

Better together?

MAKING IMPROVEMENTS BY
RECONFIGURING SERVICES



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- following up issues of concern identified through the audit, to ensure satisfactory resolutions
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The Accounts Commission takes sole responsibility for the contents of this report. Comments and queries should be addressed to Lesley Bloomer or Stewart Black.

¹ See Appendix 1 for membership of the Group.

Better together?

Making improvements by reconfiguring services

Reconfiguring means bringing together the delivery of services...

- both within councils and between councils and other agencies
- for example, merging the administration of housing and council tax benefits
- bringing together school and public library services
- operating 'one-stop shops', whose staff cover a range of services.

... to improve service quality and/or efficiency.

- making services more accessible
- freeing up resources for service investment and development
- increasing take-up of services.

Councils should actively look for these opportunities ...

- during Best Value service reviews
- during service planning processes
- looking across the full range of services, not just within existing boundaries.

... and decide which to go for by looking at the pros and cons of the different options.

- consulting with staff and users, and using other research
- considering what will happen to costs, to service levels and service quality.

Successful implementation of the changes needs good project management skills ...

- planning the work needed to achieve the change
- communicating well with people affected by the change
- setting performance targets for implementation.

... and support from the top is also essential.

- top-level management and councillors need to be involved in decisions and provide support to reconfiguring projects.

Introduction

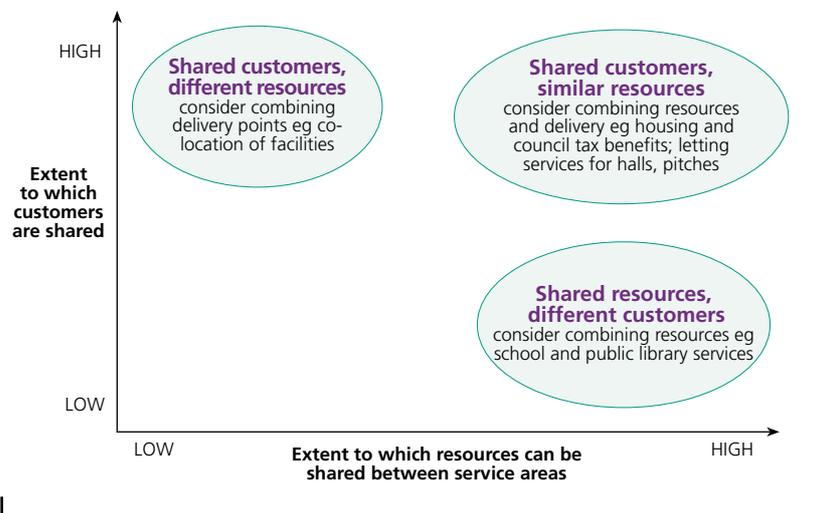
What is reconfiguring?

Reconfiguring is altering the way services are delivered to improve quality and/or efficiency. This report focuses specifically on one aspect of this - bringing services together. Reconfiguring can involve combining services, eg merging the administration of housing and council tax benefits. It can also mean merging parts of services, eg the staffing and management of school and public libraries, or using one office to deliver a range of different services. The objective is to improve services to users and/or to improve efficiency.

Reconfiguring requires looking outside traditional service practices and boundaries. This means looking at the range of council services which customers use and seeing if any of these can be brought together. It means looking at the resources used to provide different services - skills, knowledge, processes, physical assets - and seeing if bringing these together can improve the efficiency or effectiveness of services (exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1: Different types of reconfiguring opportunities

Reconfiguring can take place around shared resources and/or shared customers.



The distinctions between the types of reconfiguring in the exhibit are blurred, and one may develop into another. For example, setting up a single phone number to allow customers to access a range of council departments (shared customers) can lead to the bringing together of staff under one roof, then training them to handle calls across a range of areas (sharing resources).

Reconfiguring options can be relatively obvious; for example, many councils have brought together benefit services and some have merged library services.

However, they also include more radical examples, which go beyond the obviously linked services, or which involve other organisations:

- siting library services and a leisure centre in a shared building (Glasgow [a])¹
- siting the HQ functions of the Health Board and the Social Services Department of the council together (Dumfries and Galloway [b])
- developing joint benefits administration and processing between different councils (Brighton and Hove, Lewes, Tandridge, and Wealden councils [c])²
- using a police station as a community office - where the public can get access to council services and information (councils and other agencies in Somerset [d])³.

Councils have worked together to achieve improvements over the years⁴. Inter-agency partnership working is also increasing. However, the opportunities presented by local government reorganisation and the introduction of Best Value mean that reconfiguring should now be routinely considered when service delivery is being reviewed.

Why is it important?

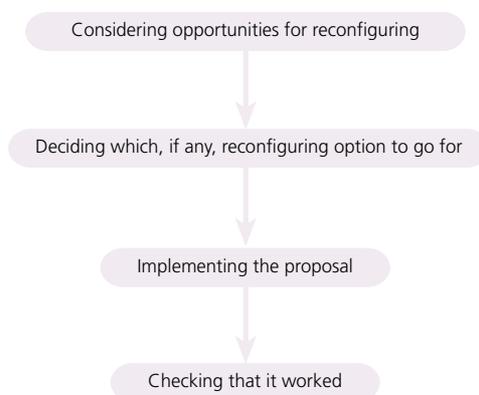
There may be substantial improvements in service quality or costs by taking a reconfiguring approach to the delivery of services. Best Value requires that councils carry out reviews that challenge existing ways of delivering services. Reconfiguring contributes to this aspect of service reviews by getting managers to look beyond their own services for opportunities to bring together functions or services to improve efficiency and/or quality. The increasing emphasis on “joined-up” government means there will be greater expectations on councils to deliver services in new, integrated ways, both within councils and with other providers of public services.

What is involved?

The steps involved in reconfiguring are straightforward - identify whether there are opportunities, if so, appraise them, implement the preferred option and then evaluate its effects (exhibit 2). The guidance is structured on this process.

Exhibit 2: Steps in reconfiguring

The steps involved are straightforward.



¹ Alphabetical references are to the contact points for case studies given in Appendix 2.

^{2,3} *Promising Beginnings: A compendium of initiatives to improve joint working in local government*, Audit Commission, 1998.

⁴ A compendium of current arrangements is provided in *Voluntary joint working arrangements by councils 1996/97 and 1997/98*, COSLA, 1999.

⁵ Best Value Task Force Second Report, July 1998. The quote refers to “one of the key elements that would define a council delivering best value.”

“...a rigorous approach to analysing service delivery mechanisms and processes - this means demonstrating that the council has seriously considered innovative alternative ways of delivering services.”

Best Value Task Force⁵

The keys to success are:

- thinking radically about the options at the beginning, generating ideas by, for example, benchmarking and looking beyond current boundaries and practices
- taking a robust cost-benefit approach to the appraisal of different options
- using good project management skills throughout the work, from identification of opportunities to evaluation
- putting an emphasis on performance management over the course of the work - appraising options on their likely effects on costs and benefits, setting targets, working towards these, monitoring and evaluating the outcome.

A starting point for identifying opportunities for reconfiguring is the service review or service planning process. This ensures that opportunities are considered systematically and routinely, rather than on an *ad hoc* basis.

Reconfiguring can be considered alongside, and in combination with, other service delivery options - market testing, partnership working and so on (exhibit 3). For example, it may be possible to deliver service(s) in-house or externally, and they may be delivered in a reconfigured format or not.

Exhibit 3: One authority's options for the development of its enquiry-handling processes

Reconfiguring opportunities can be considered alongside other options for service delivery.

East Ayrshire [e] reviewed how it handled calls to the authority. Following local government reorganisation, it had inherited different out-of-hours contact numbers and wished to develop a more user-friendly way of contacting the council. The options it investigated included the following, either singly or in combination:

- continuation of inherited arrangements
- full after-hours service including specialist services such as RALF (Roads and Lighting Faults) and Social Work Standby
- partial after-hours service with existing provision of RALF and Social Work Standby retained
- separate helpline unit
- combined community alarm and helpline unit
- external provision of helpline service, funded by the council.

It decided on a combination of options 2 and 5 after a full analysis of costs and effects on service provision of the options, and researching practice in other councils and the private sector.

The scope of the service review or service planning process will broaden if the council decides to pursue opportunities for reconfiguring. It will need to look at the costs and implications of bringing together services, and so people outwith the particular service will be involved in discussing and debating the pros and cons.

Implications for the management of service delivery

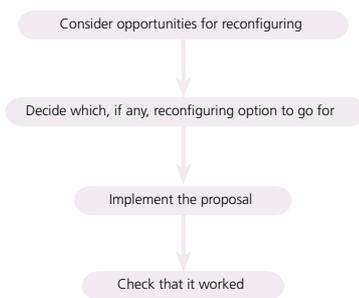
Bringing together delivery routes, staffing or processes involved in different areas may have implications for their management. There need to be clear responsibility and accountability lines for the provision of different services, and reconfiguring may muddy existing reporting lines.

For this reason, the implications for management responsibilities should be reviewed at the time reconfiguring is considered. For example, numbers of staff and the skills needed may change and new performance measures which reflect altered service delivery may need to be developed. Reconfiguring should prompt at least a review of management responsibilities, and frequently this will lead to restructuring of service management. However, this report confines itself to guidance on service reconfiguring, and does not cover management restructuring.

Where the services are, or could be, delivered by DLOs, DSOs, private contractors or external agencies, there are other management questions. Reconfiguring can yield substantial savings and service improvements. Because of this, the client within the council should consider the scope for reconfiguring when the service is being specified prior to tendering, and where appropriate, invite tenders on a reconfigured basis.

About this report

This report provides an introduction to the idea of reconfiguring and what is involved in it. The guidance follows these steps:



Stage 1 - This section outlines a systematic approach to identifying opportunities for reconfiguring.

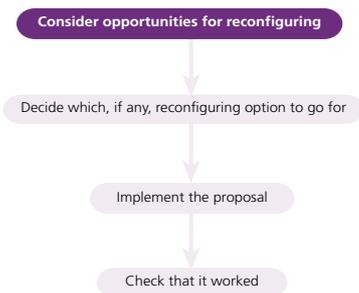
Stage 2 - This section looks at how different options can be assessed. It looks at cost-benefit analysis, handling risk and how these tools can be used to help reach decisions on options.

Stage 3 - This is concerned with ensuring that the preferred option is implemented according to plan.

Stage 4 - This section looks at whether the option worked by evaluating whether the project achieved its objectives.

The guidance is illustrated with a range of examples, some of which feature at a number of different stages. Information on the examples used is available from the contact points listed in Appendix 2.

Stage 1: Considering opportunities for reconfiguring



A systematic approach

Councils should use a systematic approach to look for reconfiguring possibilities. This can be incorporated in a service review or service planning process. Identifying opportunities needn't take long, perhaps one or two meetings, but it ensures that the improvements possible from bringing together services are always considered. The end-point of this stage is a list of possibilities that will be assessed in Stage 2.

All services offered by local authorities use resources to provide a service to customers. Resources include staff, knowledge, skills, processes, offices, computers etc. Customers include tenants, benefit claimants, council tax payers, library users and so on. Opportunities to bring together services or functions may be found by thinking through where resources are shared and/or where users are shared.

The two questions that need to be asked to check for opportunities are:

Which other services do our customers use?

- council tax benefit claimants may also claim housing benefit and ask for advice on other benefits
- a youth group may hire halls from the education, libraries or leisure and recreation departments
- an elderly resident with support from a home help might also be eligible for council tax benefit
- a business may deal with economic development, trading standards, careers partnerships, education, planning and other departments
- a council tenant may require refuse collection, stair cleaning, back-court maintenance and so on.

Which other services use similar inputs to us?

- the school library service and the public library service use similar skills, knowledge and resources - books and other items - but have largely different user groups
- councils have leisure centres and leisure facilities in schools that involve similar inputs, but have different user groups
- some of the major departments in councils run their own systems (eg personnel, accounting, purchasing). These require similar IT systems and skills as those in other departments.

Sometimes both users and inputs are shared. This is the strong argument for the combining of council tax benefit and housing benefit services. A number of councils have rationalised their venue letting services for similar reasons. Organisations which wanted lets would previously have contacted different departments, with sometimes different charges for similar facilities. Now they can go through one office for access to all types of community facilities.

The examples above are restricted to provision within councils. The list of possible reconfiguring opportunities is much longer when other agencies are added, eg health boards, local enterprise companies, the voluntary sector, and so on.

“Joined-up government” and other initiatives, eg community planning, will encourage councils and other public agencies to seek joint-working opportunities. This guidance deals primarily with opportunities within councils, but it is equally applicable to cross-body opportunities, although the mechanics of reconciling different funding streams, reporting processes and other differences mean these are more complex.

Which other services do our customers use?

Residents pay council tax, may also pay rent, claim benefits, use libraries, leisure facilities, schools, seek welfare advice and so on. They may visit supermarkets, post offices, hospitals and so on.

Both quality and costs may be improved by bringing together the delivery of different services (exhibit 4, overleaf). Reconfiguring around shared users means that, for example, contact points for all council departments could be brought together, through either phone lines or one-stop shops. Thinking more widely, services may be brought together and delivered through, say, an office, a school, a library, in the home.

Service take-up levels may also improve because people can get easy access to more than one service at a time. For example, a number of officers will visit businesses - from planning, economic development, trading standards, environmental health departments and so on. If they also carried information on, for example, work placement opportunities for school pupils, then there may be a greater number of placements and increased opportunities for young people in the area. The idea can be extended to cover services from other public agencies, for example information on other job training support, and other business development assistance.

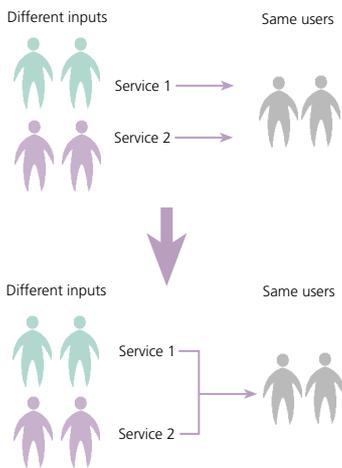
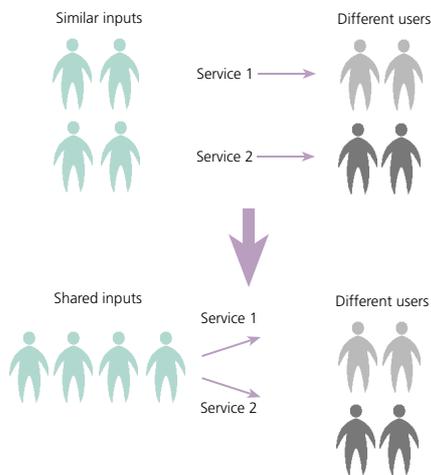


Exhibit 4: Examples of services brought together around a shared user

Opportunities to bring together services around shared users occur across a wide range of functions.

- Clackmannanshire [f] has five 'community access points' with staff who deal with members of the public on a range of functions, eg library services, rent, council tax, benefits advice, housing services, booking of leisure facilities, environmental services, education and concessions. The staff there are trained in all these areas to ensure that users do not have to go to different people. Longer opening hours have improved access for users and there has been an overall reduction in the number of staff involved.
- Dundee [g] has invested in its neighbourhood resource centres to bring together community education/development, libraries, information services, community regeneration, equal opportunities and community safety advice. Use of both the libraries and neighbourhood centres has increased, and savings in the costs of providing the services have been made.
- In Aberdeen [h], the council's housing service is preparing to introduce a single form for applications for housing provided by the council, housing associations and other bodies. The information, to be provided only once by the applicant, will then be available to each relevant body. Overall, the initiative will result in a single waiting list for housing, a 'single offer' outcome, and a more robust measure of housing need in the city.
- East Dunbartonshire's [i] review of its housing repairs and maintenance service found that four different departments within the council were involved. Tenants found the system confusing, line management responsibilities were blurred and the integration of 'demand' repairs and the capital programme for housing was weak. It has now established a call centre and has integrated the different elements of the service in a 'repairs management centre'.
- Glasgow's [j] tenants use refuse collection back-court maintenance, stair cleaning and litter-picking services. The services were provided by different departments. These are now managed and co-ordinated by a lead contractor, and are all carried out within a 24-hour period in any one area. The change came about following a review by the council of the way in which it managed the environment around its council houses. Where the environment was poor, houses were hard to let, and so rental income was lost. Benefits include faster re-letting, an improved environment and greater pride in the environment.

Providing different services to shared customers at one location may, in time, lead to sharing of other resources, yielding savings or improvements in services. For example, Glasgow [a] is relocating Pollok Library within the refurbished Pollok Leisure Centre. The intention is to provide an integrated leisure-based facility close to Pollok centre. The building will have a common entrance and foyer area, from which the library and other facilities will lead. The design will allow further integration of management and service delivery in the future, if this proves desirable and beneficial. The development is seen as a possible template for future developments within Cultural and Leisure Services.



Which other services use similar inputs to us?

Councils have many different services under their control. Staff providing these services may have different skills and knowledge and they may use different processes - ie the inputs, or resources, for these services differ. For example, the inputs for social work - assessment and counselling skills amongst others - are largely different from those required in benefits work - claims assessment and accurate processing. In other cases, the inputs are similar. For example, the skills, knowledge and processes needed to run public libraries are similar to those needed for school libraries.

Again, there can be a range of benefits in bringing together the resources used in similar services, even where user groups are different. For example, library stock can be made available to more users, pooled staff can be used more flexibly and more cost-effectively, and economies of scale mean that resources may be freed up for investment in the development of the service (exhibit 5).

Exhibit 5: Examples of services brought together around shared inputs

Bringing together services that use similar inputs can lead to the freeing up of resources, as well as service improvements.

- Aberdeenshire's [k] Library and Information Service was formed by integrating its public library and information service with the school library service and academy libraries. New staff posts cross old service boundaries - eg network librarians are responsible for an academy library and oversee the public library service in the area too. A greater variety of work is available and there are more career opportunities for staff. Planning and management of library and information services are handled in a corporate way with better use of resources. This has allowed the development of a wider range of services within the budget of the former separate services.
- East Ayrshire [e] introduced a helpline - a single phone number to replace the six separate out-of-hours lines that it had inherited on reorganisation and to provide access to all departments. The inputs, skills and processes to handle emergency calls were similar, and the council provided training to ensure that staff knew how to deal with queries across the range of council services. Costs reduced and customers were able to access information about any area of council services.
- Edinburgh [l] carried out an audit of the areas for which it had maintenance responsibility. These included housing estates, highway verges, cycleways, walkways and water courses. A 'multi-trade task force' was formed by temporary secondment of staff from all relevant departments to co-ordinate, manage and undertake all work within a pilot area of the city. Initial findings indicate reductions in service complaints along with significantly higher levels of satisfaction from residents within the local area. Further evaluation is being undertaken to consider the benefits of extending this approach across the city.

There can be variation in the extent to which inputs are brought together - in most cases there is a range of possible options. For example, most councils in Scotland have brought together their housing and council tax benefits systems - using a single application form for shared users. However, in a number of councils the inputs - staffing, data processing and enquiry handling - have not been merged. In some, there are separate databases for applicants who are council tenants and for those in the private rented sector, with separate staff dealing with the different groups due to the different claims processes involved. Other councils have moved to having single data entry and shared databases as well as single application forms.

How this stage might work

Looking systematically for reconfiguring opportunities is about thinking through answers to the two questions above - who shares our customers and who uses similar inputs to us? The time to do this is at the early stages of either service review and/or service planning processes, using the staff who would routinely be involved in them.

The simple approach to these questions is to get a group of people involved in the area, probably staff, but it could also include user groups, and ask them to think firstly about the customers who use the service - what other interfaces with the council will they have? What interfaces with other public agencies will they have? Secondly, they can be asked to think about the inputs - what is used to provide the service? What skills, knowledge, processes and physical resources are needed? What other council services use similar inputs? What other public services use similar inputs?

A more sophisticated approach would be to start from information about the users of a service and use that to develop ideas on a group by group basis. For example, elderly people are a sizeable proportion of library users, as are children. Looking for reconfiguring opportunities for services for these groups would lead perhaps to thinking about making library services available via day care centres or residential homes for one group and via schools, nurseries, youth clubs and so on for the other. Both of these approaches might lead to increased access to the library service, and in turn to increased lending rates.

Where there are already groups of users, eg user groups, citizen panels, or forums, they may be asked for views. The experiences of other councils and bodies are also relevant, and staff will be able to draw on their knowledge of work elsewhere to come up with suggestions.

Both process benchmarking (looking at the reasons why different councils and bodies, including those in the private sector, achieve higher levels of performance)⁶ and process mapping (setting out the steps involved in the provision of services) can help staff to think laterally about what opportunities there could be to bring services together (exhibit 6).

Exhibit 6: Examples of benchmarking and process mapping

Benchmarking and process mapping are two tools that can identify and develop reconfiguring options.

- Glasgow [j] benchmarked comparative cost information from the private sector when it was reviewing its landlord services.
- East Ayrshire [e] mapped existing and preferred arrangements in relation to the council's handling of telephone calls for information.
- Fife [m] used process mapping in considering how members of the public visiting its local offices were dealt with.

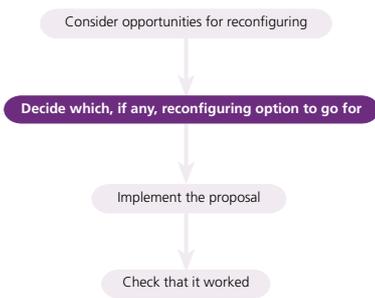
⁶ 'Measuring up to the best: A manager's guide to benchmarking', Accounts Commission, 1999.

Whether a simple or more sophisticated approach is taken, the need at this stage is to think broadly, radically. The sifting and prioritising of ideas comes later.

The end-point of this stage, identifying opportunities, is a list of options for further consideration and a decision on whether to proceed to assess them. A decision not to proceed may be made for a variety of reasons; for example, if there are other initiatives which will affect the area. A record of the options, a note of who was involved in their development, and the reason(s) not to proceed should be retained with the service review or service planning papers for future use.

If the decision is made to proceed, the next task is to assess the ideas, develop a short list and then choose one. This is the subject of the next section. The people aspects of project management, eg identifying stakeholders and thinking about communications, are essential at this stage. More information on this is given in Stage 3.

Stage 2: Deciding which reconfiguring option to go for



The objective of this stage is to consider the options that have been generated and to decide whether to proceed, and if so, on what basis.

This decision has to be based on the pros and cons of the different options - ie after undertaking a cost-benefit analysis and considering risks. This is a way of appraising the options. It can be undertaken at two levels. The first will be a broad-brush look at the list of options generated at the early stages of the service review or service planning process. This will thin out the list to perhaps a couple of serious options. A more detailed look at costs and service provision under each of these options will then be needed to help to decide whether to go ahead or not.

Before plunging into assessment of the options, time should be taken to review:

- objectives - what is to be achieved from the reconfiguring? Is it saving cost primarily, or service improvement for a particular client group or a particular aspect of service that is currently causing dissatisfaction? These objectives help to focus the cost-benefit analysis.
- baseline position - what are the current costs and service levels? What do customers feel about services now? Which aspects are working well and which not so well now? This is the situation against which other options should be assessed.

HM Treasury provides guidance for central government that is relevant and useful. *'The Green Book'*, as it is known, provides further information on the techniques of appraisal. It recommends that:

"Appraisal must not be seen as merely an obstacle through which a proposal must pass in the final stages before implementation. It should begin, at least on a preliminary basis, early in the gestation of a proposal, and undergo review, and sometimes reworking at each important stage, especially when new information becomes available. Only in this way can it properly contribute to the form of the proposal and the choice of options that should be examined."⁷

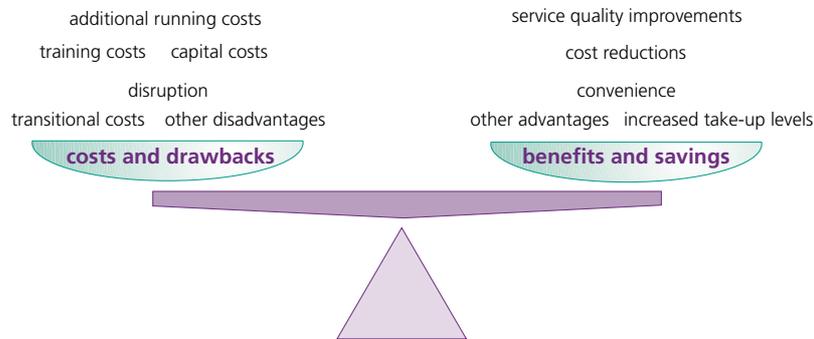
Arriving at a short list

The first stage, identifying opportunities for reconfiguring, may have thrown up a range of options for consideration. These could include very radical ones and ones where there are only slight alterations to present arrangements. Taking this long list down to a short list of potentially viable options requires cost-benefit analysis. This means looking at the costs and drawbacks on the one hand and the savings and benefits on the other (exhibit 7).

⁷ *'The Green Book', Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government'*, Treasury Guidance, 1997, HMSO.

Exhibit 7: Some headings for cost-benefit analysis

Cost-benefit analysis is a structured way of comparing options.



Cost-benefit analysis can take half an hour to do, or can take months. Its depth will depend largely on the scale, importance and riskiness of the options. The costlier, more important or riskier areas will require more in-depth analysis than other areas of work. The depth will also depend on the stage of the process. A relatively quick consideration of the broad costs and benefits of a long list of options can help to develop a short list, which is then the subject of a more detailed cost-benefit analysis.

A quick look at whether options are likely to achieve objectives, and how their costs and benefits compare with the baseline position may be sufficient to dismiss a number of initial reconfiguring options with confidence. What is needed to do this is a broad feeling for what will happen under different options (exhibit 8).

Exhibit 8: Some questions for an initial, broad analysis of the costs and benefits of options

An initial sift of ideas can be done using the questions below.

- will running costs go up or down?
- what capital investment will be needed - a lot, a little, none?
- what other costs will there be - which are substantial, which less so?
- what will stakeholders feel about it - councillors, staff, users, contractors, both current and potential, others?
- what will happen to service levels - rise, drop, stay the same?
- what will happen to service quality - improve, decline, stay the same?
- will there be any other benefits?
- what are the risks involved - financial, reputation, others?

Asking these questions provides a level playing field on which to compare options - a systematic approach to the appraisal of different ideas.

The process will have now arrived at a short list. The remaining options can be developed further now - refined, improved or combined. This development of options can take on board ideas sparked by the initial discussion about the pros and cons. Ideas for further refinement of how the options may work can come from other staff, other councils, other organisations, or professional bodies.

The end-point of this stage is setting out a short list of options and how they would work in practice. This list should include the baseline position (what the others are being assessed against).

Choosing a preferred option

A preferred option is chosen by a more detailed examination of the costs, benefits, and risks of each of the short list options. This assessment is made with reference to the objectives for the work. This is the same process as was used to knock out options to arrive at a short list, but is carried out in more depth. For example, instead of broadly judging whether costs will go up, a more detailed forecast will be needed now of how much they will go up by, and why. Similarly, a more detailed forecast of the impact of the option on service take-up levels and quality will be required.

The steps involved in undertaking the work at this more detailed level are:

- identifying what information is needed
- gathering that information
- identifying the preferred option.

Identifying what information is needed

The starting point for this is a more detailed review of costs and benefits (exhibit 9). The information needed now is at a greater level of detail and precision. The person or team involved in examining the options can work down this list and identify what information they have, what they need to get, and how best to get it.

Some information will be routine, some less so. For example, details of accommodation and staffing costs should be relatively easy to forecast based on the requirements of the different options. On the other hand, finding out the effect of options on service take-up and service quality may require more detailed research.

Exhibit 9: Headings for more detailed analysis of costs and benefits

More detailed forecasts are required when choosing between a short list of options.

Effects on costs

Future running costs

- in-house staffing costs - numbers, grades, salaries - or contractors' charges
- premises - running costs
- IT - support costs
- what other costs will there be?

Set-up costs

- IT - hardware, software, licences
- staffing - recruitment, training, redundancy or transfer costs
- premises - fit out/refurbishment, capital costs
- costs of tendering processes
- what other costs will be there be?

Risks

- time taken to organise IT, premises, staffing alterations
- disruption to service provision during transition
- outcome of negotiations on changed conditions of service
- altered level of interest by contractors in tendering
- uncertainty over service take-up levels
- what other risks are there?

Effects on services

What will be the likely take-up levels?

- what groups of users are there?
- which groups will increase their usage?
- which will decrease their usage?

Service quality

- how will service quality be affected?
how will we measure this?
- what unquantifiable benefits will we get? eg will customers be able to access services more easily?
- what drawbacks will there be for users?
- what other disadvantages are there?
- what other advantages are there?

Gathering information

Research to gather the necessary information can take several forms - eg looking for reports of work carried out by professional bodies, or covered in local government journals. Internet searches or organisations such as the Planning Exchange⁸ can help to find relevant reports. Visiting councils which have already introduced similar measures can help to provide evidence of what may change.

Activity-based costing can provide a way of comparing the costs of different options on a like-for-like basis. It involves analysis of the costs of all the activities carried out in order for a service to be provided, not simply the direct costs of service provision.

Benchmarking - looking at performance levels and which processes lie behind them - can also help to increase the accuracy of forecasts of the changes to costs and benefits that may result from different options. The balanced scorecard⁹ approach to management information can also be used as a basis for benchmarking to assist appraisal of different options. This is a way of looking at management information under four perspectives - customer satisfaction, business processes, continuous improvement, as well as financial (exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10: Using a balanced scorecard approach to appraising options

Highland used a balanced scorecard approach to review the development of its IS/IT services.

Highland [n] asked a consultant to benchmark its IS service and the method used was based on the balanced scorecard. The benchmark data were used as the basis of comparison of alternative forms of delivering IS/IT. From a range of options, the council decided to enter into a partnership for the supply of new systems and the delivery of IS services. The contract was let under the Private Finance Initiative.

Asking the views of users (and any other groups likely to be affected by the changes - eg staff or contractors) will be very important at this stage. The effects on the users of the possible options need to be explained and then views can be sought. For example, a proposal to combine school and public libraries may mean that customers can request books and collect them at their local school rather than going to the central library. Users can be asked about whether they would use this service, whether they have transport to go to school and so on. Similarly, users of services can be asked about their preferences for using call centres or council offices to contact their council.

It may also be helpful to seek the views of contractors where the service is, or could be, contracted out. Their views can influence the ways in which work is packaged. Care needs to be taken to ensure that packaging does not result in, for example, small or niche contractors being unfairly disadvantaged in the tendering processes.

There is a variety of ways of consulting the public on options, and a burgeoning literature on their effectiveness. They include surveys, citizens' juries, scrutiny panels, focus groups, public meetings and interviews. The choice of which is most appropriate in which circumstances will depend on the type of information being sought and the people who need to provide it (exhibit 11).

⁸ The Planning Exchange in Glasgow publishes ISLA bulletins, which list recently published literature relevant to local authority and other public sector work. It also runs a literature search service for members.

⁹ *'The measures of success: Developing a balanced scorecard to measure performance'*, Accounts Commission, 1998.

Exhibit 11: Examples of consulting users

There is a variety of ways of consulting users - different ones are appropriate in different circumstances.

Edinburgh [o] used focus groups for the development of its public information service, CapInfo.

North Ayrshire [p] surveyed pupils and wrote to parents when considering the introduction of a cashless 'smart card' for school meals payment.

Up to this point, there has been a concentration on costs and benefits. Risk is the other component of the appraisal. Risk can affect options in many different ways - for example, it may be very difficult to predict changes in demand for a service that is delivered in a different way or in a different place; the outcome of negotiations with staff about changed conditions; or the time taken to install new computer systems. Risk can be addressed in a number of ways (exhibit 12):

- **Undertake a pilot** - consider introducing the option in a phased way or using a dry-run approach.
- **Do more research** - this can be desk research, or include finding out more about the experience of bodies that have undertaken similar changes. This could also include further research on users' views.
- **Do sensitivity analysis** - this means asking "what if, for example, the costs are at the top end of the possible range; what if the service usage is at the bottom end of the possible range?" Some factors will have much more effect on whether the option will work than others and attention should be paid particularly to risks in these. This analysis highlights the effect of different scenarios on the options, and may influence the judgement of an option's merits.
- **Ensure other options are kept open** - if there are substantial risks associated with an otherwise preferred option, and a decision is made, nevertheless, to implement it, then other options should be kept open as far as possible in case the desired one fails.

Exhibit 12: Ways of handling risk in assessing projects

There is a range of ways of minimising risk in project options.



“Without clear objectives, options will be ill-defined or overlooked, incorrect weights applied to costs and benefits, and risks and uncertainties not examined thoroughly.”
*'The Green Book'*¹⁰

Identifying the preferred option

Once the information is gathered it should be summarised to inform decisions. Criteria for making a choice will include the areas covered by the cost-benefit analysis using the headings in exhibit 9, or similar - for example, Highland use cost, affordability, effectiveness/impact, likelihood of success, skills required for success, timescale and risks.

The weighting of cost and quality criteria will depend to an extent on whether the objectives of the initiative are mostly about reducing costs at a static level of service, or about improving the quality of service at a static cost. There may be a threshold of effectiveness or of costs set - eg a minimum standard of service, a minimum saving required - which helps to choose between options.

Policy objectives are important in the ranking of options - both at service level and for the council overall. For example, an emphasis on social inclusion may mean consideration is given to an option which is more expensive but which contributes more towards that objective than others - locating library services at a local housing office could be an example of this. Clear evidence of these policy considerations should be recorded at the time of the decision.

How this stage might work

It is likely that the staff who looked at options for reconfiguring (Stage one above) will have involved staff from other departments and possibly other organisations in the appraisal of different options. The decision-making process will almost certainly require consulting with users.

The time taken on this work will vary according to the amount of research required to gather the information needed for the decision. In some cases it will be weeks, in other cases, longer.

Recording of the work undertaken to get to this point should include:

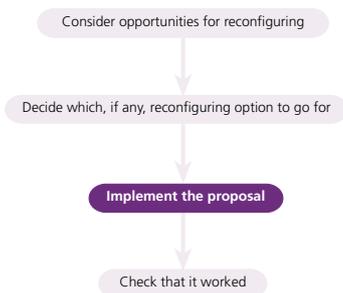
- the options which were considered
- the analysis of their forecast impact on costs, service take-up levels and quality, and other pros and cons; together with the assumptions on which these forecasts were based; results of sensitivity analysis, if used
- the staff involved in assessing the options and those involved in the decision to proceed or not
- the processes used for assessing the options, including details of the methodologies and results of consulting with user groups and other stakeholders.

These points may well be covered in the committee paper proposing the adoption of an option.

The end-point of this stage is a decision on whether to proceed with an option, and a proposal which outlines how it will work and its forecast impact on costs, service take-up and quality.

¹⁰ “The Green Book’, *Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government*’, Treasury Guidance, 1997, HMSO.

Stage 3: Implementing the proposal



Work on cost-benefit analysis ends with the choice of a preferred option. Now the task is to implement it well. A lot of the groundwork for successful implementation will have been done in the analysis stage - eg forecasts of costs, changes in service levels and quality can be easily translated into implementation targets. Staff involved will already know about the possibility of change and be thinking about what it will mean for them.

Successful implementation relies on getting three things right - people, planning and performance (exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13: Keys to successful implementation

Attention needs to be paid to people, planning and performance management to implement change successfully.

<p>People</p> 	<p>Who will manage the project?</p> <p>Who else needs to be involved in running the project?</p> <p>Is a project sponsor needed - a councillor and/or member of the management team?</p> <p>Who will be affected by the change?</p> <p>How will we communicate with them?</p> <p>What training will be required?</p>
<p>Planning</p> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; gap: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><div style="width: 40px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9d9d9;"></div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><div style="width: 40px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9d9d9;"></div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><div style="width: 40px; height: 15px; background-color: #d9d9d9;"></div><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div> </div>	<p>What budget approvals are required?</p> <p>What is the timetable for the work?</p> <p>What are the milestones?</p> <p>What needs to happen, and when, to meet the milestones?</p>
<p>Performance</p> 	<p>What are the objectives of change?</p> <p>What are the performance targets?</p> <p>What monitoring arrangements are there?</p> <p>What are the reporting arrangements?</p>

“Most improvement plans fail because of lack of support from elected members and senior management or because of poor project management skills.”
Accounts Commission/COSLA¹¹

Putting together the project team

A project team needs a manager, people to carry out the work and strong support from the top.

The project manager needs to be adept at leading multi-disciplinary teams and to have experience of managing change. In most of the examples looked at in this study, responsibility was given to a single individual - often a senior manager. Clackmannanshire’s [f] work on community access points was led by the Executive Director, Corporate Services; the Depute Chief Executive led East Ayrshire’s [e] work in setting up the customer helpline service.

Support from councillors and members of the senior management team is often crucial in the successful implementation of a project. The involvement of elected members from a very early stage in the reconfiguring of Dundee’s [g] neighbourhood centres and libraries helped subsequent implementation.

In most cases a project team is set up to help the project manager to implement the changes. The team can be drawn from the major stakeholders in the work, and may include staff, technical experts, representatives from personnel, corporate services and so on. As well as doing the work involved, their role can include representation, eg of staff groups or user groups, and communication - an ambassadorial function for the project. Project teams can include a range of interests affected by the project and be set up at the start of the reconfiguring process or to implement the chosen option.

The staff involved in the project team are likely to be drawn from operational roles. Project management may be new to many of them and training may help them to be effective in their roles as project team members. The training should cover the planning aspects of projects, as well as managing change, dealing with people, communications and so on.

Stakeholder analysis can help in the setting up of project teams (exhibit 14), as well as with other aspects of a project. It simply means thinking through all the people who will be affected by a project and what their interests and concerns may be. It does not take long to do and can be very helpful in making decisions about who should be on a project team, who needs to be consulted about the changes, who needs to be informed and so on.

Exhibit 14: Forming a project team

One council set up a project team which involved a range of stakeholders, and ensured top-level support for the project by setting up a senior steering group.

Aberdeenshire’s [k] Project Team for the integration of school and public library services was a representative ‘diagonal slice’ of all staff in the school and public library services and academy libraries. This team consisted of qualified and unqualified staff and included a UNISON staff representative and a project adviser from the Personnel Service. It was chaired by the Principal Librarian. A Steering Group, including the Directors for Education, Leisure & Recreation, Personnel and a trade union representative, approved each stage of the review.

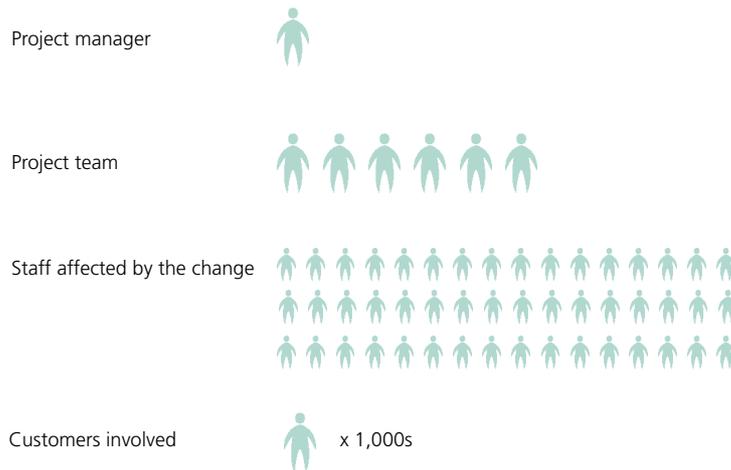
¹¹ ‘Guidance on Service/Performance Reviews’, COSLA/Accounts Commission, 1998.

Managing communications

Many people may be affected by a reconfiguring project (exhibit 15). The numbers illustrated here would be similar for the great majority of reconfiguring projects. Communications are vital to the success of a project where so many people are affected by the change.

Exhibit 15: People affected by a reconfiguring project

Reconfiguring may affect hundreds of staff and thousands of users.



Each of the groups in the exhibit can either assist the successful implementation of the work or unconsciously hinder it. What they do depends to a great extent on communications with them.

Communications can be about a range of different things; eg consulting on the different options; informing people of the need for change, the benefits of it and how it will affect them; briefing people on the mechanics of change - how the service will be different, what job changes will be required.

Whatever the subject of individual communications with affected groups, the objectives of successful communication are to ensure that:

- people affected by the change are clear about why it is happening and how it will affect them
- people are able to play their part in the change - they understand what they need to do differently as a result of the change
- where possible, ownership of the change is established. People are more likely to welcome and play a full part in implementing change when they feel some ownership of it. This can be helped by consulting them, taking on board their views, and keeping them informed of progress.

This approach was taken by East Ayrshire [e] in the introduction of its new helpline service. There was staff input to the delivery of training and the development of new departmental protocols for handling enquiries. This firmly established ownership and responsibility for the implementation and ongoing support for the helpline.

Project planning

The project plan is the document that will guide work on the implementation of the changes. It needs to cover the main tasks essential to the work, who should carry them out and when they need to be done by.

There are a number of project planning techniques¹² that can help the development of a plan. The simplest is taskboarding - brainstorming the tasks that need to be done, recording them on sticky notes, and then deciding which need to happen first and subsequently, and agreeing who will do them. Others include Gantt charts, and, for more complex projects, critical path analysis, which identifies the steps in a project that must be completed on time if the project as a whole is to meet its deadlines. These techniques help the project team to set out who needs to do what task by when.

A complete project plan should include a listing of tasks, and may identify milestones. These are important points in the project, often when several tasks need to be completed - for example, training, information for users, procedures and so on must all be completed by the date when new systems go live. The overall project plan should also include:

- the project's objective(s) - what effect is it intended to have on costs and/or service levels or quality?
- appropriate performance targets for these objectives
- the information which will be collected to monitor progress
- a timetable, including milestones
- a budget, detailing costs and where they arise
- arrangements for communication with key stakeholders, eg users, staff, councillors and so on
- reporting arrangements (within the council and, where relevant, outwith the council).

Managing performance during implementation

The point of the reconfiguring work is to improve service provision and/or to improve efficiency. Appraising the option against others and the status quo will have yielded information on its likely effect on costs, service levels and quality. These can form the starting point for performance targets, and for monitoring progress towards these (exhibit 16).

¹² Eg see JR Meredith and SJ Mantel, *'Project Management - A Managerial Approach'*, 3rd Ed, 1995. Other project management texts will also contain details of a range of techniques.

Exhibit 16: Examples of performance management of projects

Councils have taken different approaches to the setting of performance targets.

- Fife [m] set operational targets for its decentralised offices. These included times to answer phones, undertake transactions in the office and respond to certain housing repairs requests. The council prepares a written report based on routine monitoring approximately every six months. The project plan was also closely monitored by looking at overall timetable, capital investment and staff training.
- East Ayrshire [e] set operational targets when it set up its central contact number for public enquiries. These included the requirement that all calls should be dealt with, and that, where it became clear that callers needed to contact a non-council body, council staff would assist callers by phoning on their behalf rather than simply redirecting them.
- North Ayrshire [p] set targets for uptake of free school meals, speed of service and cash income for its cashless school meals service.
- East Lothian [q] set both quantitative and qualitative targets for its merger of school and public library services. These included delivery times to schools, which had been five to six weeks and which came down to one to two weeks; improvement of primary and secondary school stock; and setting targets for schools related to COSLA guidance on school library stock.
- Glasgow [j] monitors the performance of its integrated landlord services (grounds maintenance, litter-picking, stair and close cleaning and refuse collection) against agreed performance targets. There are three different types of monitoring:
 - by the provider (where the supervisor carries out a random inspection of 10% of premises each day)
 - by tenants (who report outstanding problems to the provider, which records all information and follows up complaints)
 - by neighbourhood offices.In addition, the manager for the landlord services and colleagues obtain feedback from tenants at community meetings.
- Clackmannanshire [f] gathered information on usage levels for the Community Access Points (CAPs). This included the number of rents and library transactions and requests for/bookings of leisure services. This information is used to influence the resource requirements of different CAPs.

Performance targets are important. It is very difficult to decide whether a project has worked well or not if there were no targets set for it at the beginning. Equally, it is very difficult to monitor the work if time-bound interim targets are not set up.

Thus, if an overall target is to improve service usage by 25%, then a 10% rise might be a reasonable interim target after six months. If only 1-2% had been achieved, then it would be worth investigating why and taking action to alter things if required. Where monitoring information has highlighted that things are not on target or that there are other concerns, then action can be taken.

Slippage against milestones and poor performance against targets can be due to a number of reasons, but perhaps two of the most common are delays in the introduction of new IT systems and in training. The most common reason for delay in projects integrating revenues and benefits systems was problems encountered in data transfer. Once new systems and processes are in place, whether IT-based or otherwise, staff need to be trained.

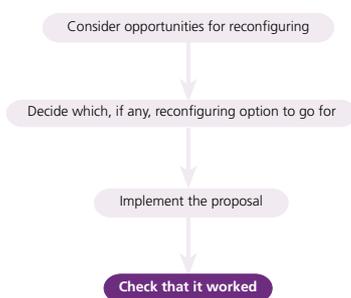
Training on the new requirements of the job for the staff affected is often critical to the success of the work. East Ayrshire [r] based its training for staff involved in the integration of housing and council tax benefits on real situations to demonstrate how the service would operate in practice.

How this stage might work

It is likely that there will be a project team reporting via the project manager to a steering group, management team or perhaps committee. Overall management will be eased if there is a good project plan, if responsibilities for tasks are clear and there is support from the senior management and elected members for the work. This can form the basis of progress meetings, and performance targets can be monitored and corrective action taken.

The project plan may form the basis of a report to committee and include details of future reporting arrangements to the committee. These could be at set time intervals, or when problems arise, or a change of direction is indicated.

Stage 4: Checking that it worked



Councils should review changes to see if they have worked, and also to see if any lessons for the conduct of future reconfiguring or other projects can be learned. This evaluation can also help to assess the payback from the investment made. Assessing the benefits can also be an important motivation to all those involved and provide evidence for other organisations considering the changes.

Evaluating the project - did it work?

The project should be evaluated against the targets that were set for it at the outset. These should relate directly to the objectives of the work and so evaluation should provide the information needed to see if it worked.

The Treasury '*Green Book*'¹³ recommends that the results of an evaluation should summarise:

- (if relevant) why the outturn differed from that foreseen in the appraisal
- how effective the activity was in achieving its objectives, and why
- its cost-effectiveness
- what the results imply for future management or policy decisions.

Evaluating should, in most cases, involve both staff and users. Their views will be required to see whether the objectives for service quality have been achieved, and to see whether there have been any unanticipated benefits or drawbacks to the changes. There is a variety of evaluation methods and approaches (exhibit 17).

Exhibit 17: Examples of evaluations of reconfiguring projects

Councils used a variety of approaches to evaluate whether their objectives were achieved.

- Aberdeen [s] carried out a survey of users following the integration of its benefits and revenues services. It also took the opportunity to ask questions about additional improvements that customers wanted, including, for example, being able to make payments and handle enquiries over the phone outwith normal office hours.
- East Ayrshire [e] carried out a survey of 100 users six months after the launch of its 'helpline' service to help evaluate it.
- Dundee [g] reported on its neighbourhood resources initiative to the departmental committee several times in the early years and also produced a 'first 1000 days' booklet.
- In Dumfries & Galloway [b], the two senior managers involved carried out an evaluation of the co-location of the Social Services Department and the Health Board. A 'before and after' evaluation was also commissioned from an academic consultant.

¹³ '*The Green Book*', *Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government*, Treasury Guidance, 1997, HMSO.

Review work is frequently carried out by staff involved in the development of the project, but may also be done by corporate services staff, or external consultants, for example. Independent evaluation by staff or consultants who have not been closely involved in the development and implementation of the changes may be regarded as more objective.

A second aspect of evaluation is about how the reconfiguring initiative itself was managed. This will involve reviewing how options were identified, how they were appraised, how they were implemented and learning lessons for the future. This analysis will help the council to continue to look for ways of bringing together services, reducing costs and improving quality in the future.

A checklist for action

This checklist is offered for use by people involved in reconfiguring work to help them to apply a systematic approach to the work. The questions are based on the guidance outlined in Stages 1-4 above.

The checklist may be used to review the guidance that is produced to support service planning and service reviews. It may also be used by staff involved in specific reconfiguring projects, to help steer their work through the different stages.

The checklist may also be used by senior management and elected members when they are involved in initiating, approving or evaluating reconfiguring projects.

Many of the questions, particularly in Stages 2-4, are relevant to change projects generally, not just reconfiguring, and may be used to review guidance and practice in these projects.



Corporate guidance

- 1 Does our guidance on service reviews cover reconfiguring as an option?
- 2 Does our guidance on service planning cover reconfiguring as an option?
- 3 Does our guidance incorporate the points made in this report and checklist?

Stage 1: Considering opportunities for reconfiguring

Looking for opportunities in particular areas

- 4 Have we looked for opportunities to bring together other council services which use similar resources to us?
- 5 Have we looked for opportunities to bring together services provided by other public agencies which use similar resources to us?
- 6 Have we looked for opportunities to bring together the delivery of other council services which our customers use?
- 7 Have we looked for opportunities to bring together the delivery of other public services which our customers use?
- 8 Have we considered reconfiguring as an option alongside or in combination with other delivery options - eg market testing, partnership delivery and so on?

Recording

- 9 Have we recorded the options that were identified, the decision made to proceed or not, who made it, and the reasons behind it?

Stage 2: Which reconfiguring option should we go for?

Objectives

- 10 Are we clear about the objectives we want to achieve?

Costs

- 11 Do we know the current costs of providing this service?
- 12 Do we know the set-up costs of the alternative options?
- 13 Do we know the likely running costs of the alternative options?
- 14 Have we worked out the running costs of the alternative options in a way that allows direct comparison with the current approach?

Service levels and quality

- 15 Do we have quantitative measures of service quality?
- 16 Do we know what users feel about the quality of the service provided currently?
- 17 Have we asked users their opinions of the pros and cons of different options?
- 18 Have we asked staff their opinions of the pros and cons of different options?
- 19 Have we asked other stakeholders - eg contractors, other agencies - their opinions of the pros and cons of different options?



20 Have we taken policy considerations into account when appraising options?

Risk

21 Have we identified the risks of the different options?

22 Have we considered the different ways in which risk can be minimised?

Recording

23 Have we recorded the options that were considered and their costs, benefits and risks?

24 Have we recorded the decision that was made to proceed or not, who made it and the reasons behind it?

Stage 3: Implementing the proposal

People aspects of the project

25 Have we considered who will be affected by the change?

26 Have we considered the range of communications and their objectives - consultation, briefing and so on - needed by the groups of people affected by the change?

27 Have we considered the training requirements of staff and others affected by the change?

Project team

28 Have we considered the skills and knowledge required to lead the project team and taken these into account in the choice of project leader?

29 Have we considered the range of skills and knowledge required and used this to help put together a project team?

30 Have we considered whether the range of departments and agencies involved in the project are satisfactorily represented on the project team?

31 Have we considered the training and development needs of the project team?

32 Have we ensured that the project team has high-level support for its work?

Project planning and control

33 Have we developed a project plan which covers objectives, performance targets and how they will be monitored, timetable and budget, communications and reporting arrangements?

34 Have we monitored progress on the timescale and budget of the project, and taken action where required?

Performance management

35 Have we set targets for the costs and quality aspects of the work?

36 Have we monitored progress against the performance targets and taken action where required?



Recording

37 Have we recorded objectives, performance targets, timetable and budget for future evaluation? (These would normally be included in the project plan).

Stage 4: Checking that it worked

Evaluating the changes

38 Do we know whether the change achieved its performance targets?

39 (If appropriate) have we considered the reasons why performance was not as expected?

40 Have we considered the cost-effectiveness of the change?

41 Have we considered the implications of the actual results for future decisions on service delivery?

Evaluating how we worked

42 Have we evaluated the processes used to identify, appraise and implement reconfiguring options?

43 Have we ensured that the lessons learned in the evaluation of the process are disseminated to others involved in similar initiatives?

Recording

44 Have we recorded the results of the evaluation and reported them as outlined in the project plan?

Appendix 1: Advisory Group

Members sat on the Group in a personal capacity.

Danny Cepok	Corporate Policy Officer, Falkirk Council
Robert Craig	Director, Library Association & Scottish Libraries Information Council
Michael Enston	Head of Corporate Policy, Fife Council
Roger Metcalfe	Director of Information Systems, Highland Council
Nigel Millar	Director of Business Excellence, Quality Scotland Foundation
Mike Peterson	Head of Revenues & Benefits, Edinburgh City Council
Bob Russell	Director of Housing & Commercial Operations, East Renfrewshire Council
Donald Thomas	Head of Finance and Personnel, Education Resources, South Lanarkshire Council
George Thorley	Chief Executive, South Ayrshire Council

Appendix 2: Contact points

The table (opposite) lists the contact details for examples of reconfiguring cited in this report. In the case of many of the examples, the study team prepared a brief ‘narrative’ statement which described the reconfiguring initiative nominated by the council. Readers wishing to obtain further information on any example (eg a copy of the narrative) should contact the relevant officer.

The examples cited in the report are used to illustrate actual reconfiguring opportunities taken forward by councils, and particular aspects of the Commission’s guidance. The short title given to each example has been used for convenience but it is not necessarily the title used by the council. The Commission did not carry out an independent evaluation of the examples.

Example reference	Short title of example of reconfiguring	Council	Contact officer	Contact number	Narrative available?
[a]	Co-location of library and other services - improved access	Glasgow	Martyn Wade, Head of Libraries & Archives	0141 287 5114	yes
[b]	Co-location of social services and health headquarters functions - improvement of co-ordination	Dumfries & Galloway	Keith Makin, Director, Social Services	01387 260928	yes
[c]	Developing joint benefits administration and processing between different councils	(1) Tandridge (2) Brighton & Hove (3) Wealden (4) Lewes	(1) Mrs Enid Allen, Special Projects Officer, Chief Executive's Department (2) Chris Taylor, Head of External Customer Service (3) Bill Lovell, Assistant Treasurer (4) Carole Owens, Revenues Contract Manager	(1) 01883 732940 (2) 012373 291850 (3) 01323 442666 (4) 01273 484079	no
[d]	Use of a police station as a community access point	Somerset	David Redford, Chief Executive	01823 355455	no
[e]	Public information 'helpline' - single central telephone number	East Ayrshire	Maureen Walker, Information & Advice Officer, Support Services - Administration	01563 576206	yes
[f]	Community access points - improved user access	Clackmannanshire	Bob Dunbar, Executive Director, Corporate Services	01259 452030	yes
[g]	Neighbourhood resources - integration of services	Dundee	Fraser Patrick, Chief Officer, Neighbourhood Resources & Development	01382 433250	yes
[h]	Multi-agency integration of housing applications	Aberdeen	Colin Ross, Principal Housing Operations Officer	01224 523032	yes
[i]	Housing repairs management centre - integration of repairs service; improved user access	East Dunbartonshire	Colin Rowbury, Manager, Repairs Centre, Connect Services	0141 574 5550	no
[j]	Co-ordination of back-court maintenance and close cleaning services	Glasgow	David Melvin, Depute Director, Direct and Care Services	0141 353 9050	yes
[k]	Integration of public and school library services	Aberdeenshire	Gerald Moore, Principal Librarian, Library & Information Services	01651 872707	yes
[l]	Establishing a 'multi-trade task force' for open spaces maintenance	Edinburgh	Jim Inch, Council Personnel & Management Services Officer, Corporate Services	0131 469 3971	no
[m]	Local office network and one-stop shops - improved user access	Fife	Jim Findlay, East Area Co-ordinator & Head of Service, Chief Executive's Service	01334 412770	yes
[n]	Provision and development of IS/IT services	Highland	Roger Metcalfe, Director of Information Systems	01463 702842	no
[o]	Public information service ('Capinfo')	Edinburgh	Dave Lochhead, Corporate Policy Manager, Corporate Services	0131 469 3850	yes
[p]	Schools catering 'smart card' - improved service delivery; 'cashless' service	North Ayrshire	Kenneth Wilson, Head, Catering & Cleaning	01294 485316	yes
[q]	Integration of public and school library services	East Lothian	Margaret O'Connor, Manager, Cultural Services	01620 827576	yes
[r]	Revenues and benefits administration - staff training	East Ayrshire	Trish McLean, Benefits Manager, Finance Department	01563 576650	no
[s]	Revenues and benefits administration - survey of users	Aberdeen	Jack Nowak, Head of Revenues & Benefits	01224 346767	no



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