



Go National - Programme progress

September 26

Contents

This is the first of the monthly updates you can expect between now and the delivery of our Go National programme

- Executive summary
- Progress this month
- Resource structure
- Network plan
- Property search
- Retail engagement





Executive Summary & Progress

Executive Summary

- Ahead of plan after the first full month of set up
- Team and governance work complete
- All leads in post, plans and critical path established
- Strategic partners appointed
- Network designed and property search underway
- Scotland specific requirements established with partners and plans in place
- Retail engagement scheduled, outlined from now to launch and with first activity underway



Progress this month

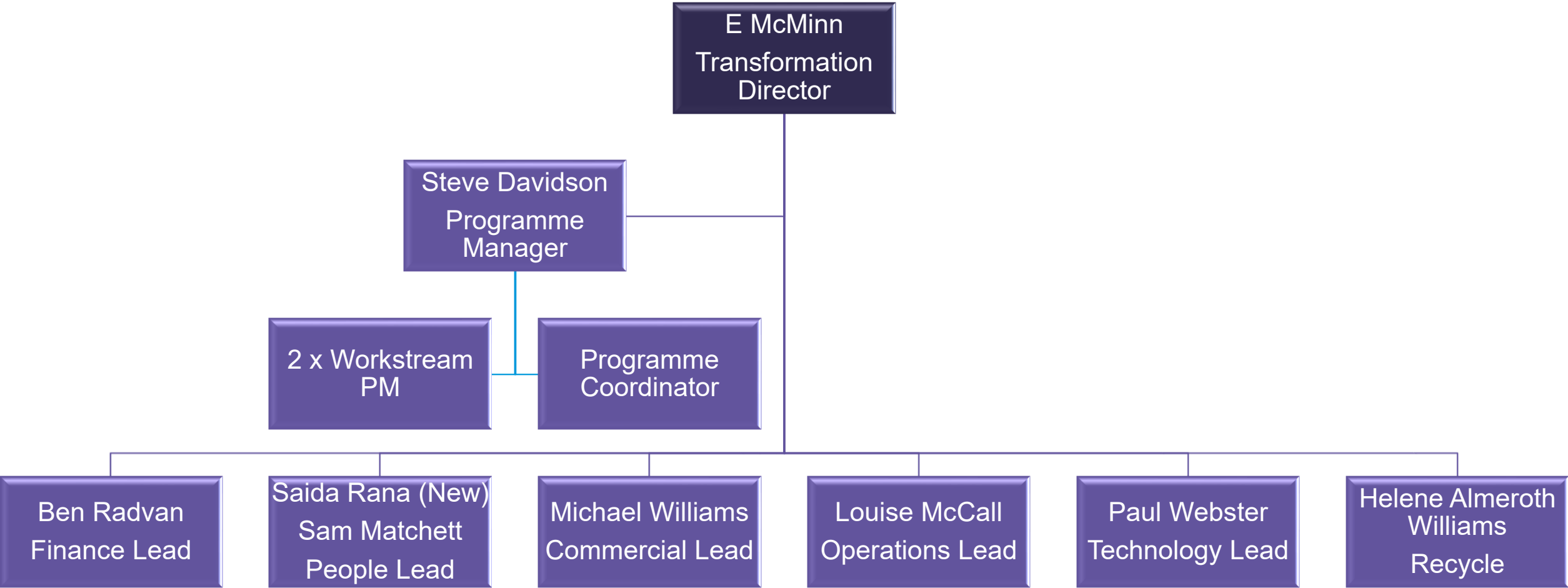
After a full month in preparation and set up phase – we are ahead of plan – notably with network, property searches, procurement and planning

- ✓ All Functional Leads appointed and announced to the business - Substructures are well underway
- ✓ Programme governance fully set up – meeting cadence, dashboard reporting, RAID logs, escalation paths etc
- ✓ Strategic partners sourced and appointed (e.g. Savills for property, TLT for legals)
- ✓ Plan progressing in detail
 - ✓ functional plans materially completed
 - ✓ activity owners allocated
 - ✓ Task precedents and dependents understood
 - ✓ Critical path established
- ✓ Holiday changes for FY27 communicated to business (e.g. black out periods, restrictions on holiday buy scheme, embargo on extended leave)
- ✓ Material progress with network planning
- ✓ Property search well underway – site visits underway
- ✓ Material progress with Retailer Engagement Plan
- ✓ Procurement underway – orders placed for high risk / long lead time products (e.g. Newspaper printing kit)



Resource

Programme Leadership Team – all roles dedicated



A Strong Senior Team

- All functional leads in post, announced to business on 10 September
- Strong mix of tenure, experience, expertise, style.
- Team will work closely together and drive all functional plans
- Offsite event planned 14-16 October for GN complex solutioning workshops
- Weekly, monthly meeting cadence established.

STEVE DAVIDSON
PROGRAMME MANAGER



Steve has been with the business for just over a year, and he is an experienced project and programme manager with extensive experience in the finance sector with a focus on regulatory compliance and customer excellence. Steve will be holding us all honest to the programme plan, ensuring we follow our standard robust governance managing RAIDs, the programme interdependencies and driving the actions to plan. Although dedicated to Go National, Steve will continue to report directly to Caroline Jones, who will be continuing to manage the total business programme and project portfolio, and between them they will also manage the interconnection between Go National and the other major programmes within the business.



LOUISE MCCALL
OPERATIONS



Louise started her journey with Smiths News 21 years ago as a service deliver partner and has worked her way up through the business undertaking numerous diverse roles, from Nottingham Site lead to taking over leadership of our solution design team for new propositions and into her most recent role as Head of Solutions Design and Performance Delivery. Louise has also played a key part in our Recycle project and Customer Experience project. It is this cross functional experience and deep knowledge of the business that will support Louise in the delivery of her new role. To give some flavour to the nature of activities within the Operations Plan, some of the key elements of the plan are:

- New property searching
- Network review
- Property layout and fitout
- Route planning
- Contractor strategy
- Operational processes & delivery
- H&S Processes



MICHAEL WILLIAMS
COMMERCIAL



Whilst Michael has most recently been working on identifying and nurturing growth outside of newspapers and magazines, in his 30 years with the business he has gained extensive knowledge and experience of the retail and newspaper environment having led both functions for us here at Smiths News - all of which will be invaluable as he seeks to bring the teams together to deliver a complex plan with a myriad of internal and external stakeholders.

Key elements of the commercial plan include:

- Onboarding circa 16000 new retail customers (approximately 9000 of which are independents)
- Capture trading information
- Customer engagement and communication
- Publisher engagement and communication
- Customer training
- Trade press engagement
- System development
- Policy alignment



PAUL WEBSTER
TECHNOLOGY



Paul started his career with WH Smiths News IT as a developer before leaving the business and subsequently rejoining the Operations team in 2002 as Logistics Systems Manager. Since then, he has held senior roles across both Operations and IT, with project and programme responsibilities spanning the design and implementation of technology-led solutions across existing and new operational sites and national rollouts. More recently, Paul has worked within the Operations Executive team as Programme Manager and acted as Operational Sponsor for the Future Tech programme. Paul brings a strong combination of deep operational and IT knowledge, extensive experience of delivering technology-enabled change, and established programme governance expertise — all of which will be critical to the successful delivery of the IT workstream. Key elements of the technology plan delivery include:-

- Logistics Systems – News Pack, News Returns, HHT's, Proof of Delivery
- IT Networking – Local and Data Centre connectivity, Cabling, Internet
- SAP Solutions and Services
- Depot IT Services – PC's, Laptops, Printers, Telephony
- Depot IT Fit-Out
- IT Security Strategy Alignment / Assurance
- IT Business Continuity Assurance

BEN RADVAN
FINANCE



Ben joined Smiths News in August 2025 as Head of Management Accounting with overall responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of our SAP accounts. Prior to joining Smiths News, Ben spent 9 years working in the aerospace industry where he held a range of senior Finance roles and developed a broad range of experience across all aspects of Finance. This breadth of experience means Ben is well positioned to successfully deliver the requirements of the Finance Workstream. The Finance plan includes:

- Managing the programme to budget and reforecasting throughout
- Setting up the c 16,000 on Direct Debit and ensuring a smooth transition for invoicing
- Setting up the new cost centres and accounting structures
- Managing the accounting and the treatment of all costs for the programme.
- Ensuring our reporting is set up to cope with the new customers, sites, colleagues etc.
- Strategic procurement for the vast list of new products and services associated with the scope

SAIDA RANA
PEOPLE LEAD



Saida Rana joined on Tuesday 8th September, and she brings a wealth of experience in delivering people strategy, organisational transformation and senior business partnering.

Saida has experience across healthcare, academia, technology, telecoms, and FMCG. Key elements of the people plan include:

- Workforce planning and recruitment
- Onboarding and Induction
- Employee relations and wellbeing
- Leadership capability
- Talent and development
- Supporting change
- Communications
- Culture and engagement



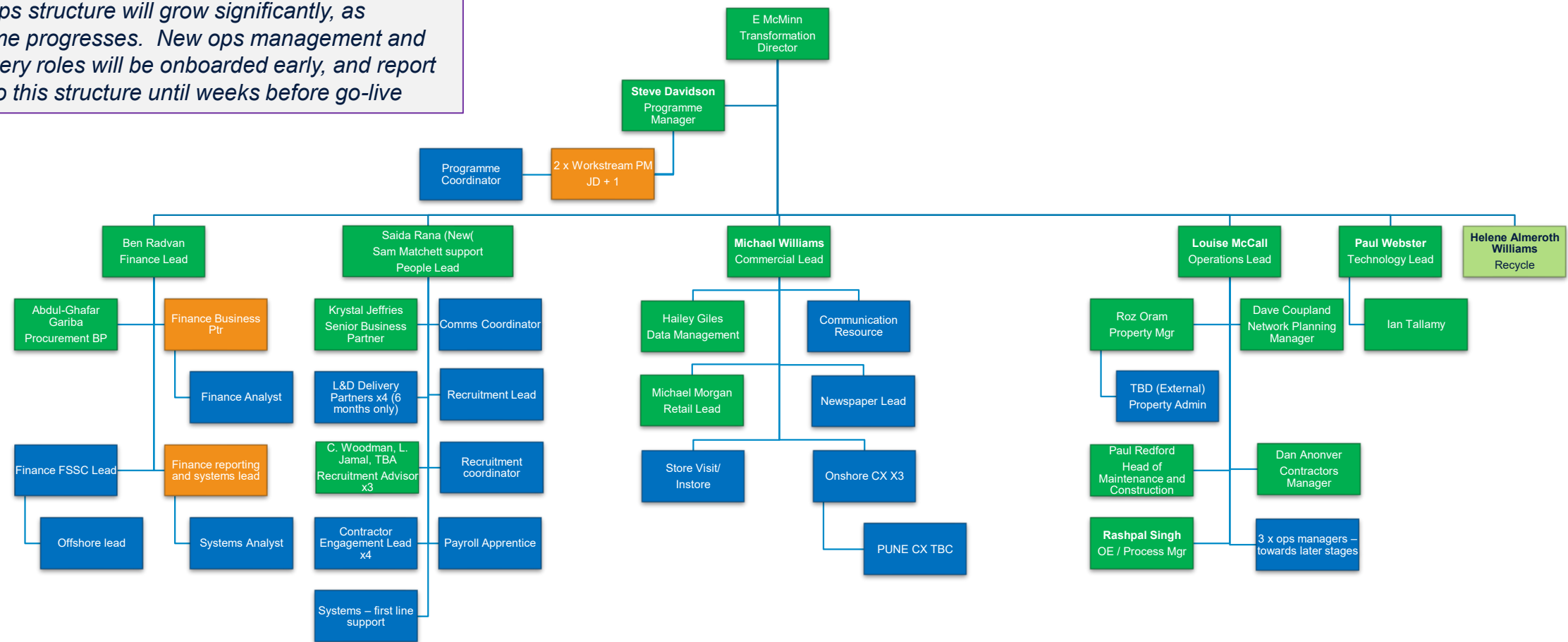
SAM MATCHETT
PEOPLE

With over four years at Smiths News, Sam Matchett has had the opportunity to work alongside colleagues from across the business and partner with teams in a variety of projects, including the recent Operational Excellence programme with additional experience of change programmes in previous businesses. Sam is committed to creating pragmatic interventions for all that enable colleagues to develop the skills, knowledge, behaviour and confidence needed to succeed, recognising that every role has an important part to play in delivering the ambitions of Go National and the wider business.

Programme team – all roles dedicated

	Appointed
	Identified, not announced
	Not yet identified, advertised
	Strategic supplier / partner

Note – Ops structure will grow significantly, as programme progresses. New ops management and Ops delivery roles will be onboarded early, and report through to this structure until weeks before go-live



Strategic partners

Savills - Property

TLT - Legals

Barricane - Network

Approaching Scotland

Legal support

- SN Legal team have completed a full legal advisors panel review, TLT have been appointed.
- Merits of TLT (in addition to service confidence and commercials) are UK coverage, and specifically dedicated expertise in Scotland.
- Provision of Scottish office facilities is a strong benefit (for meetings, interviews etc)
- Engagement with TLT is well underway and Scotland specific needs are being incorporated into plans.

Geographic Nuances and Knowledge

- Jonathan Denton has engaged with Scott McCulloch, for highlands and islands current local arrangements and abnormalities which have been captured and incorporated into the plan (i.e. includes some Scottish elements, but is whole UK), engagement with Scott will continue throughout the programme.
- A list of these special arrangement showing on next slide for illustration. All 72 retailers for NewsUK identified across the Highlands and Islands

Other

- Senior Ops visit to EuroCentral on 23 Sept (and also Broxbourne on 21 Sept and Knowsley in early October)
- Michael Williams visiting Scott McCulloch and several key retailers w/c 28 Sept
- Engagement with regional press is underway
- Ability to use space within EuroCentral for benefit of programme is arranged



Network & Property

Network Planning

Network analysis complete – plan headlines

680 (approx.) New routes required (will be finalised when properties are confirmed)

20 New sites confirmed

3 Sites either new or into print sites – visits scheduled

5 Current locations to be incorporated into the current SN

7 Current SN locations onboarding new customers, capacity being validated – no obvious concerns



Network Planning – location detail to support previous summaries

National Network Plan

Detailed site plan, proposed network actions and customer redistribution

Depot / Area	Current Customers	Network	New Depot	Print Centre	Merge	Notes	Revised Customers
Aberdeen	368	New Depot	✓				368
Carlisle	293	New Depot	✓				293
Dundee	366	New Depot	✓				366
Eastbourne	261	New Depot	✓			25 SN already deliver	236
Hull	440	New Depot	✓				440
Inverness	302	New Depot	✓				302
Ipswich	557	New Depot	✓				557
Kendal	146	New Depot	✓				146
Maidstone	642	New Depot	✓				1,056
Norwich	443	New Depot	✓				443
Preston	869	New Depot	✓				869
Rhyl	330	New Depot	✓				330
Ryde	103	New Depot	✓				103
Sheffield	1,087	New Depot	✓				1,087
South East London	969	New Depot	✓			Includes Part Bow	1,313
Stockton	609	New Depot	✓				609
Swansea	537	New Depot	✓				537
Wakefield	1,127	New Depot	✓				1,127
York	391	New Depot	✓				391
Newbridge	1,166	Print Site Euro Central / New Depot	✓	?		Possible move "ML" Postcodes from Linwood to Newbridge (Site at Livingstone)	1,166
Linwood	1,764	Print Site Euro Central / New Depot		✓		TBC Following Visit	1,716
Chester	581	Print Site Knowsley / New Depot		✓		TBC Following Visit	581
Grays London	807	Print Site Broxbourne / New Depot		✓		TBC Following Visit	807
Ashford	429	-			✓	Distributed from Maidstone	-
Berwick	39	-			✓	Distributed from Newcastle	-
Bow	485	-			✓	Split into SEL, Hornsey	-
Portsmouth	373	-			✓	Split Southampton/Crawley/Croydon/Slough	-
Weybridge	339	-			✓	Split into Slough / Hammersmith / Crawley	-
Unrouted						Unrouted	47
Total	15,823		20	3	5		14,890

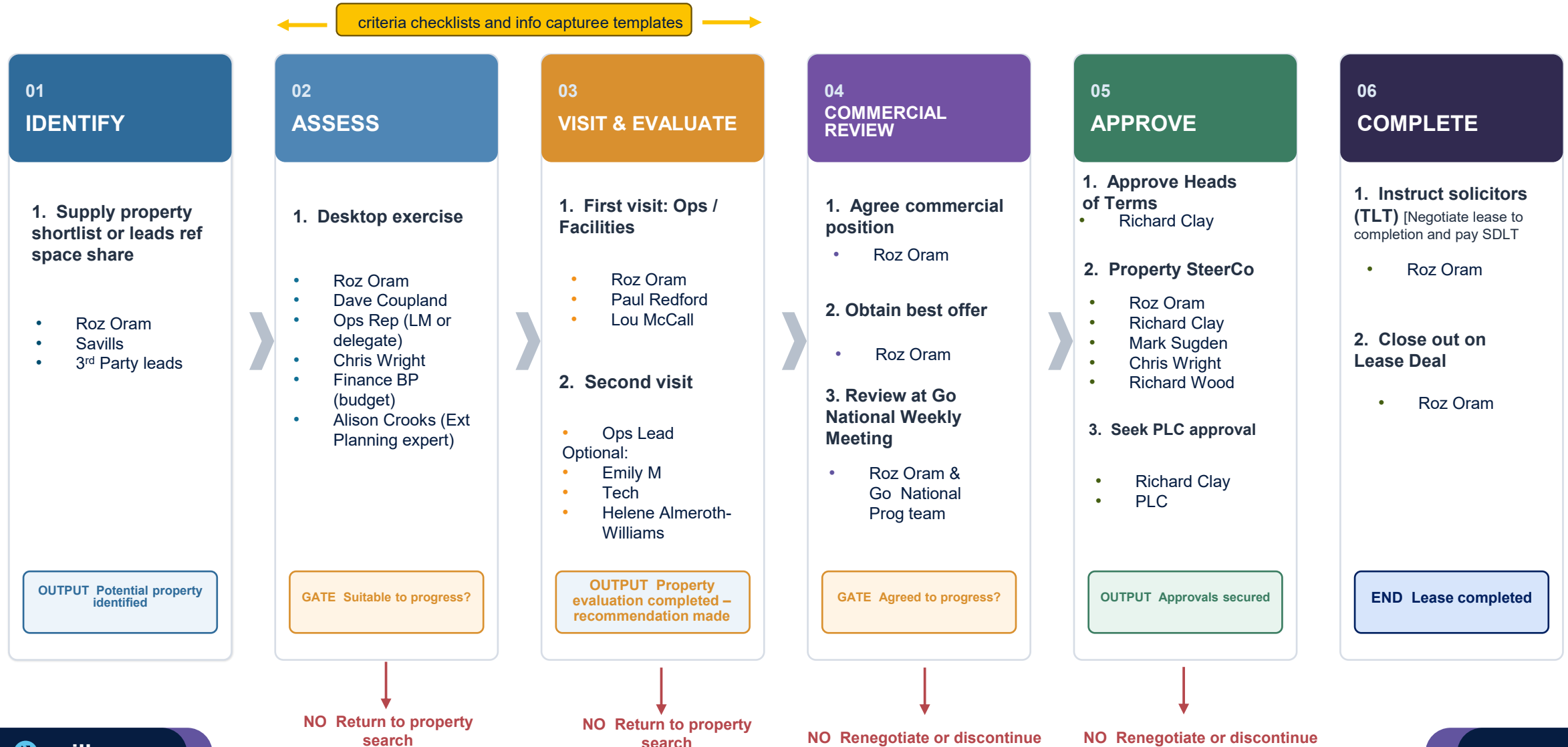
REDISTRIBUTED / RECEIVING LOCATIONS

Receiving Location						Route Note	Customers
Crawley						Split from Portsmouth & Weybridge	138
Newcastle						Includes Berwick	40
Southampton						Split from Portsmouth & Weybridge	337
Hornsey						Includes Part Bow	141
Croydon						Split from Portsmouth & Weybridge	91
Slough						Split from Portsmouth & Weybridge	146
Crawley / Croydon						Crawley 25 + Croydon 15 already deliver	40
Final Network Total							15,823



Property Identification, Evaluation and Approval Process

From initial property lead through to completed lease



Property Searches

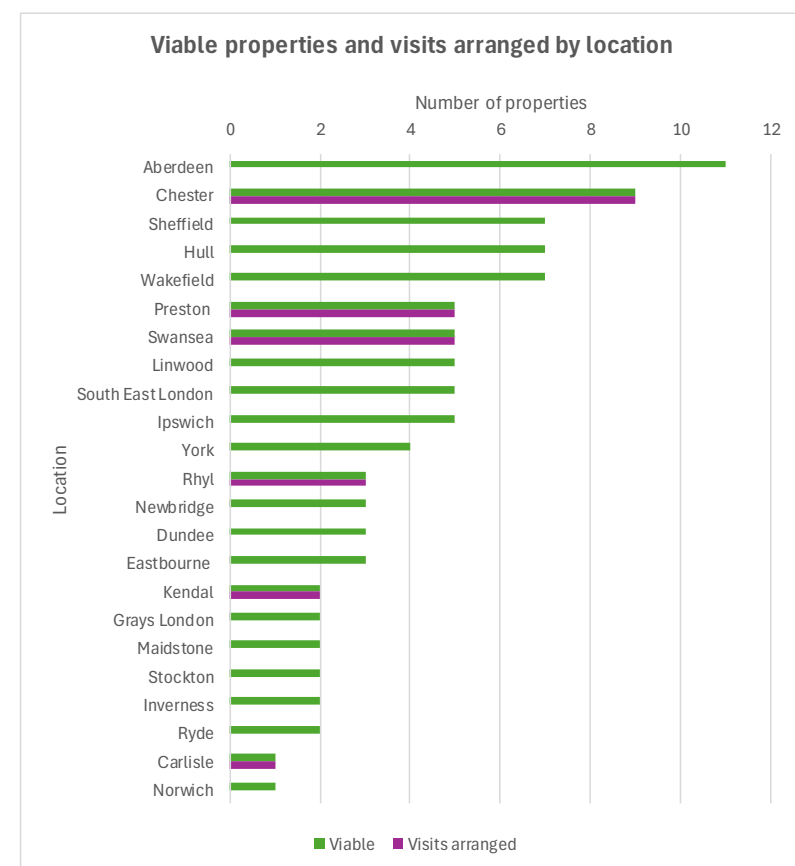
- All locations have viable sites further to shortlist and stage desktop review.
- Focus in month ahead is to close out decision on print centres, complete the arranged visits and progress other locations and initiate any tier 2 agency searches.

TOTAL IDENTIFIED	ASSESSED — STAGE 1	VIABLE AFTER STAGE 1	VISITS ARRANGED	CONVERSION
241	241	96	25	40%

STORY IN BRIEF

- 241 opportunities are identified across 23 locations; 100% have completed Stage 1.
- 96 remain viable (40% of assessed), while 145 have been rejected.
- 25 visits are arranged across 6 locations (26% of viable properties); Chester leads with 9.

ASSESSED LOCATIONS — IDENTIFIED, VIABLE & VISITS						
#	Location	Identified	Viable	arranged	Yes rate	
1	Aberdeen	32	11	0	34%	
2	Chester	24	9	9	38%	
3	Sheffield	22	7	0	32%	
4	Hull	19	7	0	37%	
5	Wakefield	13	7	0	54%	
6	Preston	14	5	5	36%	
7	Swansea	8	5	5	63%	
8	Linwood	16	5	0	31%	
9	South East London	8	5	0	63%	
10	Ipswich	6	5	0	83%	
11	York	8	4	0	50%	
12	Rhyl	7	3	3	43%	
13	Newbridge	8	3	0	38%	
14	Dundee	7	3	0	43%	
15	Eastbourne	4	3	0	75%	
16	Kendal	7	2	2	29%	
17	Grays London	11	2	0	18%	
18	Maidstone	7	2	0	29%	
19	Stockton	7	2	0	29%	
20	Inverness	3	2	0	67%	
21	Ryde	3	2	0	67%	
22	Carlisle	3	1	1	33%	
23	Norwich	4	1	0	25%	





Retail Engagement

Retail Engagement Plan

How are we defining this area?

- The **engagement** plan is being designed to manage key messages into specific stakeholders. This is the actions we take to talk directly to, or work in the room with, groups of stakeholders – largely customers and industry groups.
- Our **onboarding** plan is how we will capture customer information, deploy it into existing or new systems, and prepare those customers and suppliers to be ready on day one
- The **communication** plan is designed to inform customers, suppliers and the industry at large as to progress and key information related to our move to national. The marketing team will largely deliver this activity with input from the programme team. Elements of engagement and onboarding may also make use of the marketing team.

We need to be clear about what each element is designed to do when directing the business

What this plan does, and what we need from you

Engagement is an area you have asked about directly.

This high level plan turns that into a visible, scheduled programme

8

AUDIENCE GROUPS

From multiples with Head Office reach to independents, political customers and industry bodies — each with its own approach.

4

PHASES TO GO-LIVE

Establish, Engage, Go live and **Hypercare**, running from September through to launch on 8 July and beyond.

Weekly

SURGERIES AT LAUNCH

Cadence steps up from monthly to weekly with in-person and online surgeries as we approach 8 July.

5

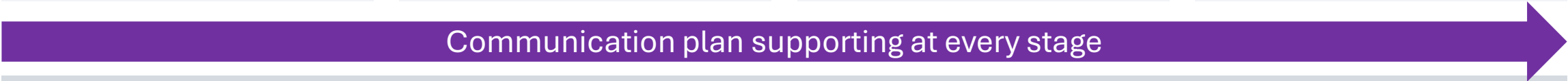
TEAMS DELIVERING

Programme, Marketing, Retail and Publisher teams, with Exec support where seniority is needed.

The ask: endorse the phasing and the cadence. Detail, resource and named responsibilities are being completed at the team workshops through September. First engagement is already booked, a Scotland visit in the week commencing 28 September.

Four phases from establish to hypercare

SEP – DEC	DEC – APR	MAY – 8 JULY	JULY ONWARDS
Establish	Engage	Go live	Hypercare
• Wide engagement with key stakeholder groups • First attendance at local meetings; introductions to key customers • Focus groups stood up; contacts and question routes shared • Milestone framework and timings published • First written comms to independents, introduction from Jon to Smiths News, capturing contact info	• Scheduled surgeries and local events in new areas • Focus groups running; group and store issues being resolved • Follow up written comms to independents capturing data for go live • Monthly feeds into industry groups	• Weekly surgeries, online and in person • Sustained presence in Scotland; outbound contact to key customers • Countdown comms and FAQs for store teams • Progress via trade press, social and website	• Daily launch reporting, reducing over time • Monthly progress and performance feedback in packs • Follow-up into industry groups to play back performance • Preparation for DMG in the new year



Cadence tightens as we approach launch. Monthly through Establish, moving to weekly from May, then daily reporting through early Hypercare.

Who we are talking to, how often, and who leads

AUDIENCE	WHY THEY MATTER	CADENCE	LED BY
Multiples — existing	Head Office reach, but engagement is currently low	Monthly pack, fixed format	Retail
Multiples — new	Coverage gaps being closed; CJ Langs is the only one of volume discovered so far	Onboard, then standard cadence	Retail
Non-standard distribution (Highlands & Islands)	Distribution complexity makes early operational relationships critical	Letter, then following independent cadence	Retail / Ops
High volume & home news delivery (HND)	Not critical for launch, but need segmenting by size	Phased, weighted after go-live	Retail
Independents	First impressions count; they need a route to hear our story and ask questions	Letter, surgeries, trade press, social media	Retail / Marketing / Programme
Political customers	Noisy and not yet identified. Onside they are advocates, offside they are not.	Identification first, then direct contact	Retail / Programme
Industry groups (The Fed, ECR, NMA, PDRP)	Reach members at scale and give us a feedback loop	Event calendar plus monthly feeds	Retail / Programme / Exec
Wider retail bodies (Symbols, SGF, ACS, Scottish trade press)	Currently unmapped — a gap we need to close	To be scoped	Retail / Programme

A fixed rhythm, with clear ownership

MONTHLY The standing pack • What we said we would do • What we have delivered • What happens next • Universal format for every multiple — it does not change • Feeds trade and social comms as well as in person events	EVENT LED In the room • Year of industry events mapped and planned • The Fed Executive attended in every phase • Our own surgeries and workshops in new areas • Seniority matched to the audience	MOVING WEEKLY THROUGH MAY Close to launch • Weekly surgeries, online and in person • Sustained presence in Scotland • Outbound contact to key customers • Daily reporting to multiples once live
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DELIVERED BY

Programme Industry groups, political customers	Marketing Written comms, trade press, countdown	Retail Multiples, independents, surgeries. workshops	Publisher Operational support for non traditional and high volume	Exec Senior-level attendance and escalation where required
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Points we need to close quickly

01

Identifying political customers

List under construction with help from publisher teams. Once we’ve a solid foundation, we’ll begin engagement via appropriate team and at appropriate level of seniority

PROGRAMME / RETAIL

02

The Fed's data-sharing position

Access to the membership list depends on what The Fed has agreed with members about sharing data with third parties. Confirm before we plan around it.

PROGRAMME / RETAIL

03

High volume versus home news delivery

These may be the same population in most cases. Allocation will manage day one, we need to be engaged to make appropriate in the moment operational decisions at the same time

RETAIL / NEWSPAPER

04

Resource and named owners

Engagement activity is mapped but not yet resourced. The ongoing workshops assign responsibilities and confirms whether current capacity is sufficient.

ALL TEAMS

Decision timing: all four close as September workshops conclude

Communication Plan

- We know we need regular external communication, designed to inform all interested parties as to our progress.
- This is paramount to keeping our narrative the prevalent one in the marketplace including an ongoing plan to communicate the project progress to the industry at large (e.g. trade press, social media, website etc...).
- It should be scheduled, regular, frequent and promote confidence in our prospective new customers and stakeholders.
- Work is underway to identify what, when and how we deliver this with Marketing taking the lead on how we do it and the Programme & Retail team responsibility being the feed of information

Progress

- Team engaged, requirements articulated, resource gaps identified and plans to fill them in motion
- SN website being immediately updated
- LinkedIn/Facebook under review to be repurposed for Go National
- Agreement with Better Retailing for early access to content and team throughout
- First press release on project circulated this week



smiths news

GoNational

Next month

Looking ahead

Planned activity for the coming month includes

- ✓ Visit 3 print sites, determine outcomes and finalise network plan
- ✓ Progress site search and visits
- ✓ Create solution for contractor attraction and recruitment
- ✓ Sign off all functional plans, and loaded into Programme Management software
- ✓ Material progress with any remaining unappointed programme roles
- ✓ SN Internal leadership conference (majors on Go National), and plan 3 day offsite solutioning event for GN teams
- ✓ Complete training plan

