

Appendix 1 - Timescales

A further consideration of timescales is given below; this considers only the timescale of each option and makes no comment upon the relative cost of each option. The cost of those options involving potential partners is difficult to assess at this stage and could be subject to significant variation depending upon the options provided by the potential partners. Costs would, however, become clearer within the competitive procurement process.

The commencement date of the project is not considered and hence no suggestion of an anticipated 'go live' date is made. The timescales begin from the commencement of the first task of the proposed project and take no account of any preceding debates, approvals or other pre-project activity required to instigate the programme of change.

Three options are considered in the table below. Option 2 combine two of the options recommended previously within the main business case. This option combines the two options that suggested a short-term transformation partner to just undertake the transformation whilst the councils continued to deliver the existing service or to use the transformation partner to also deliver the existing services on a short contract throughout the transformation process.

It is considered that the timescales would not particularly vary in either of the original options, the utilisation of the contractor to also deliver the existing service is a method of reducing delivery risk rather than to reduce the implementation time.

Option	Estimated timescale	Key tasks and issues
External resources to support internal project	12 -18 months	Procurement and Conversion of systems
Transformation partner (includes short term service delivery contract if required)	18 months	Procurement of contractor Procurement and Conversion of systems
Transformation partner and longer term service provider	12 months	Procurement of contractor TUPE transfer

In each instance the timescale is dominated by one or two significant tasks that will effectively determine the overall timescale for delivery of the whole project.

The consideration of the timescale required therefore concentrates on those major elements and the assumption is made that all other tasks will be completed concurrently with the dominant factor or factors. This will become clearer when an implementation project plan is produced in due course.

External resources to support internal project

With this option procurement of project resources will be unlikely to be necessary. Resources could be employed on a short-term basis directly to one of the partners, or specialised agency staff could be recruited as required. Individual contracts are unlikely to exceed OJEU thresholds unless project significantly overruns so methodology of recruitment would be achieved within the scope of the Council's own standing orders.

The major task to achieve before transition would be the conversion of systems and would, in this instance, be necessary before any savings are likely to be achieved.

It is estimated that procurement of the systems through the usual OJEU procurement procedures could take up to 6 months, this allows for the required timescales at each stage of the process and sufficient time to prepare documentation and to assess tenders. The use of the OGC's 'buying solutions' could reduce this if the Council's are comfortable in using this route to procurement.

It is then estimated that to convert the main Revenues systems would comfortably take 9 months, if pushed suppliers may be able to condense the conversion into 6 months but this will also depend upon the availability of an 'implementation slot' with the suppliers and the availability of internal resources to test the migrated data throughout the process.

It is also estimated that a conversion of the Electronic Document Management would take between 3 and 6 months depending upon whether historical documents require conversion. Whilst this conversion could be undertaken concurrently with the main systems conversion it is suggested that this would probably create too large an effect on the Council's own resources who would need to test system conversions as well as continue to deliver the ongoing service.

In total therefore if the quickest routes are taken it would be possible to achieve live running of the shared service within 12 months of the commencement date, but 18 months probably offers a more likely scenario.

Transformation Partner

This option will create the additional time burden of an OJEU procurement for a transition partner, whose costs under a single contract for this piece of work will undoubtedly exceed the OJEU threshold. Again, however, this could be reduced by using 'buying solutions'.

It is recommended that the procurements for the transition partners and the Revenues IT systems are run concurrently if resources allow. (One option to spread the burden of procurement would be for one authority to lead on appointing the transition partner and the other to lead the systems purchase).

Once procurement is complete however, it is anticipated that the contractual arrangement put in place would enable a more efficient transition to be achieved. So whilst 12 months may be ambitious for this option, 18 months for the whole process, including procurement, would seem a reasonable target to set.

A more distinct team for the transition will undoubtedly be put in place, even if the ongoing service delivery is also transferred to the contractor for the short term. This will undoubtedly allow more concurrent work to be undertaken.

Transformation partner and longer term service provider

This option is shown as the quickest for the Councils to begin to benefit from the efficiency savings generated by the arrangement. The savings in this instance would not be dependant upon the complete transition of the services. The savings would be receivable immediately upon the live commencement of the contract with the contractor. The contractor would then take on the responsibility of implementation of the arrangement and service transformation within the early stages of the contract. The cost of transition would then be spread across the life of the whole contract.

This would also have the advantage to the Councils of not having to find the initial one off costs as outlined in the business case.

The timescale to a contractual start date therefore consists of the procurement of the contractor and the TUPE transfer of staff.

Procurement would be as outlined above and the TUPE transfer would be expected to then take around a further 5-6 months. Again as in previous time estimates any other tasks such as contract negotiation should be achieved concurrently with the TUPE transfer.

The main time issue with regards to TUPE will be the consultation with staff. Although TUPE does not impose a specific time scale for consultation, they must be meaningful and allow sufficient time for the representatives to consider the proposals. In practice, to allow group and individual consultation, the 5-6 month timescale is considered as appropriate.