



Developing a Strategic Context for Local Government Reform

September 2009

Background

In August 2009 the **name of Council** cluster completed a high level scoping exercise across all service areas to identify priority actions for convergence. This comparative exercise enabled each team to determine the main areas of difference in the delivery of services and has resulted in the identification of key convergence actions that will have to be addressed between now and June 2010 in line with the DoE guidance (07/09, Convergence of Plans, Programmes and Projects).

At the outset of the high level scope it was agreed by the Transition Committee that the second stage of convergence – establishing project teams – should reflect the themes as outlined in the *short term vision* document agreed by the Transition Committee at a series of workshops earlier in the year.

Having completed the high level scope it has become clear that a number of convergence actions do not sit neatly within any one of the existing high level scoping teams but are rather cross departmental in nature. Correspondingly, many of these areas (HR, Finance, ICT, Customer Relations) have separate and distinct tasks that must be completed to different timelines in accordance with the DoE guidance.

At this stage in the convergence process there is an opportunity to regroup many of the actions emanating from the high level scope into revised project teams which reflect the vision themes. There is also an opportunity to ensure that the impact of the transferring services and the identification of service excellence and innovative practices are included and addressed in parallel with convergence activity. This will enable the cluster to identify possible transformation opportunities at an early stage.

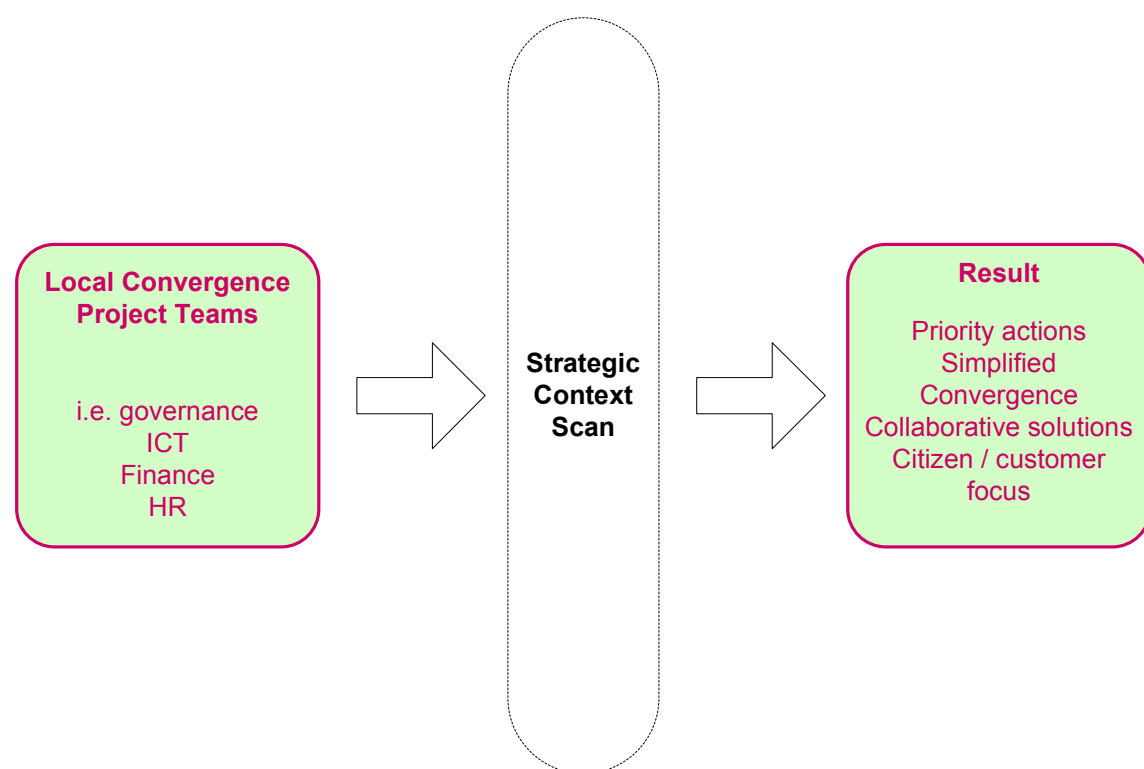
It has been identified that the programme of work to be undertaken by **name of Council** and other clusters must take place within a regional **strategic context for reform**. It is recognised that there are regional influences that will impact upon convergence activity at the local level, which if identified from the outset, will enable a more efficient and streamlined convergence process to take place. Similarly, there are opportunities for regional collaboration around single design solutions that will avoid unnecessary work duplication at the cluster level.

This document identifies the strategic context for local government reform and provides a template against which all transition clusters can scan their local programme of convergence activity. We have identified a template comprising seven strategic areas. These are:

1. **Citizen Delivery Impact** (*What is the impact on the citizen?*)
2. **Legislative Provision** (*Will there be new legislation or changes to existing legislation?*)
3. **Regional Policy Direction** (*What policy guidance has been issued / anticipated?*)
4. **Community Planning** (*What is the likely influence of community planning legislation?*)
5. **Financial Impact** (*What are the significant financial costs / efficiency savings?*)
6. **Transferring Services** (*What will be the impact of specific transferred services?*)
7. **Collaborative Working Arrangements** (*Are there potential collaborative working opportunities – short, medium, long term?*)

The **name of Council** cluster has identified 14 project teams; seven of these reflect the vision themes. This means that many of the high level actions identified through the initial scoping teams will be progressed under a thematic rather than a functional structure. Other project teams will examine additional transition tasks which will impact on convergence activity and the design of the new council. The following table is a recommended structure for the establishment of project teams with completion dates in accordance to DoE guidelines. (Note: Approved by the Transition Committee September 09).

Process in applying the Strategic Context Template:



Project Team	Completion Date
Governance*	Ongoing to May 2011
Civic Leadership & Community Planning*	Ongoing to May 2011
Innovation & Excellence*	Ongoing to May 2011
Place-Shaping*	Ongoing to May 2011
Health & Wellbeing*	June 2010
Environment*	June 2010
Economic Development*	June 2010
Customer Service	November 2010
Estates & Accommodation	December 2010
Finance	June 2010 (Additional completion dates for ongoing tasks – up to February 2011)
ICT	October 2010
HR	Ongoing to May 2011
Transferring Services	Ongoing to May 2011 and beyond
Communication, Culture & Vision	Ongoing to May 2011

* Denotes themes from the short term vision

9. Estates & Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estates Strategy 								
10. Finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate financial management system • Preparation of budget • Bank appointment 								
11. ICT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IT strategy and implementation plan 								
12. HR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment • Staff Transfer 								
13. Transferring Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning • Public realm • Housing 								
14. Communication, Culture & Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing • Corporate identity • Branding 								