

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM PROGRAMME PROGRESS REPORT

Agenda Item: 3

Summary: The report attached provides members with a summary and detailed view of the programme progress of the Transition Committees and the Policy Development Panels.

Action Required: To note the new Local Government Reform Programme Progress Report and consider the recommendations.

BACKGROUND

1. The new Local Government Reform Programme Progress Report highlights the key milestones in the reform programme. A summary and detailed copy of the report are attached as Annex A and B to this minute. The report has replaced the Local Government Reform Implementation Framework.

DETAIL

2. Annex A and B of this minute details the high level milestones of the overall programme and key milestones for the Transition Committees and the Policy Development Panels.
3. The report consists of two levels of detail – the Management Summary (Annex A) provides a high level overview of progress against the key milestones as well as the main Risks and Issues identified. The Detailed Report (Annex B) provides an update on each high level

milestone, as well as commentary against each action on the Transition Committee and Policy Development Panels plan.

4. The information provided by the Transition Committees and Policy Development Panels has been used to gauge the overall programme progress. The information gathering exercise has, however, uncovered the need for a revision of some milestones and their accompanying dates. In particular:

- Most Transition Committees have been classed as '*Overdue*' in the action to Establish Winding-Up arrangements. It is recognised that the original Plan date of August 2009 is in need of revision.

It is evident that some progress is being curtailed due a need for guidance / direction from the centre:

- An example of this can be seen by the comments made by Transition Committees relating to Community Planning. Many of Transition Committees have been classed as '*Overdue*' on this task, due to their need for guidance.
- The Transition Committees will also not meet the planned completion date (end March 2010) to recruit a Chief Executive, senior and administrative staff. This milestone date needs revision.

The great majority of tasks across the Transition Committees have been rated as '*Planned*', as these are currently within the target date for completion. This covers a range of circumstances including work in progress towards the date, and those tasks which are at an early stage or have not yet begun. Many of the tasks in the '*Planned*' category have target dates in the upcoming months.

5. The most pressing issues raised by Transition Committees are essentially interdependency issues, relating to the impact of a delay to a final decision on Boundaries, and delays to legislation, especially the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill. Capacity Building, staff transfer and local programme planning are issues highlighted as being impacted by the need for guidance and direction.

6. Areas of concern raised by many Transition Committees point to the issue of uncertainty around the May 2011 deadline and its associated consequences such as the impact on staff morale and delay to local transition arrangements. Many Transition Committees state that progress is being hindered by lack of clarity on funding arrangements.

7. Risks which cause most concern included: failure to complete the programme by the current deadline; potential impacts on service delivery, and; delays caused to convergence work.

RECOMMENDATION

8. That members note the new Local Government Reform Programme Progress Report.

9. That milestone dates for the Programme (high-level) and Transition Committees are revised and Issues are addressed as follows:

Programme Management High Level Milestones – Proposed timescale amendments

| Milestone ID | Original Due Date | Proposed Action |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------------|
| ID 1 Statutory Transition Committees | Jan '10 | Proposed Revised Due Date July '10 |
| ID 2 Decision on Boundaries | Oct '09 | Views on Revision |

Transition Committee Milestones – Proposed timescale amendments

| Milestone ID | Original Due Date | Proposed Action |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| ID 6 Winding Up Plan | 31 Aug '09 | Proposed revision |
| ID 12 Chief Executive Recruitment | 31 Mar '10 | Proposed revision |
| ID 13 HR / Finance Recruitment | 31 Mar '10 | Proposed revision |
| ID 14 Admin Recruitment | 31 Mar '10 | Proposed revision |

Issues

| Issue ID | Proposed Action |
|-------------------------|---|
| ID 7 Programme Planning | Revise unrealistic Milestones |
| ID 8 Capacity Building | High-light need for capacity Building guidance |
| ID 10 IS/ICT Strategy | High-light need for information regarding the IS / ICT Strategy progression |

Joint Secretariat

April 2010