



# Accounting Officer Memorandum

## Approved Premises Expansion Programme

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 assessed a project or programme within the Government's Major Projects Portfolio (GMPP).

### Background and Context

Approved Premises provide temporary accommodation for high-risk offenders who have completed a prison sentence and are now on probation, in the community. Their key purpose is to create an environment which allows for close monitoring of behaviour in order to protect the public. Staff work closely with wider Probation supporting offenders to address the causes of their offending behaviour e.g., access to treatment programmes for mental health issues and substance abuse, as well as finding more settled accommodation once risk to public has reduced.

The Approved Premises Expansion Programme was established to meet ministerial commitments to Parliament (January 2019), to increase capacity in response to recommendations from HM Inspectorate of Probation and more closely meet demand, reflecting wider rises in the number of people on probation.

Since inception, the programme has delivered 169 additional beds, including opening 4 new Independent Approved Premises (83 beds) and 51 additional beds in dedicated premises for women. The programme has now finished delivery.

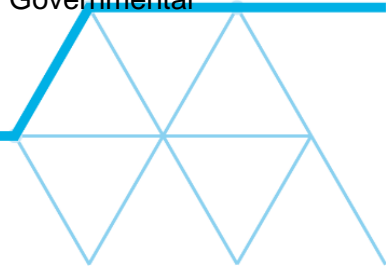
### Regularity

The service provided by Approved Premises is well established. This is not a new policy, and no new legislation is required. The programme intent is to increase capacity and does not alter their purpose or how they are operated.

There are no legislative changes required or legal elements that need to be considered for its expansion and MoJ Legal and MOJ Estates colleagues have approved the proposed expansion approach.

### Propriety

The Approved Premises Expansion Board has complied with all Departmental and Governmental



governance and assurance requirements. The affordability statement shows that over the 3 Year SR21 period the RDEL/CDEL allocation from the SR21 Reducing Reoffending uplift funding covers the requirement to deliver 169 bed spaces across the AP establishments.

Beyond the SR21 period, funding will need to be baselined to maintain overall affordability.

### **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 project has an NPC of £39.7m and a total cost of £79.7m over the life of the business case (10 years).

While the preferred option represents a Net Present Cost, it does deliver the best value for money from those presented; specifically, delivering capacity in locations where there is highest demand on a critical service.

### **Feasibility**

The proposal is feasible but subject to a number of risks, particularly in relation to the increasing construction costs driven by inflation and other complex factors identified in the business case. If the delivery plans and mitigations are implemented successfully the programme will be compliant.

### **Conclusion for the Accounting Officer**

My conclusion is that the Approved Premises Expansion Programme should proceed in line with Ministerial ambition.

As the accounting officer for HMPPS I considered the assessment of the Approved Premises Expansion Programme and approved it on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

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.

Amy Rees

HMPPS Chief Executive

**I have placed a copy in the Commons and a copy has also been provided to the Principal Accounting Officer for the Ministry of Justice, who has seen my assessment and endorsed my conclusion.**