

Response to the invitation to create a single tier of local government in Northamptonshire.

This document sets out the scope of the specific services we propose to provide. For clarity, this work does not include conducting the consultation exercise.

Background and purpose

There is currently one county and seven district or borough councils administering public service delivery within Northamptonshire. Following the publication of the Northamptonshire County Council Best Value Inspection report, the Secretary of State invited the councils in the area to submit a proposal for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR).

To date, the councils have indicated they will respond to this invitation and have decided to commission the development of a Submission, which will evaluate the evidence associated with LGR, and its links with the wider public service reform agenda (such as closer working with local health agencies, for example).

The working assumption of this scope of work is that LGR in Northamptonshire would result in two new unitary authorities being established, one for the north and one for the west.

Approach

Week 1 (week commencing 30th April): Mobilisation

We will hold a mobilisation meeting with senior stakeholders and the Programme Team members to agree:

- **Project timescales**, the overall project plan and associated milestones;
- **Roles and responsibilities** in our team, the programme team and the Chief Executive's group;
- **Working arrangements** between the programme team and our core team including key contacts;
- **Key documents** and analysis produced to date that we will require access to;
- **Key information** and data that we will need to access to undertake the analysis; and
- **Frequency of progress check point calls** with your key contact and our engagement manager to manage progress against the plan.

Week 2 (week commencing 7th May): Understanding the context, priorities and appetite for transformation

We will hold a workshop for the Chief Executives and Leaders to understand their views on the evidence and risks associated with reorganisation. This will enable us to gain an understanding of:

- **Priorities, drivers, and aspirations** for LGR (at a local, regional and national level). In particular, we will focus on the potential to use reorganisation as a catalyst for delivering transformation and wider public sector reform in Northamptonshire (taking other significant agendas into account, such as the potential for the integration of health and social care services).

- **The significance of place** within the re-organisation debate, i.e. how the proposed authorities for north and west can best serve their disparate geographies and evaluate how this new model of local government would need to be designed in order to secure improved outcomes for local residents.
- **Relationships across the impacted councils, and issues explored to date with key stakeholders** such as back-bench members, and other stakeholders likely to be impacted by reorganisation, e.g. town and parish councils, CCGs, police and fire, the LEP and MPs. This will include discussions to date with government.
- **Any issues of contention** between parties that we need to be aware of while developing the Case for Change document. Our experience to date has suggested that different stakeholders will have different areas of concern. Particular attention will need to be paid to the potential models of governance that will need to underpin the operation of any future council.

We will also use the discussion with Chief Executives and Leaders to establish the basis on which public consultation is to be carried out and engage with the team delivering this phase of activity. We will also engage with other key stakeholders from other public service agencies across Northamptonshire.

This stage of the work will provide us with a baseline understanding the context and overall aims of the Case for Change document.

Weeks 3 – 4 (weeks commencing 14th and 21st May): Defining the tests, document structure and conducting initial evaluation of the strategic benefits

We will use our experience of conducting similar exercises elsewhere to define the tests the Case for Change will need to satisfy (as indicated by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) and use this to suggest a structure for the Case for Change. We will present our approach to your programme team and seek views and input so that local priorities and perspectives can be reflected in the analysis.

Having agreed an overarching structure for the submission, we will conduct a *high level* analysis of the evidence associated with the establishment of two new unitary authorities for Northamptonshire. This will address the criteria in the schedule to the letter from Paul Rowsell dated 27th March and will, in doing so, also include a focus on:

- **The requirement for a new model of local government to improve outcomes** across a range of thematic areas, such as the local economy, infrastructure, housing, environment, education, skills, health, wellbeing and community cohesion.
- **Delivering improved value for money and financial savings.** This will include the financial case for reorganisation and transformation (linked to the wider public service reform agenda), taking into account the likely implementation costs and other significant factors such as council tax harmonisation, inherited debt and the treatment of reserves.
- **The impact of the proposal on governance and accountability** and in particular the mechanisms you will need to adopt to maintain effective and sufficiently local leadership (including area committees and the establishment of town councils in areas where they have yet to be introduced).
- **The long-term sustainability of the proposal**, including the way in which service capacity and resilience will need to be improved, how technology could be harnessed to underpin the operating models of the new councils and how key services such as adult and children's social care will be delivered.

- **The risks associated with reorganisation**, especially those associated with the disaggregation of services currently delivered by the County Council, and the implications of the multiple alternative delivery vehicles that have been established.

At the end of this period, we will supply a short document to use as the basis for conducting public consultation on your proposals. This will constitute deliverable D1 and will enable you to commence public consultation by early June.

While we will not be responsible for managing the consultation process, collecting data or evaluating its results. However, we will provide content that will assist with the process (it is anticipated that the consultation process would take six weeks to complete).

Weeks 5 – 6 (weeks commencing 28th May and 4th June): Detailed analysis

Based on the structure previously agreed and the high level analysis conducted to support the public consultation process, we will add, as required and agreed, more depth and detail to our understanding of the relevant issues. This work will entail a number of 1:1 interviews with relevant stakeholders to test our thinking and ensure local considerations are taken into account.

We will leave open the option of a further workshop for Chief Executives and Leaders to discuss the work carried out to date and to consider some of the timelines associated with reorganisation. It will be important that each of the impacted councils considers how to engage with the decision making process and any subsequent design and implementation activity.

Weeks 7 – 8 (weeks commencing 11th and 18th June): Report drafting and implementation planning

During this stage of the project, we will write up our findings in the form of a Submission document. We will test content with your programme team and other stakeholders who may wish to be engaged in this process as it is developed.

We will also develop a high level transformation roadmap identifying the tasks that will need to be completed to establish the new councils, as well as the more significant activities that will need to be pursued to secure genuine transformation (and achieve the associated benefits).

Week 9 (week commencing 25th June): Presentation of our analysis

We will present the first draft of the Submission document to the Chief Executives and seek collective feedback on the document. This first draft document will constitute deliverable D2.

Week 10 (week commencing 2nd July): Final Draft Report

We will finalise our draft Submission document in light of the feedback received. This final draft document will constitute deliverable D3.

Completing this programme of work in the timescales indicated will leave three weeks for the councils to consider the submission document, and enable any governance processes to be completed, prior to the submission deadline of 27th July.

The deliverables

The table below sets out the deliverables we will produce during the course of this work:

Ref.	Title	Description
D1	Consultation briefing	This will comprise a high level explanation of the proposed model of unitarisation for Northamptonshire, the strategic benefits it could deliver and an approach to implementation. The purpose of this document is to inform the public consultation exercise (to be commissioned separately by the Northamptonshire councils). It will be delivered in Word format and be no more than ten pages in length.
D2	First draft Submission document	This will comprise a detailed explanation of the proposed model of unitarisation for Northamptonshire, an analysis of the strategic benefits it could deliver, an assessment of the degree to which these will satisfy the MHCLG tests and a transformation roadmap. It will be delivered in Word format and be approximately 100 pages in length.
D3	Final draft Submission document	This will comprise an updated version of D2, taking comments provided by the Chief Executives and other stakeholders into account.

The Participating Organisation's responsibilities

The ability of the Consultant to perform the services described in this schedule is dependent upon the Participating Organisation fulfilling its responsibilities. The Participating Organisation will be leading this project and will be required to own the following key activities:

- Providing access to the appropriate members, chief executives, and senior management teams;
- Data gathering, interviews and review of outputs;
- Providing access to relevant individuals to support analysis as required;
- Insight into current ways of working and potential new ways of working;
- Decision making and sign off;
- Attendance at relevant workshops;
- Overall project management;
- Communication and stakeholder engagement;
- Administrative support for project management including arranging meetings/workshop venues and attendees; and
- Consultation on the LGR proposal.

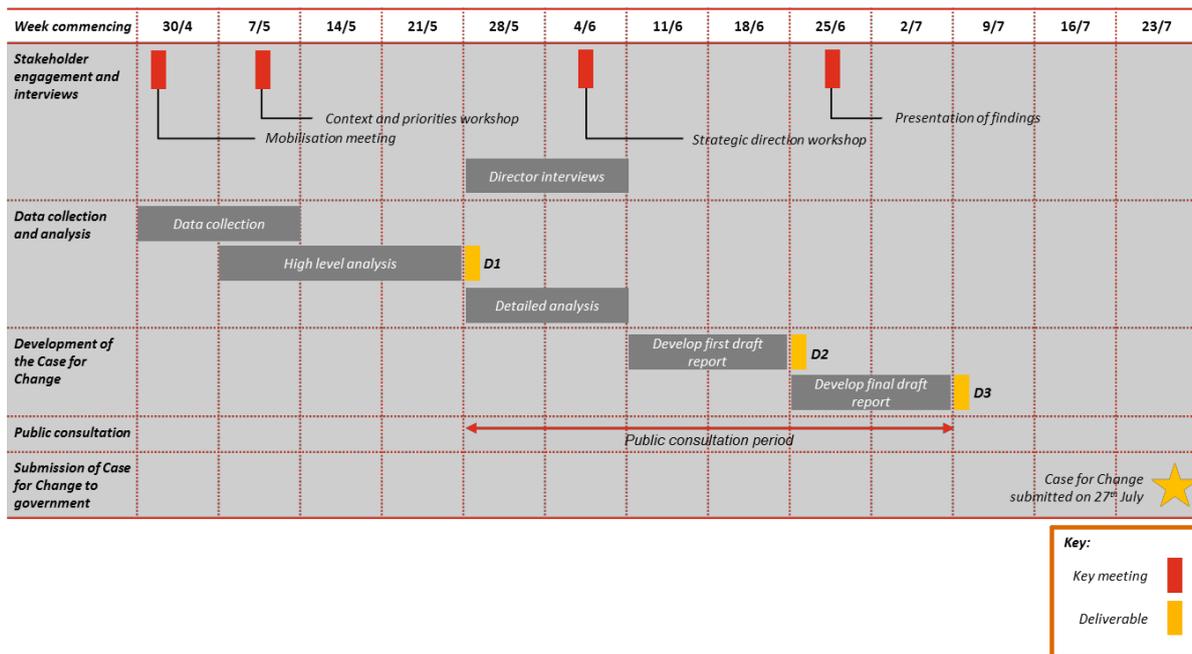
Supervision and oversight

Paul Deegan will be the Engagement Partner for this work. He will be supported by Ian Evans, Engagement Director. Both will input into key meetings and workshops as well as providing the necessary oversight to deliver a high quality project.

Timetable and duration

We will start delivering the work on **30th April 2018** and estimates it will submit its deliverables to the Council by **6th July 2018**.

The approximate phasing of the activities described in this schedule are set out below:



These are estimates in advance of starting work. We will keep you informed of progress and of any proposed changes in this timetable.