

Title:	Service and resource planning - response to Local Government Reorganisation
Portfolio holder:	Councillor Graham Payne and Councillor Rod Eaton
Reporting Officer:	Paul Mountford, Policy and Communications Services Manager
Key decision:	Yes

Purpose

This report summarises the implications for the Council's priorities and services as a result of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). It identifies what work will continue, what work will be modified as a result of LGR, and what work will be stopped.

The report focuses on the planned work of the Council, as set out in the Corporate Plan and Service and Resource Plans for 2007-08 and proposed for 2008-09. It does not deal with all the LGR issues and work as these are addressed elsewhere.

Background

LGR has created a new context against which the Council needs to reconsider and reprioritise its work.

A considerable focus will be on working with the County Council to prepare for a unitary authority. However, at the same time the Council also needs to ensure that it continues to deliver and develop its services and progresses a number of initiatives that were previously agreed. This is important for many reasons, two are highlighted here. The Council is committed to achieving high quality services for its local community and to making continuous improvements even through periods of significant change and transition. A number of projects are well advanced and much work has already been done, so it would be inappropriate to abandon them at this stage. It would also have an adverse effect on staff morale, motivation and the engagement of Members.

The Corporate Team and Service Managers have looked in detail at the changes needed to priorities and services. They have also been briefly discussed with the Cabinet to ensure that the overall direction was correct. This report draws together all this work and the discussions held to provide an overview.

It has implications for a number of other important processes including:

- **Financial plans, including revenue balances, the capital programme and reserves:** A number of projects are proposed to be modified or postponed. In some instances this could mean resources becoming available for alternative purposes. A report detailing the financial implications of LGR is also on this agenda and this should be read in conjunction with this report.

- **Service and Resource Planning:** This annual process will be substantially simplified for 2008-09. This work will form the basis for the preparation of service and resource plans for 2008-09. These plans will be considered by Cabinet early in the new year.

Although simplified, there are some aspects of service planning that will need to continue and this includes work on equalities and the preparation of service equality impact assessments. These are required to consolidate level 2 of the equalities standard and will feed into the development of services for the new unitary authority.

Main issues

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan spotlight priority areas will continue to be taken forward including:

- PFI for affordable housing
- Transforming Trowbridge
- Waste and recycling review
- Improvements in Development Control

Many of the critical tasks identified under the six main spotlight priority areas have either been completed or will continue largely unaffected by LGR. However, there are a small number of critical tasks that will either be shelved or significantly refocused to take account of the new circumstances. They particularly relate to the following spotlight areas:

- **Putting customers first:** The work will partners to provide more joined up and seamless services, working through the Wiltshire Customer First Partnership, has been stopped. The only exception to this is Building Control and work continues to create a single Building Control service across the county.
- **Meeting housing need:** Many of the strategy reviews and updates will be shelved. This includes the Housing Renewal Strategy and the Affordable Warmth Strategy.
- **Better Access to recreation:** The leisure facilities review will solely focus on the re-provision of leisure centres in Castle Place, Trowbridge and Melksham. Leisure strategies, including the open space strategy, will not be produced.

Service and resource plans

Each Service Manager has reviewed their service and resource plan to ensure that the projects being progressed are still appropriate in the new situation. Some will continue while others will be refocused or ceased altogether. The detailed results from this work have been collated and reviewed by all service managers and the Corporate Team. They are summarised in this report.

Principles

Overall, a number of principles have been identified which will be followed during the transition period. They are:

- Generally no new or updated strategies, policies and plans will be produced unless they are a legislative requirement. However, the work already underway on the LDF

Core Strategy and equalities updating the race equality scheme to ensure full compliance will continue.

- A number of key management processes will be revised and simplified to take account of the new situation. This includes service and resource planning where plans will be simply rolled forward to 2008-09; performance management focusing on key priorities and customer focused performance measures related to Vanguard; and appraisals.
- Where possible, contracts and service level agreements coming to an end shortly will be extended for a further year with an option to extend further beyond vesting day, if required.
- 'Lean fundamentals' and work with Vanguard will continue and be extended to cover a number of other services. This approach is being used in the transition and it will put West Wiltshire services in a strong position.
- IT Investment will continue where it supports the development of customer focused front-line services and is likely to have value beyond the date of re-organisation.
- Staff and Member training will be enhanced.
- External and internal audit work will be refocused onto supporting the transition process.
- Finances and the use of reserves (within the set controls to be established) will be focused onto the achievement of existing key corporate projects. No further service development bids for resources will be accepted, unless absolutely essential to implement new legislation.
- Partnership working with the county and other districts to continue, but within the context of transition to the new unitary authority.
- No further internal restructuring of services will take place, unless absolutely necessary.

Changes to priorities and actions for the remainder of 2007-08 and 2008-09

Appendix 1 outlines the work that is proposed to be continued, the work that will be significantly modified as a result of LGR, and the work that is scheduled to be stopped or postponed. Some of this latter work may be picked up subsequently by the new unitary authority. Further more detailed information on each service is available for portfolio holders if required.

In summary, the overall position is as follows:

Major Projects

Work to continue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PFI project to proceed as planned • Waste and recycling review • Transforming Trowbridge projects and 5 Towns Initiative projects • Grounds maintenance and street cleansing contract • 'Lean fundamentals' Vanguard work and improvements to Revenues and Benefits, Development Control, and a number of other service areas
Work to continue but modified for LGR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure facilities review to be focused on leisure re-provision of Castle Place in Trowbridge and Christie Miller in Melksham
Work to cease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure facilities review - other work to be postponed • Pay reform project - phase 1 still awaiting Unison response; phase 2 linking an element of pay to performance not to go ahead. • Further work on the reputation project

Strategies, plans, processes and structures

Work to continue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of LDF Core Strategy • Regional Spatial Strategy examination in public • Equalities - updating race equality scheme • 'Lean fundamentals' Vanguard work (see above) • Training plans updated
Work to continue but modified for LGR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium term financial plan to be reviewed and replaced with a short term plan to March 2009 taking account of new requirements. • Capital programme reviewed and revised where necessary • ICT programme of investment reviewed, revised and coordinated with Wiltshire county and districts • Service and resource planning to be simplified for next year • Appraisal process to be simplified • Scrutiny support and work will be refocused to review plans for the new unitary council. Some form of joint committee or board will be set up.
Work to cease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Plan review suspended • Community Plan new version suspended • Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) re-application • Investor In People (IIP) accreditation not to be re-applied for • Electronic records management system not to proceed (ERMS)

Partnerships

Work to continue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint partnership working with the county and other districts
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Work to continue but modified for LGR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of a single Building Control Service for Wiltshire with revised arrangements • Local Strategic Partnership to review its role and refocus its work onto the role of community Area Boards • Support to Community Area Partnerships to help them connect with the new authority proposals • Wiltshire Improvement Partnership - focus on governance work and member development (using government office resources, focusing on the new authority)
Work to cease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wiltshire Customer First Partnership to be disbanded

Effect on strategies and codes

This report states that the majority of new strategies or updates to existing strategies will not be undertaken as a result of LGR. This means that some may go out of date during the transition period up to the creation of the new unitary authority. Where this occurs, it may be possible for existing strategies to be simply extended, or where absolutely necessary, some short term plans may need to be put in place.

Risk management implications

This review has been completed to ensure key priorities are progressed and that work is ceased where it no longer supports the LGR transition process or creation of the new unitary authority. However, given the rapidly changing circumstances this will need to be kept under review. Otherwise there is a danger of work being completed that is no longer required and officer capacity and financial resources could be wasted.

The outcome of judicial review of LGR could impact on this work. If the judicial review is successful, the work that has been modified, stopped or postponed would need to be revisited.

There is potentially a key role for the Scrutiny Committee in evaluating and monitoring the management of risks emanating from local government re-organisation.

Finance and performance implications

There are many financial implications arising from these changes, particularly in respect of work that will be continued but modified and work that will be stopped altogether. Budgets may be reallocated to take account of the changes outlined. The detailed financial issues are being considered separately by Finance and a report is included on this agenda.

Legal and human rights implications

None

Next Steps

The Service and Resource Plans for 2008-09 will be based on this review. Service Managers will start preparing these plans in the autumn. They will reflect both the work

being undertaken by the Council itself and the work being done with the County Council to prepare for the new unitary authority. Service budgets will be adjusted to take account of the changes.

Performance monitoring will be simplified and refocused onto measuring progress against the key priorities and work that needs to be completed before vesting day.

Recommendations

Cabinet is recommended to:

- Consider and endorse the Councils priorities and key projects for the next 18 months
- Review and agree the work that is scheduled to be continued, modified or stopped.

Key Decision Box

Statement of reason for key decision	The decision relates to the Corporate Plan and identifies the priorities and key projects that will be taken forward in the period up to vesting day (1 April 2009).
Options considered and rejected	Consultation has taken place with portfolio holders, corporate team, and service managers on all the options available to deal with existing and planned projects and work, taking into account the implications of Local Government Reorganisation.
Date of implementation	22 November 2007

A summary table of changes is given below under four headings:

1 Work to be continued

2 Work to be continued but significantly modified to take account of LGR

3 Work to be stopped or postponed. Some of this work may be taken forward by the new unitary council.

1 Work to be continued

Work to be continued	Impact and issues	Service area
PFI project	There is continuing strong support for this project from Wiltshire County Council.	Housing PFI Development Control Property and Commercial Services
Leisure facilities review - Replacement of leisure centres in Trowbridge and Melksham	Replacement of Castle Place is being considered as part of Transforming Trowbridge. Development of dual use centre at Woolmore Farm site in Melksham. Both schemes unlikely to be completed until 2009-10 after vesting day. Preparatory work to continue until then.	Sustainable Communities
Play Strategy	Adopted by Cabinet 5/9/07 and submitted to the Lottery Fund together with a bid for £240k to improve play provision. If successful work begin on site in early 2008.	Sustainable Communities Property and Commercial Services
Partnership work to encourage people to be more active - Wiltshire and Swindon Sports and Physical Activity Partnership (WASP) and developing the First Active Strategy	Role in this partnership will continue as planned. A successful lottery funding bid was made which secured £250k for the connecting communities through sport project.	Sustainable Communities
Transforming Trowbridge regeneration projects	Facilitation of key site development to continue. Working with Transforming Trowbridge steering group to promote Trowbridge as the county town. Plans for St Stephens Place being reconsidered in light of lack of progress by private sector.	Regeneration Planning Policy and Conservation Development Control
'Lean fundamentals' - Vanguard Customer systems review with a focus on customers and improving efficiency in services	Work continuing and being extended to other service areas. There is also associated IT investment which will support this work. It includes: in Revenues and Benefits E-citizen facilities self serve and work to rewrite benefit application interfaces. Wiltshire County Council supports the	Revenues and Benefits Development Control Customer Services (including Environmental Health, Property and Commercial Services, and Housing) Finance Legal and Democratic Services

Work to be continued	Impact and issues	Service area
	principles adopted, particularly the focus around the customer. This work will help services prepare for LGR.	Building Control
Local housing allowance implementation. This will allow individual tenants to be paid direct.	Statutory requirement to complete work. To be implemented from April 2008. There is also associated IT investment which is needed to support this work. It includes: implementing Academy payments module to Agresso.	Revenues and Benefits
Legislation implementation in respect of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smoke free - Responsibility stray dogs - Animal welfare - Gambling 	Legislative requirement.	Environmental Health
Grants and service level agreements (SLAs)	Annual grants and funding for partnership work. SLAs may need to be extended for a further year. Future funding issues may occur beyond vesting day.	Sustainable Communities
Local Area Agreement - contribution to targets	LAA and LPSA2 targets Work on LAA 2008 to start shortly.	Sustainable Communities and other services involved in LAA delivery
Elections - to the new unitary authority	A boundary review of unitary wards will occur in 2008 and unitary elections in May 2009. This is a new piece of work which will have resource implications.	Legal and democratic Services - elections
Equalities - updating the race equality scheme	Statutory requirement	Human Resources
Training plans updated	Corporate training plan to be refocused onto staff needs and requirements for LGR	Human Resources
LDF Core Strategy	To continue but with the aim of integrating processes across the county area.	Planning Policy and Conservation
Regional Spatial Strategy Examination in Public	Already work closely with Wiltshire County Council on this and this will continue.	Planning Policy and Conservation
Leisure and Recreation Development Plan Document	On 5/9/07 Cabinet agreed it can be submitted to SofS. It should be adopted in 2008 as per planned timescale.	Planning Policy and Conservation
5 Towns Initiative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bradford on Avon bridge - Smarter Warminster - Melksham market place - Westbury market place - Trowbridge town bridge 	Projects to continue but emphasis needs to be on projects that will be completed by April 2009 as funding may disappear at that stage.	Regeneration
Waste and recycling review	Review recycling practices and identify scope for improvements. Final report early 2008.	Property and Commercial Services
Grounds maintenance and street cleansing contract	Mobilisation, transition and strengthen client management arrangements.	Property and Commercial Services Human Resources
Decriminalised parking arrangements	Work with Wiltshire County council ready for implementation in June 2008.	Property and Commercial services
Melksham and Bradford	Short of space. There are necessary	Property and Commercial

Work to be continued	Impact and issues	Service area
cemeteries, and improvements in infrastructure	DDA improvements	services
Maintenance and refurbishment work	Continue with existing programme to meet health and safety standards and protect the Councils assets.	Property and Commercial services
Multi storey car park - Castle Place, Trowbridge	Improvements to security and safety. Resource implications.	Property and Commercial Services

2 Work to be continued but significantly modified to take account of LGR

Work to be continued - but significantly modified for LGR	Impact and issues	Service area
Medium term financial plan	To be replaced by a short term plan up to vesting day in April 2009.	Finance
Capital programme	To be streamlined. (see separate report on Cabinet agenda)	Finance
Service and Resource Planning work	To be simplified. Service and resource Plans for 2008-09 to reflect the content of this report.	Finance and Policy and Communications
Corporate consultation work	Restricted to agreed high profile projects.	Policy and Communications
Scrutiny support	Need to review and change forward work plan and coordinate activity with Wiltshire County and the other districts. Focus to shift towards preparations for the unitary authority and joint work with other districts.	Policy and Communications
Wiltshire Improvement Partnership (WIP)	Focus on governance and member development that will assist the new unitary authority and its partnership arrangements.	Policy and Communications
BVPP performance plan, performance monitoring and data quality	To continue but in a simplified way. Also awaiting new guidance for future performance framework and reporting requirements.	Policy and Communications
Appraisals process	To be simplified.	Human Resources
Building Control Service - review to create a single county service	To be modified. Work on countywide service to be integrated into frontline service planning for the unitary authority.	Building Control
West Wiltshire LSP - role	Review role - use LSP as a forum to help change process and in particular the role of community area boards.	Sustainable Communities
Support to Community Area Partnerships		Sustainable Communities
Community safety	From April 2008 the majority of this service will be managed at a county level through the Local Area Agreement (LAA).	Sustainable Communities
Web based services Implementation of e-forms initiative	To continue but on a collective basis in partnership with other authorities.	Customer Services ICT Revenues and Benefits
ICT programme of investment	To be reviewed and coordinated with other councils	ICT

3 Work to be stopped or postponed

Work to be stopped	Impact and issues	Service area
Corporate Plan review	This work has been stopped.	Policy and Communications
Reputation project	Further work on the reputation project has been shelved. However, continue to maintain a high profile for the Council and its services up to vesting day.	Policy and Communications
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and its successor Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)	Council will no longer seek a CPA re-assessment and no work will be done on CAA preparations (which will apply from April 2009).	Policy and Communications
Wiltshire Customer First Partnership	This partnership is being disbanded.	Customer Services
Audit and external inspection work - Street scene inspection (due in January 2008)	The Audit Commission has confirmed that the street scene inspection will not take place. The Council will work with the auditors to reduce the scope of other work and focus on preparations for the unitary authority. Routine regularity work will continue.	Property and Commercial Services Policy and Communications Finance
IIP reaccreditation application	The council will not seek a IIP reaccreditation	Human Resources
Pay reform project - phase 1	Still awaiting Unison response. The new unitary authority will need to revisit pay structures and equal pay issues and compliance.	Human Resources
Pay reform project - phase 2 (linking pay to performance)	This phase will not proceed.	Human Resources
West Wiltshire LSP community strategy		Sustainable Communities
Leisure facilities review - Other work	Other work outside replacement of leisure centres in Trowbridge and Melksham to cease. Demand and cost analysis work completed. The new unitary authority will need to consider the way forward in due course.	Sustainable communities
Review of Member allowances	Due to the short timescales involved in the creation of the new unitary authority, it is suggested this review should not be undertaken.	Legal and Democratic Services
Implement Tenancy Deposit Scheme due to government implementation of the Landlords Accreditation Scheme		Housing
Homelessness Strategy		Housing
Housing Enabling Strategy		Housing
Warminster Cemetery	There is enough space for over 10 years	Property and Commercial services
Electronic Records Management System in Development Control, Building Control, Customers First and other areas		ICT