and pragmatism of response to risks and issues that threaten that.

## 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 Cerberus 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 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 **Cerberus programme**. Information on these controls can be found here: [Cabinet Office controls](#).

### Delegated authority

You are authorised to:

- approve expenditure of £34.89 million; Approval has been granted for the expenditure of £34.89 million. Additionally, £0.8 million for monitoring and evaluation has also been approved as an agreed pressure. Approve expenditure up to the limits granted by InvestCo plus stage tolerances described by Home Office Portfolio Change Control. Appropriate authority must be sought for expenditure which breaches tolerances
- agree Programme rescheduling within the tolerances described by Home Office Portfolio Change Control of agreed milestones, but rescheduling beyond that must be agreed with InvestCo, and the chief Portfolio Officer (CPO) overseeing GMPP-level governance and investment decisions across the Home Office. CPO should be involved in discussions seeking such agreement; and
- recommend to the Director General (DG) of Border Force at the UK Home Office and InvestCo the need to either pause or terminate the 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 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 the Director General (DG) of Border Force and InvestCo.

# Appointments

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

As primary owner, you must ensure that the Cerberus programme secures business case approval from InvestCo, the Cabinet Office, and HMT. You should also ensure that the Cerberus 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 Cerberus programme 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 decision underpinning the programme.

Although you are directly accountable for this Cerberus 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 Home Office's Portfolio and Project Delivery Directorate (PPD) and CPO 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.

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.

## Cerberus Programme status, reporting and transparency requirements

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

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

- A summary business case and deposit a copy in the House of Commons Library within 4 months of HM Treasury's formal approval of the Programme Business Case
- 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 close out report after the Cerberus programme has completed

Guidance on the [publication of business cases](#) and on the completion of [accounting officer assessments](#) is available from HM Treasury.

## Evaluation

Evaluation of major projects is a requirement. Given the scale and complexity of major projects, it is essential that they are evaluated properly to learn lessons and help ensure accountability. As an SRO of a GMPP project, you are responsible for ensuring that your programme has proportionate and suitably resourced evaluation in place. Evaluation planning should begin from the very start of the policy development and the initiation of the programme or project. Progress with the development and implementation of evaluation plans will be monitored through the major project assurance process.

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

As SRO of a GMPP programme, you are required to complete the Major Projects Leadership Academy, and you have agreed to enrol on a cohort in the near future. The Head of Profession in the Home Office department can provide further information on the application process.

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 Home Office 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 Cerberus 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 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 and Government Project Delivery will be available to you for support, advice, and assurance throughout the Cerberus programme's time on the GMPP. Government Project Delivery's suite of standards, guidance, tools, templates and services can be accessed from [projectdelivery.gov.uk](#) and we encourage you and your team to register for accounts

Following approval of the business case and entry onto the Home Office Portfolio, PPD 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,

*Simon*

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**SIMON RIDLEY**

Second Permanent Secretary, Home Office

**BECKY WOOD**

Chief Executive Officer, National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority

Senior Accountable Officer for Project Delivery across Government

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**CONFIRMATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF APPOINTMENT**

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

*Kara Claxton*

**Kara Claxton**

**17/12/2025**

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