

## **COMMUNICATIONS OUTLINE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – FEBRUARY 2010**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This Communications Plan relates to communications during the local government reform process up to May 2011. It proposes the communication responsibilities and activities that should be undertaken to support effective implementation of local government reform. The Communications Plan was agreed by the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB), at its meeting on the 10 April 2009, and by the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) on 30 April 2009.

It should be noted that communications are fast moving, therefore, this plan is adaptable and will be continuously updated as the programme progresses, as a result of changing events and circumstances. The plan will be revisited every month with a 3-month forward look to ensure that all changes are adequately reflected in the plan.

### **AIM OF THE COMMUNICATION PLAN**

To support and facilitate the change management programme by providing relevant and timely information to all staff and stakeholders.  
To support the aims and objectives identified in the DOE Communications Strategy and the Joint Communications Framework.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

It is proposed that implementation of this plan will be co-ordinated by DOE Local Government Policy Division's Communications Team in conjunction with Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA) and other stakeholders, as outlined in the plan.

Implementation of the plan will be steered by the RTCG, which will be directly accountable to the SLB, as proposed in the DOE Communications Strategy and the Joint Communications Framework considered by the SLB at the meeting held on the 6 March 2009.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives for Internal, External and Stakeholder groups have been outlined in detail in the DOE Communications Strategy. These include:

- To provide clear, consistent and timely information to all stakeholders.
- To promote a clear, shared understanding of the change process.
- To minimise misunderstanding, rumours and misinformation.
- To ensure that messages are disseminated in a timely, targeted and consistent manner.
- To increase awareness amongst all key audiences of the rationale for change and the benefits this will bring.

Set out below is an overview of the communication management process, which will underpin the communications plan. Attached for information is the latest working draft of the communications plan, which will be further developed in line with programme progress.

## COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Organisation	Key Roles	Activity	Process	Timing
SLB	<p>Communication Strategy and Plan</p> <p>Receive implementation evaluation reports from RTCG</p> <p>Advice on how any contentious messages can be handled</p> <p>Raise any political or local issues arising out of the ongoing process</p>	<p>Set strategy and agree plan</p> <p>Oversight</p> <p>Case by case basis</p> <p>Case by case basis</p>	<p>Agree</p> <p>Receive reports</p> <p>As required</p> <p>As required</p>	<p>April 09</p> <p>Quarterly</p> <p>As required</p> <p>As required</p>
RTCG	<p>Ensure the effective delivery and monitoring of the plan</p> <p>Refer any contentious issues /delivery issues to the SLB for consideration</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate communications activities</p> <p>Highlight areas of conflict</p>	<p>Provide performance reports</p> <p>As required</p>	<p>May 2009 onwards</p> <p>SLB meetings as required</p>
Joint Secretariat	<p>Manage delivery of the communications plan</p>	<p>Monitor and evaluate communications activities</p> <p>Communicate key messages to stakeholders</p> <p>Design responses to Frequently Asked Questions (Consultation with key stakeholders)</p>	<p>Conduct evaluation of communications</p> <p>Report</p> <p>Maintain Websites Respond to questions</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>After key meetings and milestones</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

Organisation	Key Roles	Activity	Process	Timing
		<p>Support stakeholders in communication process</p> <p>Account to RTCG</p> <p>Ensure key stakeholders briefed</p>	<p>Manage Local Government Reform Communications Group</p> <p>Report</p> <p>Transition Committees/CEX's / transferring functions</p>	<p>As required – on average every 2 months</p> <p>Per meeting/ as required</p> <p>Ongoing events and visits, regular communication</p>
DOE	<p>Publish Ministerial/ departmental guidance</p> <p>Manage internal and external Consultation processes</p> <p>Communicate with the Public</p>	<p>Ensure DOE policy is communicated</p> <p>Consultation management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Transition Committees</li> <li>- Severance</li> <li>- Local Government Bills</li> <li>- Boundary Commissioner Report</li> <li>- Council District Rates</li> <li>- CEX Appointments</li> <li>- Electoral Area Report</li> <li>- Community Planning</li> <li>- Elections</li> </ul>	<p>Media management</p> <p>Media</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>As required</p> <p>As required</p>

Organisation	Key Roles	Activity	Process	Timing
			management	
NILGA	Ensure local government views are represented	Communicate local government key messages	Newsletter Website Full Members meetings AGM/Conference Visits to Councils Seminars and Events Media Management	Monthly Regular updates 5 per year Annually Sept/Feb Annually As required As required
Transition Committees and Transition Management Teams	Agree Council Cluster Communications Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement /deliver plan</li> <li>• Tailor any joint messages to local areas</li> <li>• Address local issues/questions</li> </ul>	Design and deliver the local communication plan Report progress to RTCG/SLB	Implement communication activities Respond to consultations Local media management Participate in monitoring activities	As required As required Ongoing As required

Organisation	Key Roles	Activity	Process	Timing
Councils	Communicate effectively with members, staff and the public on local issues	Support local implementation	Newsletters/ briefings/ website etc  Media management	As required
Transferring Functions	Communicate effectively with staff and the public	Design and deliver communications plan	Implement communication activities  Media management	As required  As required

## KEY MESSAGES

It is proposed that key messages should be developed in Messaging Workshops with the Local Government Reform Communications Group and then cleared through the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG) and if appropriate, through the relevant Policy Development Panels (PDPs) and Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). Once approved, these messages should be reiterated in all communications to increase awareness and understanding amongst target audiences to ensure a more consistent message.

## STAKEHOLDERS

The key stakeholders to be considered in the delivery of the plan are listed below. It will depend on the message being communicated who will communicate with each stakeholder and the method used. The aim of the more detailed plan is to draw out these details.

Assembly

Community representatives

Council Chief Executives (CEX's)

Council Communicators/ Local Government Reform Communications Group

Central Personnel Group (CPG)

DOE Press Office

Elected representatives

Environment Committee

Executive

HR Co-ordination Group – advises on regional HR and staff transfer implementation issues

HR Working Group – reports to Policy Development Panel C

Local Government Policy Division (LGPD)

Local government staff

Local Government Staff Commission (LGSC)

Media

Minister of the Environment

Northern Ireland Housing Association (NIHE)

Northern Ireland Local Government Association (NILGA)

Northern Ireland Local Government Officers' Superannuation Committee (NILGOSC)

Policy Development Panels A, B and C as appropriate

Political parties

Private and voluntary sector

Public

Public Sector People Manager's Association (PPMA)

Public Service Commission (PSC)

Regional Transition Coordinating Group (RTCG)

Strategic Leadership Board (SLB)

Trade Union representatives – includes Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA), Central Joint Forum (NJC) and the Northern Ireland Committee, Irish Congress of Trade Unions (NIC/ICTU)

Transferring departments - staff and representatives from central government departments that have functions transferring to local government

## DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS JOINT SECRETARIAT – WORK IN PROGRESS FEBRUARY 2010

### Implementation Steps

#### Key

All sections coloured blue relate to joint DOE and NILGA communications.

All sections coloured green relate to DOE communications.

All sections coloured purple relate to NILGA communications.

All sections coloured red are to be determined.

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
6 March 09	SLB Meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
10 April 09	SLB Meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
April 09	Consultation on Transition Committees	Consultation mailing list Media management News release Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Press release issued 6.4.09  Consultation closed 31.5.09
April 09	Consultation on severance arrangements for councillors	Consultation mailing list Media management Briefing material Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Press release issued 6.4.09  Consultation closed 31.5.09

<b>Date</b>	<b>Message/ Event</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>*Sign off /Consultees</b>	<b>Status</b>
April 09	Local Government Policy Division website upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
30 April 09	RTCG	Key outcomes and summary document.	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
30 April 09	Communications Plan	Paper to RTCG	RTCG SLB Council CEX's Council Communicators NILGA members	RTCG SLB	Complete
May 09	Joint Communications Framework Principles and Communications Plan issued. Request for nominations to Local Government Reform Communications Group.	Email Website	Council CEX's Council Communicators Transferring function departments NILGA	Communications Framework Principles - SLB (signed off 6 March 09) RTCG (signed off 12 February 09) Revisions signed off by Joint Secretariat. Communications Plan signed off by SLB 10 April 09; RTCG 30.4.09.	Complete
May 09	Local Government website upgrade.	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing

<b>Date</b>	<b>Message/ Event</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>*Sign off /Consultees</b>	<b>Status</b>
22 May 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
21 May 09	Deadline for nominations to the Local Government Reform Communications Group	Nomination form returned	Transferring functions Council CEX's	NA	Complete
W/c 1 June	Invite to nominees for first meeting of Local Government Reform Communications Group.	Letter	Nominees	Joint Secretariat	Complete
June 09	Local Government Website Upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
11 June 09	RTCG	Key outcomes and summary document.	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
16 June 09	First Meeting of the Local Government Reform Communications Group	Meeting to discuss Terms of Reference; communications priorities and key messages	Nominees to the Local Government Reform Communications Group	Feedback to RTCG and SLB	Complete
26 June 09	Local Government Boundary Commissioner final	Briefing material Press release Media management	All stakeholders	Minister	Complete

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
	report published				
3 July 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
23 July 09	RTCG	Key outcomes and summary document.	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
24 July 09	Consultation on Local Government (Finance) Bill starts	Media management News release Website  Issued to consultation mailing list	All stakeholders	Minister	Complete – Consultation ongoing until 31 October 2009
July	Local Government Website Upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
5 August 09	Local Government Reform Joint Forum meeting	Joint Forum newsletter produced by LGSC – DOE and NILGA disseminate to key contacts	Transferring Department staff, local government staff including Council CEX and Change Managers, NILGA members, RTCG and SLB members	Joint Forum	Complete

<b>Date</b>	<b>Message/ Event</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>*Sign off /Consultees</b>	<b>Status</b>
13 August 09	Local Government Reform Communications Group meeting	Presentation from Eileen Beamish; programme update; communications strategy session	LGR Communications Group members	SLB and RTCG	Information discussed to be sent to RTCG and SLB.
14 August 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
19 August 09	Local Government Reform Joint Forum meeting	Joint Forum newsletter produced by LGSC	Transferring Department staff, local government staff including Council CEX and Change Managers, NILGA members, RTCG and SLB members	Joint Forum	Complete
August 09	Local Government Website Upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
2 September 09	Local Government Reform Joint Forum meeting	Joint Forum newsletter produced by LGSC	Transferring Department staff, local government staff including Council CEX and Change Managers, NILGA members, RTCG and SLB members	Joint Forum	Complete
3 September 09	RTCG	Publication of	RTCG members		

<b>Date</b>	<b>Message/ Event</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>*Sign off /Consultees</b>	<b>Status</b>
	(PwC Steering Group Meeting)	minutes of meeting.		Joint Secretariat	Complete
15 September 09	First meeting of the Local Government Reform Executive Sub Committee	Letter to NILGA and SLB members. Media management as required	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments NILGA members	Minister	Complete
September 09	Minister commences visit to Transition Committees	News release Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Visit to Causeway Coast and Glens 24/9/09
8 October 09	RTCG meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members Change Managers Local Government Reform Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	Complete
14 October 2009	Local Government Reform Joint Forum meeting	Joint Forum newsletter produced by LGSC	Transferring Department staff, local government staff including Council CEX and Change Managers, NILGA members,	Joint Forum	Complete

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			RTCG and SLB members		
20 October 2009	Minister's Statement to the Assembly	Briefing material Press release Media management	All stakeholders	Minister	Complete
October 09	Minister continues visits to Transition Committees	News release Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Ongoing
16 October 09	SLB meeting	Key outcomes and summary document.	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	Complete
27 October 09	Local Government Reform Communications Group meeting		LGR Communications Group members	SLB and RTCG	Complete
November 09	Minister continues visits to Transition Committees	News release Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Ongoing
23 November 09	Second meeting of the Local Government Reform Executive Sub Committee	Briefing note for stakeholders. Media management as required,	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments NILGA members	Minister	Complete
24 November 09	Local Government Reform Joint Forum	Joint Forum newsletter produced	Transferring Department staff,	Joint Forum	Complete

<b>Date</b>	<b>Message/ Event</b>	<b>Method</b>	<b>Audience</b>	<b>*Sign off /Consultees</b>	<b>Status</b>
	meeting	by LGSC	local government staff including Council CEX and Change Managers, NILGA members, RTCG and SLB members		
2 December 09	RTCG	Key outcomes and summary document.	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	Complete
8 December 09	Local Government Reform Communications Group meeting		LGR Communications Group members	SLB and RTCG	Complete
December 09	Minister continues visits to Transition Committees	News release Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Ongoing
9 December 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications	Joint Secretariat	Complete

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			Group		
21 January 10	RTCG	Key outcomes and Summary Document.	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
January 10	Minister continues visits to Transition Committees	News releases to local media Website	All stakeholders	Minister	Ongoing
12 February 10	RTCG meeting. (Ad-hoc meeting to consider Transfer of Functions Working Group report)	Paper to SLB	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members		Complete
25 February 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	
04 March 10	RTCG meeting	Key outcomes and summary document	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments		

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group		
March 10	Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2010 made	Media management Briefing Website	All stakeholders	Minister	
March 10	Local Government (Miscellaneous) Bill comes in to force	Media management News release Press briefing	All stakeholders	Minister	
March 10	Consultation on Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill starts - subject to Executive clearance	Media management News release Website Issued to consultation mailing list	All stakeholders	Minister	
March 10	CEX appointment	Media Management Briefing prepared against enquiry	General Public Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Communicators NILGA		
14 April 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR	Joint Secretariat	

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			Communications Group		
April 10	RTCG meeting	Key outcomes and summary document	SLB RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group		
May 10	Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill introduced to Assembly	Media management as required		Minister	
11 May 10	1 year to Local Government Reform	News release Media briefing Media event Advertising?	All stakeholders	Minister	
May 10	HR and Finance appointments and administrative support.	Media management as required. Support for council internal communications.	Local Government Reform Communication Group NILGA	Minister	
May 10 to May 11	RTCG (or RTC/RTMT) programme of meetings to be confirmed	Key outcomes and summary document	SLB RTCG (or RTC/RTMT) Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members		

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			LGR Communications Group		
23 June 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG (or RTC/RTMT) Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	
July 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
August 10	Statutory Transition Committees in place	Media Management News Release Website	All stakeholders	Minister	
18 August 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTC/RTMT Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	9 December 09
August 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
September 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
13 October 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTC/RTMT Transferring function departments	Joint Secretariat	

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group		
October 10	District Electoral Area Commissioner's Report	Briefing material media management	All stakeholders	Minister	
October 10	Local Government (Finance) Bill comes in to force	Media Management News Release Briefing Website	All stakeholders	Minister	
October 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
15 December 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTC/RTMT Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members LGR Communications Group	Joint Secretariat	
December 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
December 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
February 11	Commencement of media campaign	Various tools including advertising and road shows (funding dependent)	All stakeholders	Minister	
February 11	Transition Committees strike rate for new councils	Media Management News Release Briefing Website	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA	Minister	

Date	Message/ Event	Method	Audience	*Sign off /Consultees	Status
			Council CEX's		
February 11	Continuation of media campaign	Various communications tools (funding dependent)	All stakeholders	Minister	
March 11	Continuation of media campaign	Various communications tools (funding dependent)	All stakeholders	Minister	
April 11	Continuation of media campaign	Various communications tools (funding dependent)	All stakeholders	Minister	
May 11	Local (Government) Reorganisation Bill comes in to force.	Media Management News Release Briefing Website	All stakeholders	Minister	
May 11	Local and Assembly elections	Media Management News Release Briefing Website	All stakeholders	Minister	
May 11	All transfers formally completed. New councils formally take office	Ministerial platform event Briefing Website News release	All stakeholders	Minister	
May 11	Media campaign	Various communications tools (funding dependent)	All stakeholders	Minister	