Appendix R

Implementation and Transition

Before, during and after Vesting Day (1/2)

The following sets out an initial view of the core activities that would need to be completed. This provides an initial starting point for implementation with a full plan developed during the Implementation Planning phase.

Stage	Key Activities
MHCLG Decision Made and Implementation Planning	• Respond to government consultation on LGR for H&SA • Conduct detailed planning and finalise the preferred unitary model, including governance, service boundaries and legal orders. • Defining principles around target culture for future organisations. • Establish the programme delivery structure (PMO, workstreams, boards). • Baselining of existing organisations including service-level diagnostics and readiness assessments, transformation maturity etc. • Agree asset transfers, HR implications, and contract novation principles. • Begin early mapping of service transition sequencing (e.g. back-office and high-risk statutory services first, discretionary services later). • Engagement with key partners (e.g. NHS, police, unions) and draft legal orders.
Transition to Shadow Operating Models	• Establish shadow authorities and interim leadership. • Begin aligning support systems, budgets, and policies and test transitional ICT platforms. • Conduct change impact assessments and initial workforce communications. • Develop and test service continuity plans. • Begin detailed planning for staff transfers to new authorities and communication protocols.
Transition to Vesting Day and Day 1	• Transfer statutory functions to new unitaries and activate new organisational structures. • Finalise and implement new organisational structures, including leadership appointments. • Begin phased staff migration into new councils, prioritising statutory and back-office functions. • Launch critical systems (e.g. finance, HR, customer) and ensure continued delivery of statutory services and begin governance and scrutiny.
Post Vesting Day	• Stabilise core functions and begin performance monitoring. Resolve early operational issues. • Initiate phase two of reorganisation - review and implement changes to discretionary and community-based services. • Begin further structural refinement where needed (e.g. service realignment, new delivery models, shared functions). • Continue internal communications and workforce support. Embed brand identity and continue partnership alignment.
Transition to New Operating Model	• Implement Target Operating Models (TOMs) across services and introduce new staffing structures and digital tools. • Standardise service levels, policies and processes across former geographies. • Redesign customer journeys (e.g. digital portals, self-service). Embed new commissioning and governance frameworks. • Begin benefits realisation and review. Complete final structural reorganisation activities and embed enduring operating model.

Before, during and after Vesting Day (2/2)

The transition to a new model of local government will be delivered in structured phases, ensuring safe implementation, continuous service delivery, and strong foundations for long-term transformation. This table outlines the key activities at each stage across core themes.

Stage	Key Activities				
	Service and Outcomes	Technology and Property	People and Workforce	Organisation and Governance	Interaction and Collaboration
Decision Made and Implementation Planning	Agree future service models and delivery standards across unitaries.	Baseline existing systems, and agree new architecture, rationalisation of property and new locations.	Conduct pay harmonisation and start workforce planning across legacy structures.	Agree governance framework and align statutory roles and committee structures.	Map existing partner relationships. Design future collaboration framework and data-sharing protocols.
Transition to Shadow Operating Models	Begin shadow testing of service delivery models (e.g. care pathways) under future structure.	Deploy interim systems and data migration plans. Prepare staff for relocation and assess priority estate changes.	Appoint interim leadership teams for new unitaries. Initiate internal change management.	Activate shadow authorities and transitional scrutiny functions. Formalise draft constitutions.	Pilot community engagement and locality boards. Begin onboarding strategic partners. Launch internal change narrative and key messages.
Transition to Vesting Day and Day 1	Ensure safe, legal, and continuous delivery of critical frontline services. Day 1 readiness sign-off.	Activate core systems and infrastructure. Ensure key buildings are operational and accessible	Staff transfers completed, handbooks and onboarding for new councils issued.	Statutory powers formally transfer to new unitaries; formal launch of new councils.	Open single contact points; launch resident communications and VCSE joint delivery protocols.
Post Vesting Day	Stabilise services, review gaps and implement short-term improvements.	Monitor system stability and address integration issues. Review estate usage and begin consolidating underused sites.	Culture-building activities begin. HR teams begin harmonising practices across new unitaries.	Early feedback gathered on new governance arrangements. Adjust governance if needed.	Host locality forums and strategic partner roundtables to gather feedback. Continue change comms to reinforce new values.
Transition to New Operating Model	Launch redesigned services aligned to outcome-based commissioning and prevention-first models.	Complete systems integration. Rationalise estate footprint.	Implement new workforce model including leadership development and career progression routes.	Embed final operating model, streamlined decision-making, and quality assurance.	Fully implement locality boards and VCSE co-commissioning arrangements.

Managing delivery

A successful LGR requires coordinated support across multiple operational areas to ensure smooth transition and sustained service delivery. The following table outlines the key specialist support needed to deliver on each area effectively.

Operational Area	Key support required to deliver the LGR transition
Services and Outcomes	• Service design specialists to redesign end-to-end resident journeys and remove duplication. • Portfolio management office to phase service migrations and track benefits. • External quality assurance partners (e.g. Ofsted readiness reviews, Care Quality Peer-Challenge) to test redesigned services before Day 1 and launch. • Data and insight hub to provide unified KPIs and public dashboards across the new councils. • Risk Management Experts to identify, monitor, and mitigate risks throughout the transition, ensuring smooth implementation and continuity of services. • Customer Service Support to manage resident communications and queries during the transition, maintaining public confidence and service satisfaction.
Technology and Property	• Enterprise architecture team to standardise applications and lead ERP migrations. • Cybersecurity experts to manage risks and certify new shared platforms. • Estates rationalisation workstream (legal and surveying team) to optimise estate usage. • Cloud and network contractors for tool integration. • Data Migration Specialists for managing complex data transfer processes across legacy systems to new platforms, ensuring data integrity and minimal disruption.
People and Workforce	• HR TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment)) and reward experts to harmonise terms and conditions, pay and pensions. • Change Management Specialists to guide staff and stakeholders through cultural shifts and organisational change, addressing resistance and building engagement. • Training and Development Providers to upskill staff on new systems, processes, and service delivery models post-transition.
Organisation and Governance	• Dedicated LGR Programme Management Office with risk and benefits tracking and a single financial ledger. • Financial Advisors to provide detailed oversight of financial planning, forecasting, and budget management, helping manage transition costs and long-term viability. • Legal Experts to navigate the legal complexities of creating new statutory authorities, drafting governance frameworks, and managing contracts.
Interaction and Collaboration	• Communications specialists and stakeholder engagement experts to improve collaboration. • Collaboration with the Mayor and the MCA to manage delivery. • Communications and engagement agency to design a pan-H&SA narrative, resident survey cycles and real time feedback channels. • Dedicated partnership liaison officers to maintain momentum with key stakeholders (e.g. NHS ICB, Police, Fire) during transition.

Lessons for a successful transition

Implementation and transition are where the risks of LGR become most acute, from leadership gaps and staff uncertainty to delays in delivery and reduced resident confidence. The examples on this slide are drawn from previous LGR programmes, where proactive planning, clear leadership, and disciplined delivery helped overcome these risks. Each case study demonstrates how success was enabled not just through structural change, but through the right behaviours, systems and investment in getting transition right from the start.

Case Study 1	Case Study 2
Work completed	**Work completed**
Case study 1 involved the replacement of a two-tier system with a single unitary authority. This involved a projected £98m net benefits over 5 years.	Case study 2 involved the merging of five local authorities (A County Council and four District Councils) into a single unitary council. This delivered £125 million in taxpayer savings over five years and reduced back-office costs to under 7% of the budget, with no council tax increase during this period.

Case Study 1

- Clearly set up and monitored **workstreams for delivery** that were accountable for outcomes with strong and central leadership
- **Appointed strong leadership** to champion the case and communicate its residential and financial benefits
- **Prioritised visible improvements from Day 1** to maintain ambition and credibility, as well as to ensure residents could see and feel the benefits early
- **Invested in the programme** (in both transition and transformation resources)
- **Agreed and established clear priorities** and clarified the relative importance and risk of different workstreams to focus effort where it mattered most
- **Established early digital delivery tools** to track progress, ensure data consistency, and avoid later IT bottlenecks

Case Study 2

- **Early preparatory work** between county and districts avoided delays seen in other reorganisations
- **Established clear governance arrangements early**, with the County Council acting as transitional authority which provided stability
- **Set up Joint Implementation Teams** which enabled cross-council collaboration on key transition issues around service delivery, HR and IT
- **Recruited a new Chief Executive** through open competition to signal a fresh start
- **Made protection of frontline services a priority** to minimise disruption to residents and ensure key staff were retained and reassured
- **Clear and early communication** reassured staff and helped manage TUPE-like transitions proactively
- Took steps to **protect local identity.** For example, civic identity and democratic continuity were protected using legal structures (e.g. Charter Trustees) in order to retain local pride
- **Planned for early IT alignment,** enabling continuity of digital services and smoother system migration