IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE
27 AUGUST 2008

<u>TOWARDS ONE COUNCIL – PROGRESS REPORT</u>

<u>**Executive Summary**</u>

This report headlines current progress on the programme

<u>**Proposal**</u>

There are no specific proposals in this paper

<u>**Reasons For Proposals**</u>

To provide a strategic overview for the Implementation Executive

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1. Introduction

1.1. This progress report is moving away from the format adopted in previous reports for a number of reasons:

- It is focussing on the key strategic issues which must be the priorities for the Implementation Executive.
- The appointment of the majority of the service directors mean that in future they will take responsibility for ensuring the Implementation Executive is consulted over progress and key decisions. The Programme Office will be discussing future arrangements for regular progress reporting with them.
- The publication of the Service Director Handbook (circulated with this report) has captured a large amount of relevant data and this will be kept up to date on the extranet.

2. Department of Communities and Local Government

2.1. The Minister for Local Government recently met Leaders of the Implementation Executives of the emerging unitary authorities and has subsequently confirmed in writing the importance that DCLG attach to delivering the full business case which was submitted for the creation of the unitary authority. He spelt out that whilst the Implementation Executive may have further ideas for innovation and modification, these must be genuinely 'proposals plus'.

2.2. He has stressed the importance of ensuring that the arrangements that we implement will deliver the outcomes on strategic leadership, on neighbourhood and community empowerment, and on service delivery to the same or greater extent as envisaged by the originally submitted business case.

2.3. **Regulations:** The CLG are continuing to make progress with the regulations and orders that will be required to support the creation of the new authority. On the 28th August, Orders will be laid before Parliament to ensure that the creation of new Parish and Town Council's within the transitioning authority areas rests with the IE, rather than the current District or County Council. This means that the formal creation of Salisbury Council, and the setting of any precept and transfers of responsibility to the new Council will need to be undertaken by the IE.

2.4. Regulations will be laid requiring the County Council to appoint an Acting Returning Officer who will be tasked with preparing for the European Elections and any General Election that may be called prior to 1st April 2009. Subject to the final details of the Regulations, the Acting Returning Officer will be empowered to take whatever steps they believe are necessary in order for them to fulfil the role of Electoral Registration Officer on 1st April 2009 including, for example, the preparation of a new unitary-wide electoral register before vesting day.

2.5. Orders will also be laid during August or September to require the following revised plans to be approved by the IE and in place on Vesting Day:-

- All plans required under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004
- An Off Site Emergency Plan

2.6 The following plans must be revised and in place no later than 31st March 2010:-

- Accessibility Strategy
- Housing Allocation Scheme
- Home Energy Conservation Act Strategy
- Homelessness Review and Strategy
- Private Sector Renewal Strategy (Housing)
- Statement of Licensing Policy (Alcohol)
- Statement of Licensing Principles (Gambling)

2.7 There will be a requirement for a revised Community Strategy to be prepared and approved no later than 31st March 2011. The date by which a revised Local Development Scheme must have been approved by the IE has been put back to 31st December 2008.

2.8 All other existing plans and strategies for a geographical area will remain valid for that geographical area until revised or revoked by either the IE or the new authority.

2.9 **Regulatory Committee Update:** It is proposed that Orders will be introduced so that for the period from 1st April 2009 until four days after the elections for the new council, the IE can co-opt members of existing regulatory committees of the predecessor councils onto the new authorities regulatory committees, but this must be done in line with the political balance of the IE, rather than any predecessor council.

2.10 **Membership of Public Bodies Update:** The revised membership order for the Cotswold ANOB will result in the Wiltshire Council having one member on the Board, with this member needing to be identified immediately after vesting day to prevent a loss of representation. The CLG have issued draft copies of the membership order to local stakeholders for comment, but are not consulting on the changes to membership.

3. **Service Director Handbook**

3.1. Since the last meeting the Programme Office has been focussed on putting together Version 1 of the Service Director Handbook which was circulated just over a week ago.

3.2. A copy is attached for the information of the Implementation Executive. For the first time we have pulled together a document which spells out what we are about and what we need to achieve. In particular, we capture

- The culture we are seeking to achieve
- A detailed description of the major corporate initiatives which will drive the transition
- What is expected of service managers between now and 1 April 2009 in relation to budgets, structure, benefits realisation, property and performance

- The handbook also introduces the processes for handing over the transition process from the current workstream's to the service directors and, most importantly, introduces processes to ensure that the benefits promised are realised.
- Finally, the hand book goes into some detail around key issues such as customer access, community working, financial issues and performance to ensure all service directors have a common understanding of the issues involved.

3.3 We recognise that the role for many of the service directors, particularly those responsible for bringing together district council services, will be very challenging between now and 1 April 2009. The handbook stresses that individual directors are not alone as they tackle the issues but can call on a wide range of support from their colleagues in the support service units.

3.4 The handbook contains a critical path and that alongside the development of a Day One plan have become the principal method of monitoring progress.

4. **Day One Plan And Critical Path Update**

4.1. The governance and update process for the transition period has been reviewed and updated. In order to support the work required to achieve this, the Day One Plan has been extended to cover activities up to the period immediately after the elections to the new council in Spring 2009.

4.2. Considerable progress has been made in relation to moving accountability for activity to the newly confirmed Service Directors, which is being supported by a formal hand over and sign off process. To provide greater visibility and assurance, a more focused approach has been adopted that uses a Critical Path to present a program overview. The Critical Path will be a 'live' document and a cross program group, comprising the project managers from the major strands of activity within the transition program has been created to support this. This group meets weekly on a Thursday, and includes a review of key actions and issues undertaken. This approach will enable a program wide over view to be taken, rather than fragmented view of a specialism or area at a time, whilst retaining sufficient assurance that specific activity is occurring within each project or workstream area.

4.3. The critical path document is owned by the Day One Program Manager, who will coordinate the transition program and be responsible for reporting to JIT and the IE in relation to this activity.

4.4. As we move forward, the Critical Path, and it's associated risks and issues will become the predominate monitoring tool for high level reporting. Under this high level document, the Day One Plan has been reviewed with all lead officers, and within each project area, documentation and progress has been reviewed as part of the hand over process to the Service Directors. The full Day One Plan is available from the programme office as is the standard template used to support the formal hand over to the Service Directors. Please contact Di on 01225 756161 if you wish to be sent a hard copy

5. Delivering the Business Case – Main Headings

5.1. **Strategic Leadership:** Plans for the drafting of the constitution and other key policies for the operation of the Council are in hand and will be brought to the Implementation Executive for approval in due course.

5.2. The election team is in place based in Chippenham but with some staff remaining in Salisbury.

5.3. Members will be given an update on the position relating to the Bourne Hill Office project at the meeting.

5.4. **Neighbourhood engagement and empowerment:** 10 community area pilots across Wiltshire are commencing to test community area board models. The plan is for community area working to begin immediately post election in May/June 2009 building upon the outcome of these pilots.

5.5. Work on the potential devolvement of responsibilities to town and parish Councils continues. Detailed responses have been received from over 60 town and parish councils with their preferred options. Work continues to establish the Town Council for Salisbury with parish elections planned for this to be concurrent with elections to Wiltshire Council in 2013.

5.6. Service directors have been advised of the necessity of ensuring that the service priorities and plans take account of local priorities identified through the community planning process.

5.7. **Customer Access Strategy:** The customer access strategy has already been developed and endorsed by the Implementation Executive. It provides the long term framework for improving our customer approach and will drive service design principles and the property strategy. In addition it covers the initial requirements for 1 April including the introduction of more integrated face to face contact points, the integration of customer contact telephony and the introduction of a new Wiltshire Council website.

Headlines

5.8. Salisbury F2F premises work has probably not made quite enough progress to be able to go live in before 1 April. However, we are pursuing a good prospect abutting Pennyfarthing House.

5.9. The scope of the process and scripting work will not be established for some time. Although we will have it all "working" by 1 April, we will have to make pragmatic decisions about what we can do by then or what we would really like to have done. We will focus on high volume, high impact services, especially where there are wide differentials between the current districts.

5.10. Possible delays to implementation of the WAN. At this stage there is no impact on our plan and we will continue monitor this, and have a "plan B" in place against further delays.

5.11. Members may be aware that British Telecom is planning the realignment of payphone provision by removing public telephone boxes. It has been suggested that these could be used as future customer access points. However the focus until 1 April is on ensuring that our main existing

channels are working completely reliably, so the scope of our work until then is fixed: it will cover F2F (including existing arrangements with Town Councils), telephony to our contact centres, web and email. Once we are through 1 April we will wish to look at how we provide access in future, and that would be an appropriate point to consider this option together with the others we will evaluate, which include kiosks, video-links, mobile servcie delivery (we come to you), digital TV, and sharing facilities with other organisations and local businesses

5.12. **Service Delivery:** A wide range of activity is taking place in relation to the bringing together of services. The current priorities revolve around the handover of the transitional arrangements from the workstream boards to the responsible service directors. The timelines and processes for the most important priorities have been identified relating to: handover, budget, benefit realisation, development of structures and the requirements of the BMP.   The Service Director Handbook goes into more detail in this process.

5.13. **BMP:** The blueprint stage of the SAP enterprise resource planning implementation has been completed on time. This hugely important programme (in terms of delivering the planned savings) is on track to deliver a totally new finance, HR, procurement and payroll system by 1 April 2009 that will support the new authority.   Realisation phase commences week of 18 August. The constraints that this places on service directors in terms of developing and implementing their new structures is significant and much effort is being devoted to ensuring that there is a common understanding about those constraints and that service directors have access to appropriate levels of support to help them.

6. **Outstanding Issues**

6.1. **Development Control**
At the last meeting of the Implementation Executive a further report was called for on a number of issues relating to the delivery of the development control service. A report has prepared which is to be presented to Overview and Scrutiny and it is anticipated that the further report will come forward to the next meeting.

6.2. **External Communications Strategy and re-branding**
These matters will be the subject of reports to the next meeting.

6.3. **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**
DCLG are now requiring the preparation of this Scheme (which brings together and timetables the bringing together of the various strategic planning policies in the four districts) by 31 December. Arrangements are in hand to achieve this deadline which will be subject of a further report to the Implementation Executive.