



Pathfinder to Unitary

The Approach of the Durham Districts

Special Council
Sedgefield Borough Council
Tuesday, 23rd January 2007

[Local Government White Paper]

- Devolution and neighbourhoods
- Stronger leadership for place shaping
- Importance of strategic and operational partnerships
- City Regions and Core Cities
- Public service not just local authority radical change
- Efficiency and value for money

[Local Government White Paper]

The Invitation to Councils in English Shire Counties -

- Propose a new form(s) of unitary council(s) for a County area
or
- Propose a Pathfinder approach to pioneer improvements to the existing arrangements
or
- Develop local solutions

NB STATUS QUO IS NOT AN OPTION

[Local Government White Paper]

The Timetable -

- 25th January – Submission of Bids
- End March – Announcement on preferred bids
- March – July – consultation on preferred bids
- End of July – Final decision on successful bids

Timetable will then vary dependent on which approach adopted

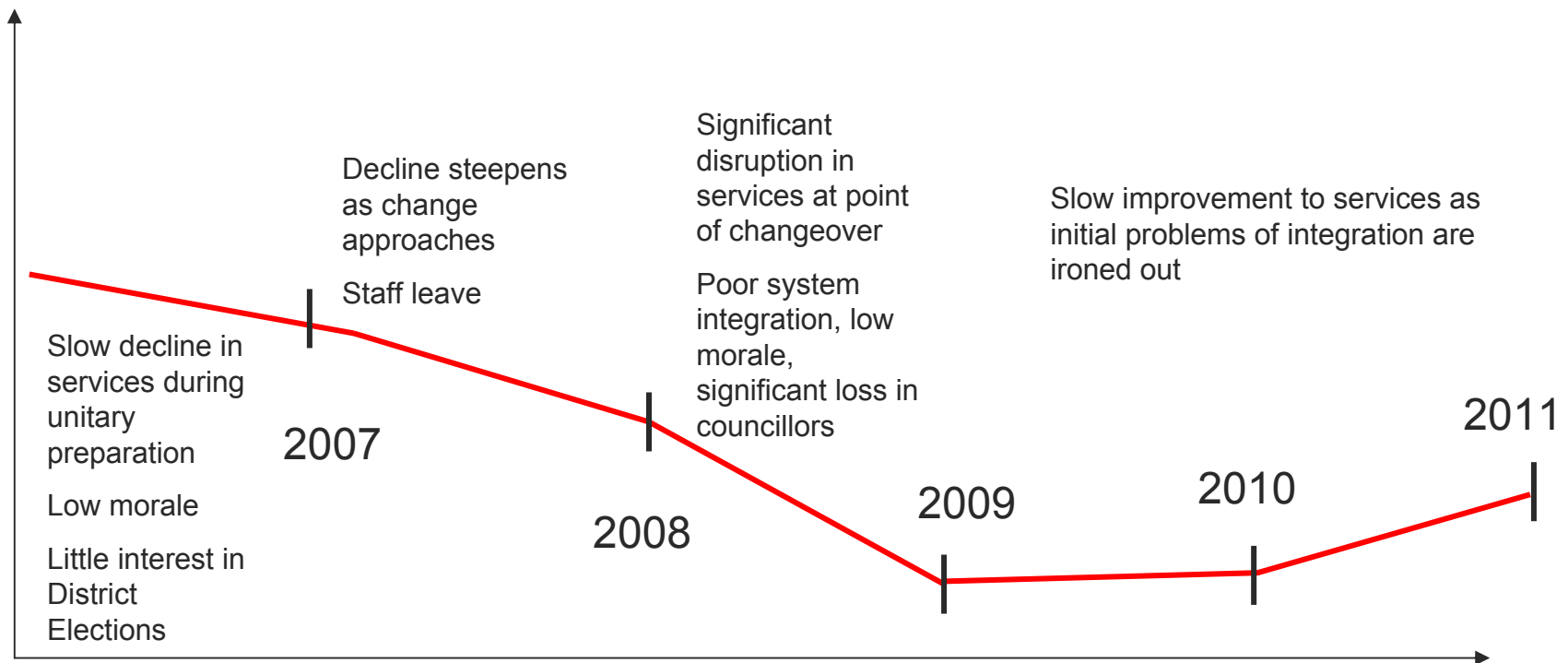
Traditional Approach to Unitary – Earliest Timetable

- Election to new authority(ies) - May 2008
- Remaining authorities abolished - May 2009
- 2 years to address transitional changes and residual problems
- Regain normal service provision by 2011 at earliest
- High financial costs of transition
- History shows increase in council tax per household despite promises
- Major disruption and reduction in service standards
- High turnover of staff and low morale
- Dramatic reduction in democratic representation
- Delayed start in transforming services

**A SINGLE UNITARY FOR COUNTY DURHAM IS THE
APPROACH ADOPTED BY DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

Risks of Service & Efficiency Decline with traditional unitary approach

Performance



[There is a better way]

Durham District Councils have

- Evaluated 15 different governance models
- Given early consideration to two Unitary Councils based around City Regions and three Unitary Councils based on 'PCT localities'
- Given consideration of the 'enhanced two tier' and pathfinder models
- Acknowledged that the present system doesn't work effectively
- Engaged with stakeholders to develop key principles of good governance

The Pathfinder to Unitary Approach

- Managed transition from two tier to unitary government
- Establishment of Transformation Board
- Establishment of Transformation Scrutiny Panel
- Business Transformation Programme
- Designed with active engagement of partners, stakeholders, town and parish councils and our communities
- Strengthened role for front-line councillors
- Meaningful neighbourhood arrangements
- Review of wards to reflect natural communities
- Election to Shadow Council(s) in May 2011

The Pathfinder to Unitary Approach – Timetable

Activity	Timescale
Transformational Board Established	September 2007
Transformational Board Determine Unitary Authority(ies) for Consultation with Stakeholders	September 2008
Unitary Authority(ies) Number and composition agreed by Secretary of State	July 2009
Boundary Committee Approve New Unitary Authority(ies) Ward Boundaries	December 2010
Shadow Unitary Authority(ies) Elections	May 2011
New Unitary Authority(ies) operational	April 2012

[The Pathfinder to Unitary Approach – Transformation Board]

- Leaders of 8 Councils (including Deputy Leader of County Council), supported by -
 - Chief Executives*
 - Jointly appointed Transformation Director*
 - Programme Management Team*
- Charged with implementing the Business Transformation Programme
- Member of County Cabinet on District Executives

[The Pathfinder to Unitary Approach – Transformation Scrutiny Panel]

- Bespoke scrutiny arrangements -
Frontline members from existing councils
County Durham Local Area Agreement
Board
Government Office North East
Local Strategic Partnerships
Town and Parish Councils
Community Empowerment Networks

Business Transformation Programme – Creation of Single Back Office

- Phase 1
 - Financial transactional services
 - IT services and communications
 - HR transactional services
 - Legal services
 - Procurement
- Phase 2
 - Insurance
 - Benefits
 - Call Centre infrastructure
 - Recruitment
- Phase 3
 - Services migrating from education, social care etc

Business Transformation Programme – Shared Services at the Front-Line

- Front-line services delivered at most appropriate level
- Shared services across clustering of Districts
 - Policy and Strategy
 - Regulatory Services
 - Refuse and Recycling
 - Highways Maintenance
- Strategic services linked to county-wide back office
 - Schools
 - Child Protection
 - Asset Management
- Other services at local level

Business Transformation Programme – Neighbourhood Arrangements

- Neighbourhood Charters
 - Disaggregated performance data
 - Environmental standards and milestones for improvements
 - Local issues to be tackled
 - Development plan for the area
- Neighbourhood Service Centres
 - Single Phone Number to County-Wide Call Centre
 - Access Strategy building on work of E-Government Partnership

Business Transformation Programme – Review of Ward Boundaries

- Determine optimum number of councillors to represent our councillors
 - Represent natural boundaries
 - Foster identifiable community leadership
 - Reflect diversity of County in terms of settlement pattern and population density
 - May be combination of single and multi-member wards

- Boundary Committee approves new ward boundaries of new council(s) – December 2010

Establishment of Unitary Arrangements

- Transformation Board agrees new unitary arrangements September 2008
 - Full consultation of alternatives:-
 - Single council with strong locality arrangements
 - Two councils based on North and South Durham
 - Three Councils based on North, South and East Durham

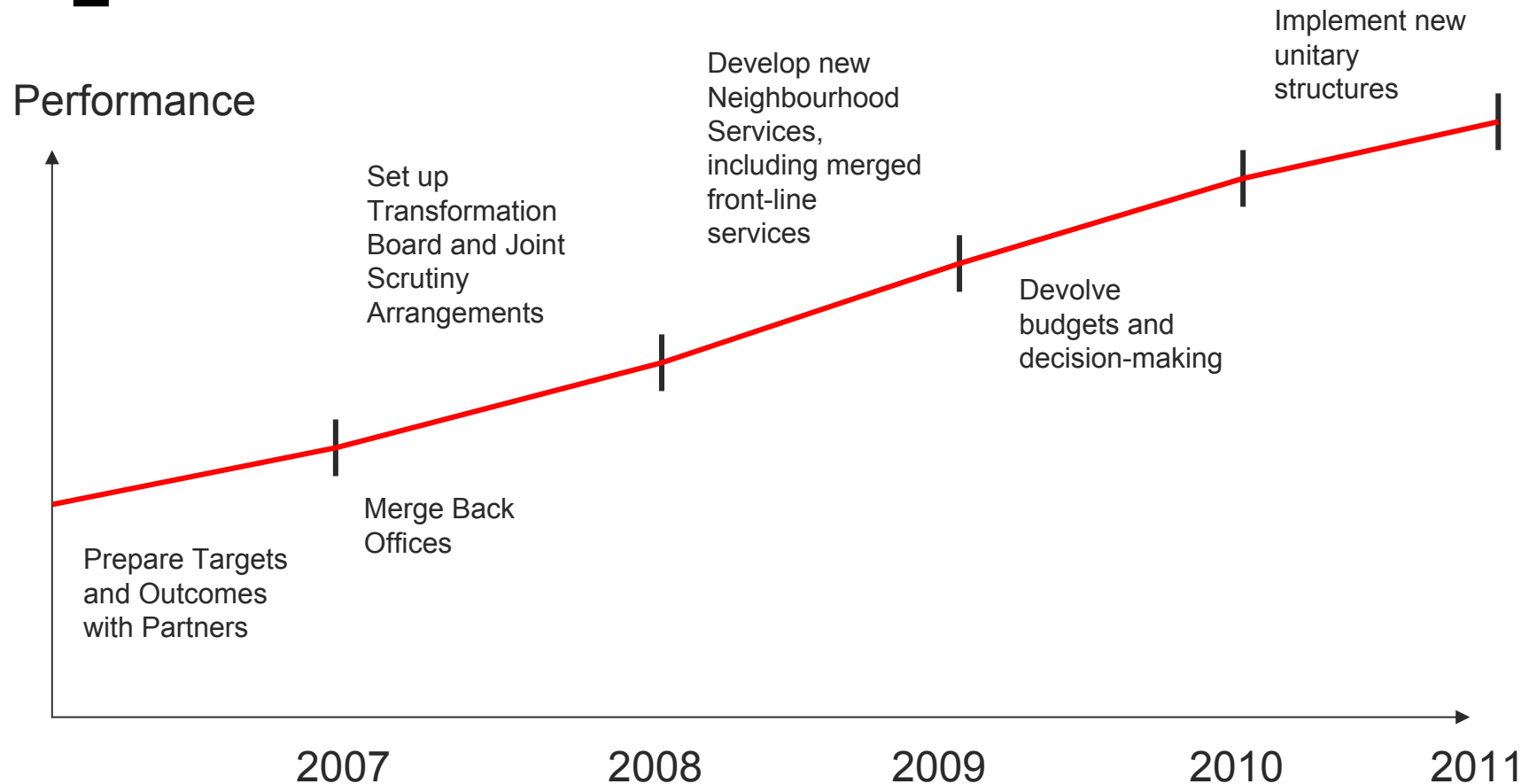
- Secretary of State approves unitary arrangements July 2009

- Elections to Shadow Council(s) May 2011
- Fully operational as single tier April 2012

The Pathfinder to Unitary Approach – Financial Case

- Significantly reduce costs of transition - £8m over 5 years
- Savings from back office and shared services - £38m over 5 years
- Reinvest in Neighbourhood Services Centres - £5.5m over 5 years
- Streamlining County services potential annual savings of £22m
- On formation of unitary council(s) annual savings increase in range from £27m to £35m
- Transitional costs also increase in range of £13m to £18m

The Pathfinder to Unitary Approach – Evolutionary Change



Why a Pathfinder to Unitary Approach – The Result

A modern approach to Unitary Government

Not a 'one size fits all' approach

A strong emphasis on devolved services and community engagement

A managed approach to change rather than 'big bang'

A slim but effective centre

Transparent accountability for strategic policy and decision making

More effective use of resources

A managed reduction in costs

Same or greater savings

Less disruption to services and the democratic process

Keeping the **Local** in Local Government

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