



A 2020 Vision for Joint Working Report on Options for Future Delivery Models and Interim Management Arrangements

Executive Summary

**Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold
District Council, Forest of Dean District
Council and West Oxfordshire District
Council**

This report was produced on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council by Activist Group.

Report Details



Report Author	Eric Bohl (Activist Group)
Contributors	Helen Thomas, David Incoll, Caroline Stanger, John Layton, Jonathan Russell, Mike Wynn (Activist Group).
Version number	v3.0
Date	20 November 2014
Revisions	v3.0 – final draft

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This executive summary provides an overview of the contents of the report. Each chapter of the main body of the report is summarised and some of the key recommendations drawn out. A summary of all the recommendations and proposed principles drawn from the main body of the report is shown at the end of this executive summary.

Chapter 2. Introduction

- 1.2 2020 Vision is an ambitious new model for how district councils could work together and is being developed by four partners: Cheltenham Borough Council, Cotswold District Council, Forest of Dean District Council and West Oxfordshire District Council.
- 1.3 In June 2014, each of the four councils' cabinets agreed to set up the 2020 Vision Programme Board to develop a programme plan; business case; and consider any efficiency savings that could be delivered for 2015/16 with a further report to partner councils in Autumn 2014.
- 1.4 The four councils have worked together for a number of years to share services. GO Shared Services have been in operation successfully for over two years and the partners have a range of other partnerships.
- 1.5 This has given them the confidence to explore taking a significant step towards much deeper sharing of the staffing resources that enable each authority to function. This would represent the first time that four district councils have shared most of their services.
- 1.6 Activist Group are the authors of this report and were engaged using funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government's Transformation Challenge Award to provide independent advice to the 2020 Vision Programme Board.
- 1.7 This report will contribute to the planning and research being undertaken by the four councils' officers to develop the proposals that each council will consider before deciding whether and how to proceed. This report focuses on two principal issues:
- The **options for the delivery models** that would be needed to make this possible.
 - The **interim management arrangements** that will be needed to make the transition to the models if the partners decided to go ahead.

Chapter 3. What's Driving 2020 Vision

- 1.8 The report examines what is driving each authority to explore 2020 Vision. We examine what is distinctive about the authorities; what they have in common; the strengths that they can draw on in tackling radical options for the future; and whether the motivations for exploring 2020 Vision provide a sufficient basis for the partnership.

- 1.9 2020 Vision sets out an ambition for the authorities to become more efficient and effective by working together but without sacrificing their sovereignty – in fact, their ability to take the decisions needed for their locality would be strengthened.
- 1.10 The strategic priorities set out in each authority's corporate plans demonstrate many similarities, including:
- The importance of value for money and efficiency.
 - A commitment to the environment.
 - Working with and supporting their communities.
- 1.11 There are some significant differences in emphasis and policies that are likely to be a reflection of differences in political control, but also in the nature of the locality. They also have differences in their size, population and prosperity. However, while there are differences between the authorities and the areas they serve, these are greatly outweighed by the similarities.
- 1.12 The four authorities share a focus on efficiency and on achieving value for money for council tax payers. This concern for efficiency goes hand-in-hand with the partner authorities' shared vision of a district council having a wider responsibility for what is often characterised as 'place-shaping'. The authorities play a community leadership role - providing a long term vision for the locality; identifying how the needs of their locality will be delivered; and acting as champions of their communities on behalf of their citizens.
- 1.13 A key shared challenge is addressing the year-on-year reductions in central government grant to local authorities. Each of the council's medium term financial strategies require significant savings - even before any further reductions in funds for local government that are expected to materialise after the General Election in 2015. Additionally, all four councils face a longer-term challenge - how to deal with the increasing costs of funding the employers' contributions to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS).
- 1.14 There are three principal options open to each authority to make the savings needed:
- Achieving **economies of scale**
 - **Redesigning the service**
 - **Redefining the service**
- 1.15 The authorities have made it clear that they would prefer not to make reductions in service levels or cut non-statutory services if at all possible.
- 1.16 Set against these constraints, each authority will need to decide whether there are alternatives to 2020 Vision that could provide savings on the scale required.
- 1.17 The four authorities are not 'identikit' in their cultures and styles. They share similar approaches to their roles as authorities: they share a commitment to 'place shaping' while having a strong commitment to efficiency. Nevertheless, there are differences in emphasis and differences in political and managerial culture and style.

- 1.18 We found that the experience of the four authorities' collaboration to date was positive. In tackling ambitious projects together, they had been able to overcome the difficulties that do arise and had developed a high degree of trust and confidence in each other.
- 1.19 We also found that members had a great deal of confidence in their officers' ability to tackle challenging projects and programmes. That confidence is built on a history of investment in the knowledge and skills needed. Additionally, whilst there was a strong emphasis on the need for efficiency savings, there was also a recognition that sharing could provide access to greater capacity and help make services more resilient.

Table 3.6: Summary of Drivers for 2020 Vision

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial: we need to respond to long-term financial pressures on the four councils. • Efficiency: we need to continue to find ways of delivering value for money (even if we didn't face the current financial pressures). • Resilience: each authority needs a wider pool of expertise and greater capacity to respond to events. • Impact: more depth in strategic capacity is needed to support the drive towards service improvement and wider social and economic benefits in each locality. • Democracy: each authority needs to have sufficient resources to be able to exercise choice and community leadership so that it can champion local needs and priorities.

- 1.20 In summary, the reasons why each partner is exploring 2020 Vision are very similar; the partners have much in common and have a track record of working together that gives them the confidence that it could be possible to achieve even more through closer collaboration.

Chapter 4. Challenges, Risks and Outcomes

- 1.21 We examine in this chapter the particular challenges faced by the four authorities and the opportunities that can be taken. We conclude by identifying what the end results are that the programme would need to achieve - the intended 'outcomes'.
- 1.22 Through the process of engagement undertaken in developing this report, we set out to capture people's ideas, concerns and fears about the programme. Some of these represent potential risks that need to be managed; some are matters of policy that can be readily addressed; and others represent more fundamental challenges that the partners will need to consider further. For each challenge, we summarise the key issues raised and suggest in the report how these can be best addressed.

Challenge 1: Staying Local

- 1.23 2020 Vision aims to preserve the sovereignty and identity of each local authority, but there were concerns about the danger of eroding them if collaboration led to complete standardisation.

Challenge 2: Managing Complexity

- 1.24 There was a strong emphasis on the importance of ensuring that new arrangements were both transparent and readily understandable - some members pointed to the complexity of their existing sourcing arrangements and suggested that the opportunity could be taken to streamline their management and governance.

Challenge 3: Taking People with You

- 1.25 The importance was stressed of engaging with and informing elected members so that they are able to shape the development of the programme and, ultimately, make the right decisions about the programme. The importance of engagement with staff and trade unions was stressed along with the need to ensure the public are informed properly about the plans.

Challenge 4: Creating the Capacity

- 1.26 It was repeatedly emphasised in our discussions that the intention of 2020 Vision is that the public should not notice any adverse impact of any changes in the way that the services are organised. The importance of investing in the resources needed to make the change possible was underlined.

Challenge 5: Policy on Pensions

- 1.27 The Report and Outline Business Case considered by the cabinets in June 2014 signalled the potential to transfer staff to a new employing body. While protecting the terms, conditions and pensions of staff transferred, new starters would be employed on new terms and conditions and would have a stakeholder pension scheme rather than access to the LGPS, which provoked differing views.
- 1.28 The partners engaged specialist advice on pensions from AON Hewitt, whose projections suggest that the rate of employer contributions to the pension scheme will almost double over the next twenty years.
- 1.29 The scale of this challenge is not yet widely understood, nor is the impact yet confirmed of the proposed solution of moving to a stakeholder pension scheme for new starters. As a result, it is proposed that the partners take time to fully explore the reasons for and feasibility of moving away from the LGPS for new starters before agreeing their policy position.

Challenge 6: Understanding the Alternatives

- 1.30 We explored the alternatives that authorities have in trying to make efficiency savings. While authorities may feel they have exhausted many of the options, the service and budget planning process in each authority will enable them to consider the options further and individual authorities may need to pursue them in greater depth.

Proposed Outcomes Framework

- 1.31 We tested what the partners would want to achieve from 2020 Vision. Given the feedback and points raised, we have developed a proposed outcomes framework. This framework is set out below and is of central importance in informing decisions on service design and the choice of sourcing options.

Table 4.8: Proposed Outcomes Framework

In creating 2020 Vision, we need to achieve the following end results:

Outcome	Contributory outcomes
Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivers realistic and sustainable revenue savings. • Provides a positive return on investment in the medium to long term. • Enables us to make further savings through partnership and better asset management. • Enables opportunities for income generation.
Influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects our separate identities as individual authorities. • Ensures our decision making will remain locally accountable. • Strengthens our ability to exercise community leadership on behalf of our localities. • Allows us to retain strong local knowledge in our frontline services. • Provides each authority with impartial commissioning and client side advice from people they trust.
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhances and maintains good quality services to the public. • Allows us to nurture our partnerships and take advantage of new ones. • Creates organisations that are flexible and adaptable to future changes. • Has governance and structures that are streamlined and easy to understand. • Is widely acknowledged to be socially responsible.
Creativity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowers staff to be creative, collaborative and enquiring. • Supports our commitment to a public service that responds to and empowers our local communities. • Fosters and rewards an innovative, can-do approach to delivering services.

Chapter 5. Service Design

Service Design Options

- 1.32 We have identified a number of key concerns and issues raised by members and senior managers that would need to be addressed if 2020 Vision is to succeed and these have

been addressed in the outcomes framework. They include a number of service design matters which we examine in turn before suggesting ways of addressing them.

- 1.33 At the heart of service design is an understanding of the needs and aspirations of the user (whether as a citizen, resident or business); a definition of the service on offer and service levels; and communication between the user and service provider.

Local Focus and Knowledge

- 1.34 Each of the partner authorities currently offers its users three entry points for contacting and transacting with the council: through reception points, call centres and online. In most cases, enquiries and service requests can be dealt with at the first point of contact (and, increasingly, through web-based self-service). However, for a number of services, there will be a need for a meeting or phone call with a specialist or for a visit to the home or business premises.
- 1.35 Greater scale and streamlined management structures can help to make other front office and professional services more efficient and cost-effective. However, some services demand a local presence (eg environmental health) and others demand local understanding (eg planning). As a result, it is essential that any configuration of services is both **manageable** and enables staff to remain **knowledgeable**. There is also concern about the impact on staff of transferring operations to remote locations and of the loss of local employment opportunities in each area.
- 1.36 An approach is proposed that will assist in ensuring that the right balance is struck between ensuring that a strong local focus is retained while taking the chance to consolidate and streamline back office services.

Identity and Branding

- 1.37 The identity and brand of an organisation are not superficial marketing concepts that are of little consequence; they are profoundly important in ensuring that the public understand what their council does and that staff understand who they work for.
- 1.38 If any new organisations created through 2020 Vision were to develop a strong, new brand, this would help with marketing their services to other potential partners and external customers. However, if this branding were used more prominently locally, this could serve to confuse citizens and businesses.
- 1.39 For staff, the identity of the organisation they work for is an essential part of their sense of purpose and attachment. The more they identify with their organisation and its aims, the greater will be their commitment and effort. Given the strong concern expressed about the risk of losing a connection with both the place and the council of which staff feel proud, a more subtle approach is required, which recognises both the new organisation they work for and the councils and places they serve.

Local Discretion and Standardisation

- 1.40 A number of areas of policy which the partners have each stressed they must retain sovereign control over include:
- Strategic planning policy: decisions over the local planning framework are of great political sensitivity and may require participation in different regional and sub-regional planning policies beyond the initial four partners in 2020 Vision.

- Local planning decisions: members are keen to ensure that they continue to be able to take decisions that reflect the fine grain of local development considerations.
- Parking policies: each authority takes a different approach to the setting of car parking charges to reflect local issues such as traffic levels; the environmental impact of car use; and the vibrancy of the local retail economy.

1.41 These red line policy issues do not mean that it is not possible to share many or all of the services that support the decision-making process. There are also many aspects of service delivery that members and officers are happy to standardise, particularly ‘back office’ operations.

1.42 It would not be feasible or sensible to try to identify in advance all of the issues that could not be delegated to a new joint organisation to decide. Instead, a practical approach taken in the partners’ other shared service partnerships has been to identify these as part of the process of planning a new shared service.

Designing Commissioning

1.43 The **ownership** of any new organisation created will be key to deciding on the nature of the commissioning function. If the new organisation has owners that are fully independent of the councils (eg in the case of a staff-owned mutual or a private sector partner), the commissioning function could not form part of that new organisation.

1.44 The **scope** of a commissioning function might include the management of a contract with a new joint body (depending on the sourcing option chosen) but could include other contracts and partnerships. In the new arrangements it is envisaged that each authority will be able to decide which joint service it will participate in and which it will be able to commission separately if it wishes.

1.45 It is recommended that the partners create a shared commissioning function to manage their relationship with any new joint body and strengthen their ability to manage their relationships with other partnerships and service contracts. This should also deliver further savings and efficiencies.

Retained Functions

1.46 The commissioning function and any retained functions will need to be managed and co-ordinated on behalf of each council and this can be conducted by a retained Head of Paid Service with the support of the other statutory posts. These posts will continue to support elected members in ensuring that the interests of each authority are properly protected and the authority’s decision-making, scrutiny and governance arrangements operate effectively.

1.47 In considering services that might be retained, there have been suggestions that these could include strategic planning advice and democratic services or other unique community support functions. Each authority will need to decide which services it wants to retain under direct control.

- 1.48 Past experience from elsewhere suggests that the size and functions of any retained functions must be kept under review to avoid the risk of retained and client side units 're-growing' and duplicating activities that are being delivered by service providers.

Chapter 6. Sourcing Options

- 1.49 There are numerous choices available for securing the sourcing model best able to meet the outcomes expected for 2020 Vision. Whereas in the past, the choice could be represented as a simple 'make or buy' decision, there is now a much greater variety of sourcing options in use by local authorities. Each model has particular strengths and weaknesses and the choice of model will depend on what the commissioner is trying to achieve.

Table 6.1: Overview of Main Sourcing Options

Make	Buy	Share	Divest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In-house transformation Continuous improvement Arms-length company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outsourcing to private sector Outsource to third sector Private-sector joint ventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared services Shared management Public sector joint ventures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer community manager Mutualisation Devolve town or parish Closure

- 1.50 In this chapter, we summarise the main features of the following longlisted options:

Table 6.2: Longlist of Sourcing Options for 2020 Vision

Type	Potential Option
Make	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As is (or suggested as 'in-house transformation').
Buy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector joint venture (only if there is a particular need for external capital or skills).
Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arms-length company (Teckal) jointly owned by partner authorities (ie a public sector joint venture). Jointly owned trading company. Shared service model (lead authority or joint committee).
Divest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spin-out to mutual or charitable trust.

Shortlisting of Preferred Sourcing Options

- 1.51 At this stage, we have conducted a preliminary option appraisal to help identify the sourcing options most likely to meet the outcomes framework set out in Chapter 4. Each of the longlisted models has been evaluated for its contribution to each of the outcomes set out in the outcomes framework, using a simple rating of high, medium and low; no weightings have been applied.

- 1.52 As a result of the shortlisting process, two broad strategic options are recommended for consideration on the shortlist:
- Traditional Sharing (under s101 and s102 of the Local Government Act 1972).
 - Teckal and Trading Companies.
- 1.53 Both options have the merit of being able to deliver significant savings, but without the delays incurred through an expensive procurement exercise. They also have the merit of using partnership models that are tried, tested and trusted already among the partner authorities (eg GO Shard Services, South West Audit Partnership and Ubico).
- 1.54 It should be stressed that this shortlist is based on a preliminary option appraisal. It is suggested that other options should not be discarded at this stage. Instead, a process of discussion, consultation and idea generation should be used to encourage debate that challenges and helps to refine the sourcing options further.

Recommended Option/s

- 1.55 It is recommended that a new **partnership venture** is established at an early stage under the control of an interim joint committee which would operate as an initial stage before the partners decide whether they wish to retain a joint committee approach or proceed to a Teckal company model. This will allow the partners to investigate and decide upon their policy on future pension arrangements before making a decision in autumn 2015 on the best long-term approach.

Chapter 7. Making It Happen

- 1.56 2020 Vision represents probably the largest and most complex district council shared service programme in the country. This is understood to be the first attempt by four councils to share services. This is not a project affecting one or two services in a council; it is a major transformation programme of change which will impact on the management of every service in four councils.
- 1.57 The programme is complex and extensive: it will involve the 'hard' side of change, with new organisational governance and structures across four authorities; service redesign; a new IT infrastructure and the integration of IT applications; and all supported by legal agreements, specifications and contracts. The programme will need to manage both these 'hard', technical aspects and the 'soft' elements. It will require thoroughness, determination and subtlety - and a forward momentum that is carefully calibrated.
- 1.58 We set out the key requirements of the programme for:
- Engagement, consultation and leadership.
 - Interim management arrangements.
 - Programme management, timetabling and risk management.

Engagement, Consultation and Leadership

- 1.59 While each authority will decide its own approach to member engagement, it would be wise for the partner authorities to ensure that each individual partner authority is engaging sufficiently to ensure that its commitment to the programme is broadly based and would survive any political change. This should not be seen as a desire to interfere with the sovereignty of each authority; instead it is a sensible process of 'due diligence' that is required for any formal collaboration between two or more organisations to ensure planned savings can be delivered.
- 1.60 As 2020 Vision focuses on the organisation of its staff resources rather than on the nature of the services that the public receives, it is unlikely to generate significant public interest in the proposals. Nevertheless, each partner authority will want to ensure that the public have sufficient information about the proposals to be able to reassure themselves about the plans and be able to comment if they wish.
- 1.61 An engaged and entrepreneurial culture in which staff are empowered to find creative and innovative new ways of serving their residents and communities is unlikely to flourish in a more traditional, top-down and directive approach to leadership and management. Instead, a more **collaborative** style would be required in which staff are not just informed, consulted or told about change, but are actively involved in its creation.
- 1.62 Consultation, engagement and culture change are recognised as essential to the success of any transformation programme whether in the public or private sectors, but they are seldom given sufficient weight, attention or resources. The partner authorities recognise their importance given their experience of previous joint programmes and projects and have demonstrated their commitment to actively engaging with stakeholders in this programme. This commitment will need to be maintained, backed up by a well-planned and co-ordinated engagement plan that is properly resourced.

Interim Joint Committee Arrangements

- 1.63 In chapter 6, it is recommended that the new partnership venture would be managed on a transitional basis under an interim joint committee which would be established at an early stage (eg early 2015), operating initially under a memorandum of understanding to focus on:
- Overseeing the development of the detailed programme plans and the final business case for consideration by each partner authority.
 - Overseeing any new sharing projects that the partners agree upon (on a case-by-case basis), eg IT and public protection, and encouraging innovation.
 - Managing any services that were transferred to its management on an interim basis pending final decisions on the way forward.
 - Negotiating the future agreements that will underpin the new partnership venture arrangements, including the financial protocols and charging arrangements.

- 1.64 It is also recommended that the joint committee report to the partner authorities in the autumn of 2015 on final proposals alongside implementation plans to take effect from 2016 onwards.

Longer-term Management Arrangements

- 1.65 In chapter 6, an approach is recommended in which the new partnership venture (managed initially by an interim joint committee) would operate from the outset in a way that was consistent with its longer-term ambitions.
- 1.66 As a result, before considering the interim management arrangements needed during the development and finalisation of plans for the partnership venture, we have anticipated the potential structure of the partnership venture and the associated commissioning function needed to monitor the relationship.

Interim Management Arrangements – Principal Roles

- 1.67 The scale of the exercise is such that it cannot be managed as part of the 'day job' for the authorities' officers.
- 1.68 There are four main roles required during the programme's planning and implementation that will need to be in place to support members in overseeing and scrutinising the development of the programme:
- Head of Paid Service.
 - Interim Lead Commissioner (new).
 - Interim Managing Director of the partnership venture (new).
 - Programme Director (new, fixed-term post).
- 1.69 The nature and duration of these roles are examined in turn. Some of these roles will be part-time and can be combined with other functions and some will be full-time (ie the Programme Director post). The new, interim roles and the post of programme director will be the three roles most closely focused on the programme and the postholders will need to work very closely together, forming the core of the officer leadership of the programme, working with the heads of paid service.

Table 7.2: Implementation of Interim Management Arrangements

Stage	Timing	This will involve:
Job design	October/November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of role definitions for interim roles and job description for programme director post, person specification, competency profile and grading. Confirmation of accountability arrangements to programme board and each authority's governance framework. Confirmation of expected start date and duration of interim roles to match programme timetable.
Structural design	November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design of indicative reporting lines and areas of responsibility for the three interim roles and council decision-making requirements. Development of plans for any consequential cover and acting arrangements. Design of ring-fencing pools for the three interim appointments and agreement of appointment process for programme director.
Consultation	December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with staff affected by proposals and potential ring-fencing pool. Formal staff consultation procedures as appropriate.
Selection	January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expressions of interest invited from ring-fenced officer pool. Appointments confirmed by Programme Board or Joint Committee.
Start	February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim management arrangements commence. Consequential organisational changes put in place, eg any backfilling and acting arrangements.

1.70 The final confirmation of the interim management arrangements will need to be established in the light of any conditions associated with the granting by the DCLG of Transformation Challenge Award funding.

1.71 As it is recommended that the interim roles and appointments are ring-fenced initially to internal candidates, it is important that the process of appointing to those roles is transparent; reflects the value the partners place on the postholders; and is pragmatic.

Programme Management

- 1.72 2020 Vision is such a complex programme it will require the support of a number of Programme Managers who would report to a single Programme Director. Three programme managers would manage three separate workstreams:
1. Programme office.
 2. Strategic, legal, governance and infrastructure.
 3. Implementation.
- 1.73 There would also need to be an investment in a specialist resource to support communication and engagement.

Observations on Technology Challenge

- 1.74 The 2020 Vision ICT strategy will need to include actions to manage the following challenges and concentrate on:
- Supporting shared working at a communications level, including email, video conferencing, etc.
 - Strengthening areas of weakness, particularly where there has been underinvestment in infrastructure.
 - Exploiting opportunities that fall within the umbrella strategy, or where change is urgent.
 - Combining support teams where capacity is an issue.
 - Developing a fluid application strategy centred round emerging priorities.

Managing Risks

- 1.75 Risk Management is an essential part of Programme Management and it is important that it is not somehow seen as an 'add on' or something done as a 'checklist'. We have developed an initial risk log which the Programme Board may wish to consider.

Timescales

- 1.76 An indicative timetable for the proposed partnership venture and interim management arrangements could be as follows:

Table 7.4: Summary of Timetable for 2020 Vision Programme

Phase	Timing	Summary	Key Activities
1	Autumn 2014	Preliminary Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Strategic Outline Case. Design programme plan. Design detail of interim management arrangements. Go/No-go decision point for each authority to proceed to next phase: Nov/Dec 2014.
2	Winter 2014 - Spring 2015	Detailed Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish interim joint committee including legal agreements. Implement interim management arrangements. Develop Outline Business Case. Initiate preliminary agreed projects.
3	Summer 2015	Programme Initiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop Full Business Case. Develop draft legal agreements. Confirm whether to retain joint committee or move to company structure. Go/No-go decision point for each authority to proceed to next phase: September 2015.
4	Autumn 2015	Initial implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and manage transition plans, including statutory consultation. Consult on and implement permanent management arrangements. Refine and agree legal agreements, including any contractual requirements.
5	Spring 2016	Full go-live of partnership venture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition made to new organisations. Delivery of programme transformation project continues. Go-live of new arrangements: April 2016.

Chapter 8. Summary of Recommendations

Recommendations 5.1

- That the partners continue to refine their service configuration model to ensure that an effective balance is struck between providing access and support for services that require a local presence and knowledge and the opportunities for efficiencies through co-locating processing and back office functions.
- That staff are trained and inducted in the local dimensions of the service they are providing as part of a comprehensive training and development plan for staff providing services to localities they are less familiar with.
- That the partner authorities establish basic ground rules and training for staff in communications; response times; and in the use of video and conference calls.

Recommendation 5.2

- That the partners develop a joint protocol and operating guidelines for the management of the identity and branding of any new organisation's services for communication with the public on behalf of the partners; for marketing the new organisation's services; and for use internally for staff.

Recommendation 5.3

- That the partner authorities establish a framework to govern the development of each new shared service, in which the policies and operations of each service are reviewed to identify those areas of policy and operational decision-making that each authority will retain sovereignty over and those that can be delegated to the shared service.

Recommendation 5.4

- That the partners establish a project to develop effective commissioning arrangement for each authority, including exploring the potential for sharing commissioning functions wherever possible.

Recommendations 5.5

- That the partner authorities identify those services that each authority believes it may wish to retain while exploring jointly opportunities for sharing or transferring to any new joint bodies.
- That the statutory Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and s151 officer posts be reviewed during the course of the 2020 Vision implementation programme and opportunities explored for sharing them where appropriate and practical.

Recommendation 6.1

- That the preferred sourcing model for 2020 Vision is a partnership venture. This would initially function as a shared service arrangement operating under an interim joint committee and the partners would decide later whether to continue operating as a joint committee or move to a company model.

Recommendation 7.1

- That each partner authority considers the most appropriate way of ensuring effective member oversight and scrutiny of the 2020 Vision programme and that the four partner authorities collaborate to satisfy each other that this engagement will provide the necessary assurances about their long-term commitment to the partnership.

Recommendation 7.2

- That the partner authorities create appropriate consultation arrangements to ensure that they are able to benefit from the views of residents and partners.

Recommendation 7.3

- That the partner authorities develop an initial statement of the preferred approach to the leadership and management of the new organisations and involve managers and staff in refining, shaping and embedding the approach.

Recommendation 7.4

- That the partner authorities establish a comprehensive, co-ordinated and resourced engagement plan for Vision 2020 that enables members, staff, the public

and partners to help shape the proposals and any subsequent implementation plans.

Recommendation 7.5

- That appointments to the three principal roles in the interim management arrangements are temporary, interim appointments, ring-fenced initially to the postholders affected by the proposals in the long-term, with the principal postholders taking collective responsibility for the delivery of 2020 Vision.

Recommendations 7.6

- That the Programme Board or Joint Committee confirms the appointments to the roles of Interim Lead Commissioner, Interim Managing Director of the partnership venture and Programme Director as set out in table 7.2.
- That independent advice is sought for the appointment process for the interim management arrangements.

Chapter 9. Summary of Potential Principles

Potential Principles 5.1

- Residents and businesses will have access to knowledgeable support from staff who understand their localities and can support members with their decision-making.
- Back office services will be centralised where possible and in a balanced way across the partnership, taking into account economies of scale achieved, any additional costs (e.g. initial staff travelling cost and time) and opportunities to reorganise or release office accommodation which delivers a capital sum or a rent.

Proposed Principle 5.2

- Each partner council's brand identity will, wherever practical, be the most prominent brand for any local service delivered jointly.
- Any new organisation's services will develop a brand identity to use as part of marketing efforts for trading and partnership growth.
-
- Staff in the new organisation will be supported in identifying both with their new organisation and the councils and localities which they serve.

Potential Principles 5.3

- The partner authorities will identify matters of policy over which they will each retain their independent decision-making.
- Wherever possible, routine operations and minor policy issues will be standardised in order to maximise efficiency and reduce costs.

Potential Principles 5.4

- Each partner authority will have access to directly managed commissioning support that will enable it to develop and set its strategic policies; source service provision; and manage its contracts and relationships with a range of service providers.
- The partners are committed to sharing their commissioning support wherever possible.

Potential Principles 5.5

- The partner authorities will retain in-house those services that they consider to be unique or of key strategic importance or that are integral to the functioning of their organisation.
- The partner authorities will keep their retained services under regular review in order to identify opportunities for improvement or savings through sharing or commissioning externally.

Potential Principles 7.1

- The partner authorities will encourage the development of a collaborative leadership style that actively engages and involves staff in the creation of the new organisations and in the services they deliver for residents and communities.
- Each partner authority will make use of its established staff and trade union consultation arrangements to ensure that effective formal consultation takes place.

Proposed Principle 7.2

- All internal appointments to posts as part of the 2020 Vision programme will be made on the basis of the suitability of the individuals for the role.