



Accounting Officer Memorandum

Community Accommodation Services Tier 3 (CAS3) National Roll-out

Accounting Officers have a standing responsibility to scrutinise policy proposals, projects or programmes and ensure the actions of the public organisation they lead meet the four Accounting Officer standards of *regularity, propriety, value for money, and feasibility* – as set out in Managing Public Money.

From April 2017, the government committed to making a summary of the key points from assessments available to Parliament when an Accounting Officer has conducted an assessment of a project or programme within the Government's Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

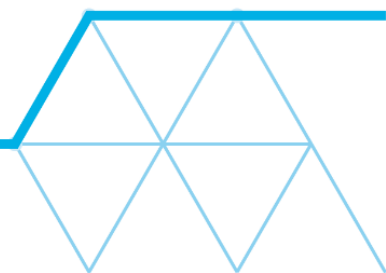
Background and Context

The aim of the CAS3 service is to ensure that no one leaves prison without the offer of a place to live, from their first night in the community, and to provide a pathway to settled accommodation. This provision will provide a critical stabilising environment for people on release from prison from which they can address other aspects of their behaviour linked to their risk of re-offending. The key objectives of the CAS3 service are:

- To ensure that all prison leavers who would otherwise be homeless have access to temporary accommodation for up to 84 days on release or when moving on from Approved Premises and Community Accommodation Tier 2 (CAS2) provision.
- To support prison leavers to move-on to settled accommodation at three months.

In July 2021, the £19.8 million invested to initially launch CAS3 in five probation regions (North West, Yorkshire and the Humber, East of England and Kent, Surrey and Sussex and Greater Manchester) was successfully implemented. Services in those regions are covered by the separate Business Case for that early adopter programme.

A programme business case (PBC) has been produced to seek approval for procuring 84-night temporary accommodation for prison leavers at risk of homelessness within six English probation regions not included within the initial roll-out of CAS3. Also, to allow us to collaboratively reach a co-commissioning agreement with the Welsh Government.



Regularity

CAS3 is an existing service which is considered to be regular. There are no legislative changes required or legal elements that need to be considered for its expansion.

MoJ Legal colleagues have been consulted on the content included within the PBC and procurement strategy for the six probation regions. As this procurement is to be undertaken under the open procedure in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations, Legal and Commercial colleagues do not have concerns with the proposed procurement approach.

Propriety

The CAS3 programme has complied with all Departmental and Governmental governance and assurance requirements. Potential CAS3 suppliers will be tested for their ability to deliver on quality and price as part of the procurement process. All suppliers will be assessed to ensure they are financially stable and able to deliver within the agreed budgets. This will provide assurance that the use of public money is sound.

Value for Money

There are no cashable benefits associated with the proposal at this time and as such the economic case has been produced on a net present cost (NPC) basis. The NPC over the life of the contracts (3 +1 +1 years) is £269m.

Though, there is a sufficient scope for reductions in reoffending relating to the wider provision of CAS3 services, as well as wider societal benefits through diverting people from homelessness and rough sleeping, for this service to represent value for money.

Feasibility

The proposal is feasible but subject to a number of risks, particularly in relation to the inherent difficulties of contracting and implementing this new service. Lessons learned from the initial roll-out will ensure that the commercial process is designed in a way to maximise benefit whilst ensuring assumptions on implementation are reasonable.

Conclusion for the Accounting Officer

My conclusion is that the CAS3 national roll-out is ready to proceed to procurement stage.

As the accounting officer for HMPPS I considered this assessment of the CAS3 Programme and approved it on 11th April 2022.

I have prepared this summary to set out the key points which informed my decision. If any of these factors change materially during the remaining lifetime of this project, I will ensure a revised summary is prepared, setting out my assessment of the changes.

This summary will be published on GOV.UK. Copies will be deposited in the Library of the House of Commons and sent to the Comptroller and Auditor General and Treasury Officer of Accounts.

Dr Jo Farrar

HMPPS Chief Executive and Ministry of Justice and Second Permanent Secretary

**Accounting Officer Assessment Memorandum endorsed by Antonia Romeo Principal
Accounting Officer of Ministry of Justice**

Date 11/04/2022