



# Accounting Officer Memorandum

## Community Support Programme (Formerly Commissioned Rehabilitative Services Programme)– Programme Business Case

It is normal practice for accounting officers to scrutinise significant policy proposals or plans to start or vary major projects and then assess whether they measure up to the standards set out in Managing Public Money. From April 2017, the government has committed to make a summary of the key points from these assessments available to Parliament when an accounting officer has agreed an assessment of projects within the Government's Major Projects Portfolio.

### Background and context

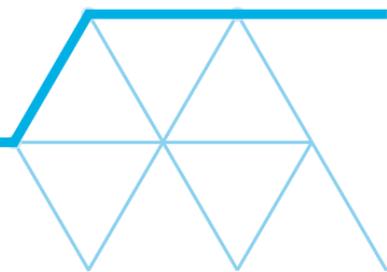
The purpose of the Community Support Programme is to design, commission, procure and implement new rehabilitative services following the end of the existing contracts, utilising learning from the current services alongside wider academic and evaluation evidence.

This assessment has been made at Programme Business Case stage (PBC) which seeks approval to proceed with the men's services competition.

The programme underpins HMPPS and MoJ's statutory responsibilities under the *Offender Management Act 2007* and supports the Lord Chancellor's objective to focus probation staff on higher-risk offenders by providing targeted rehabilitative services for others.

This investment in Community Support is needed because the services are fundamental to HMPPS achieving its key outcomes of reducing reoffending and protecting the public. They also contribute towards the government's missions of 'safer streets' and 'kickstarting economic growth' by reducing crime and thus the economic cost of crime.

Key benefits will include improvements in employment, accommodation, financial management, treatment engagement, social networks, and quality of service delivery.



# Assessment against the accounting officer standards

## Regularity

The programme has been assessed as regular and is within the MoJ's ambit. Community Support are existing statutory services delivered by HMPPS and require no new legislation. Procurement will follow the *Procurement Act 2023* under the light-touch regime and competitive flexible procedure. The programme adheres to all HMT approval requirements.

## Propriety

The programme has been assessed as proper and has followed all required departmental and government governance processes. The proposal aligns with managing public money standards and obligations will be administered to a standard that meets public expectations. Commercial strategy approval has been secured, and programme governance has acted on review recommendations.

## Value for Money

The programme providing the retender of Community Support services is looking to drive better value for money and through these contracts support reducing reoffending, more effective probation compliance, and sustaining confidence in community sentences. The recommissioned contracts will consolidate provision into fewer, larger contracts, enabling stronger contract management, uniformity across regions, and improved efficiency through reduced duplication of assessments.

The preferred model expands eligibility, reintroduces Education, Training and Employment (ETE) support, and extends provision to the remand population. This strengthens outcomes and reduces downstream pressures on prisons, local authorities, and wider public services.

## Feasibility

The programme is assessed as feasible. It has capable leadership and delivery partners, robust resource planning, and experience from the current Commissioned Rehabilitative Services contracts, which it is replacing. A detailed mobilisation plan has been developed.

Risks include tight delivery timelines, affordability constraints, and dependency on future Spending Review settlements. These risks are significant but manageable, with flexibility built into contracts and demand management mechanisms. The programme is on the Government Major Projects Portfolio and subject to independent assurance.

## Conclusion

I have considered this assessment of the Community Support Programme against the four accounting officer responsibilities of regularity, propriety, value for money, and feasibility. I am satisfied that these responsibilities are met.

I have prepared this summary to set out the key points which informed my decision. If any of these factors change materially during the lifetime of this project, I undertake to prepare a revised summary, setting out my assessment of them.

As the Accounting Officer for His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service, I approved this Memorandum on 05 February 2026.

This summary will be published on the government's website (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.

A copy has also been provided to the Principal Accounting Officer for the Ministry of Justice, who has endorsed my decision on the basis of my assurance that my accounting officer responsibilities are met.

James McEwen

CEO of HM Prisons and Probation Service

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J McEwen', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James McEwen, 05 February 2026.