

COMMUNICATIONS OUTLINE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN – APRIL 2009

Agenda Item: 5

Summary: This paper details the Communications Outline Implementation Plan, highlighting aims, objectives, key messages and stakeholders.

Action: For consideration and agreement. Once agreed, we propose that the plan be remitted to the RTCG for implementation

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.

It should be noted that communications is fast moving, therefore, this plan is organic in nature 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.

The baseline survey and subsequent evaluation reports may also dictate changes to communications activity. In order to react to these changes the communications plan will be frequently amended to take account of recommendations presented.

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.

OBJECTIVES

We propose 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 Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group, which will be directly accountable to the Strategic Leadership Board, as proposed in the in the DOE Communications Strategy and the Joint Communications Framework considered by the Strategic Leadership Board at its last meeting. The plan proposes objectives for Internal, External and Stakeholder groups in the DOE Communications Strategy. Briefly 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 by the Joint Secretariat for the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group meeting on 30 April.

COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Organisation	Key Roles	Activity	Process	Timing
SLB	Communication Strategy and Plan	Set strategy and agree plan	Agree	April 09
	Receive implementation evaluation reports	Oversight	Receive reports	Quarterly

	from RTCG Advice on how any contentious messages can be handled Raise any political or local issues arising out of the ongoing process	Case by case basis Case by case basis	As required As required	As required As required
RTCG	Ensure the effective role out and monitoring of the delivery of the plan Refer any contentious issues /delivery issues to the SLB for consideration	Monitor and evaluate communications activities Highlight areas of conflict	Provide performance reports As required	May 2009 onwards SLB meetings As required
Joint Secretariat	Manage delivery of the communications plan	Monitor and evaluate communications activities Communicate key messages to stakeholders Design responses to Frequently asked questions (Consultation Key stakeholders) Support stakeholders in communications process	External consultancy to monitor Report Maintain Websites Respond to question Manage Local Government Reform Communications	Baseline and periodic survey July/Aug 09 After key meetings and miles stones Ongoing Quarterly /ad hoc as required

		Account to RTCG Ensure Key stakeholders briefed	Group Report Transition committees/CEXs/Transferring functions	Per meeting Ongoing Seminars/events and Visits
DOE	Publish Ministerial/ Departmental Guidance Manage internal and external Consultation processes Communicate with the Public	Ensure DOE policy is communicated Consultation management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition Committees - Severance - Local Government Bills - Boundary Commissioner Report - Council District Rates - CEX Appointment - Electoral Area Report - Community Planning - Elections 	Media management Media management	As required As required As required
NILGA	Ensure local government views are represented	Communicate local government key messages	Newsletter Website Full Members meetings AGM/Conference Visits to Councils	Monthly Regular updates 5 per year Annually Sept/Feb

			Seminars and Events	Annually As required
			Media Management	As required
TC and TMT	<p>Agree Council Cluster Communications Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement /deliver of the plan • Tailor any joint messages to local areas • Address local issues/questions 	<p>Design and deliver the local communication plan</p> <p>Report progress to RTCG/SLB on progress</p>	<p>Implement Communication activities</p> <p>Respond to Consultations</p> <p>Local Media management</p> <p>Participate in monitoring activities</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>As required</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>As required</p>
Councils	To communicate effectively with Members, Staff and the public on local issues	Support local Implementation	<p>Newsletters/ briefings/ website etc</p> <p>Media Management</p>	As required
Transferring Functions	To communicate effectively with staff and the public	Design and deliver function communications plan	<p>Implement Communication activities</p> <p>Media Management</p>	<p>As required</p> <p>As required</p>

KEY MESSAGES

Key messages will be developed in Messaging Workshops with the Local Government Reform Communications Group and then cleared, as appropriate, through the Regional Transition Co-ordinating Group (RTCG), relevant Policy Development Panels (PDPs) and Strategic Leadership Board (SLB). Once approved, these messages will 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.

Assembly

Community representatives

Council Chief Executives (CEX's)

Council Communicators/ Local Government Reform Communications Group – a group set up to help drive communications activity for the Reform programme comprised initially of 26 communications personnel from the councils but changing as quickly as possible to reflect the 11 council model. This will also include representatives from the transferring government departments.

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 (NICCICTU)

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

Annex A

DRAFT COMMUNICATIONS JOINT SECRETARIAT – WORK IN PROGRESS APRIL 2009

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 CEO's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	Complete
10 April 09	SLB Meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring departments Council CEO's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
April 09	Communication on HR issues arising from the Local Government Reform Programme for Local Government	HR FAQ's	Local Government staff Council CEX's Council Communicators	Minister HR Working Group Panel C SLB RTCG	Draft currently with HR Working Group, going to Trade

	employees			NILGA Trade Unions PPMA LGSC PSC NILGOSC CPG Council CEX's Council communicators	Unions next
April 09 (subject to sign off)	HR FAQ's	Internal communication – issued to Council Communicators and CEX's to disseminate.	Local Government staff	Council CEX's Council communicators	
April 09	Consultation on Transition Committees	Consultation mailing list Media management News release Website	Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Council communicators Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups	Minister	In progress

April 09	Consultation on severance arrangements for councillors	Consultation mailing list Media management Briefing material Press briefing Website	Minister HR Working Group Panel C SLB RTCG NILGA Trade Unions PPMA LGSC PSC NILGOSC CPG Council CEX's Elected representatives Council communicators	Minister	In progress
April 09	Local Government Policy Division website upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
30 April 09	RTCG	Key outcomes and summary document.	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	

30 April 09	Communications Plan	Paper to RTCG	RTCG SLB Council CEX's Council Communicators NILGA members	RTCG SLB	
April 09	Joint Communications Framework Principles issued.	Email Website	Council Communicators Transferring function departments NILGA members	SLB (signed off 6 March 09) RTCG (signed off 12 February 09) Revisions signed off by Joint Secretariat.	
April 09	Communication to council communicators and transferring depts to request that they take part in the Local Government Reform Communications Group.	Letter	Council Communicators (cc'd to Council CEX's)	Joint Secretariat	
May 09	Baseline survey – tender document for evaluation.	Invite for external organisations to tender for communication audit.	External organisations from tender list	LGPD Press Office Central Procurement Directorate Minister (possibly) DFP (possibly depending on cost)	

May 09	Local Government website upgrade.	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
May 09					
22 May 09	First meeting of the Local Government Reform Communications Group - Messaging Workshop	Targeted key messages worked up which will be approved and used in all communications to aid consistency of message.	Local Government Reform Communications Group Joint Secretariat	To be cleared at a future RTCG and SLB.	
May 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
May 09	Consultation on Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill starts	News release Media briefing Website Consultation mailing list	General Public Environment Committee Transferring departments NILGA Council CEX's Council communicators Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Political parties Elected	Minister	

			representatives		
May/June 09	Communication on HR issues arising from the Local Government Reform Programme for Central Government employees from transferring function departments	HR FAQ's	Reps from transferring departments Central government employees	Minister HR Working Group Panel C SLB RTCG Trade Unions PPMA PSC NIHE CPG	Ongoing
June 09	Kiosks	Targeted news release Briefing Photo Media management	General Public Environment Committee Transferring departments NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected	Minister Council CEX's Council communicators	

			representatives		
June 09	Local Government Website Upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
June 09	Glossary of Local Government Terms	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	
3 July 09	Local Government Boundary Commissioner final report	Briefing material Media management	General Public Environment Committee NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Elected representatives	Minister	
July 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
14 August 09	Local Government Website Upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
July/ August 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	

August/ September 09	Company selected through tender process for communication evaluation.	Letter/ email	Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat Central Procurement Division (CPD)	
August 09	Baseline survey conducted	Audit of communication knowledge	All Local Government Reform stakeholder groups	Joint Communication Secretariat	
September/October 09	Local Government Website Upgrade	Website	All stakeholders	LGPD	Ongoing
September/ October 09	Results of baseline survey.	Document highlighting key results	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	External organisation Joint Communication Secretariat	
September 09	Amendments/updates to communication plan based on results of baseline survey.	Update plan and communicate changes	SLB RTCG	Joint Secretariat	
25 September 09	Local Government (Boundaries) Order (NI) 2009	Media management Press briefing Website	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts.	Minister	

			NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives		
October 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
6 November 09	Local Government (Contracts) Bill comes in to force	Media management News release Press briefing (Minister-led?)	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform	Minister	

			Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives Political parties		
November 09	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
December 09	Local Government (Finance) Bill introduced to Assembly	??? Comms requirements?	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local	Minister	

			Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives		
11 December 09	Communications audit result	Quarterly snapshot	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	
January 10	SLB meeting	Key Outcomes and Summary Document	RTCG Transferring function departments Council CEX's NILGA members	Joint Secretariat	
January 10	Statutory Committees in place	Media Management News Release Website	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government	Minister	

			<p>Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives</p>		
<p>January 10</p>	<p>Community Planning – Operation Plan for pilots agreed.</p>	<p>Media Management News Release Website</p>	<p>General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected</p>	<p>Minister</p>	

			representatives		
February 10	Staffing issues – staff handover.	Internal communication Letter from Minister????	Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff NILGA	Minister HR Working Group HR Co-ordination Group Panel C SLB RTCG NILGA Trade Unions PPMA LGSC PSC NILGOSC CPG Council CEX's Council communicators	
15 February 10	Communication audit	6 monthly report	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	
March 10	Councils strike District rate	Media Management News Release	General Public Environment Committee	Minister	

		Briefing Website			
April 10	CEX appointment	Media Management Briefing prepared against enquiry	General Public Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Communicators NILGA	Minister	
April 10	Local Government (Finance) Bill comes in to force	Media Management News Release Briefing Website	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community Groups	Minister	
May 10	Community	Media	General Public	Minister	

	Planning/Pilots start	Management News Release? Briefing	Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups		
11 May 10	Local Government (Reorganisation) Bill introduced to Assembly	Media Management News Release Website	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government	Minister	

			<p>staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives</p>		
May 10	1 year to Local Government Reform	<p>News release Media briefing Media event Advertising?</p>	<p>General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives</p>	Minister	
June 10	HR and Finance appointments and administrative support.	<p>Media Management Briefing prepared against enquiry</p>	<p>General Public Council CEX's Local Government Reform</p>	Minister	

			Programme Communication Group NILGA		
June10	District Electoral Area Commissioners Report	Briefing material Media management	General Public Environment Committee NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Elected representatives	Minister	
June 10	Communication audit	Quarterly snapshot	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	
July 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
August 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
August 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
September 10	Communication audit	6 monthly report	SLB RTCG Local	Joint Secretariat	

			Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's		
October 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
Nov 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
December 10	Media campaign	Preparation			
December10	Community Planning – assessing lessons learned from pilots and establishing policy and operational framework for new Council Estates Accommodation – Estates strategy including detailed inventory of property and costs.	Media Management News Release Briefing Launch event	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group SLB RTCG Local Government staff Private and voluntary sector Community Groups Elected representatives	Minister	

			Political parties		
Dec 10	Communication audit	Quarterly snapshot	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	
January 11	Media campaign	Preparation			
February 11	Commencement of media campaign	Various tools including advertising and roadshows	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 Council CEX's	Minister	
February 11	Communication audit	6 monthly report	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	

March 11	Continuation of media campaign	Various tools including advertising and roadshows	All stakeholders	Minister	
April 11	Continuation of media campaign	Various tools including advertising and roadshows	All stakeholders	Minister	
April 11	Communication audit	Quarterly snapshot	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	
May 11	Continuation of media campaign	Various tools including advertising and roadshows	All stakeholders	Minister	
May 11	Local (Government) Reorganisation Bill comes in to force.	Media Management News Release Briefing Website	General Public Environment Committee Transferring depts. NILGA Council CEX's Council communicators Local Government staff	Minister	

			Private and voluntary sector Community groups Elected representatives Political parties		
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	
September 11	Media campaign	Various tools including advertising and roadshows	All stakeholders	Minister	
	Communication audit	Final report	SLB RTCG Local Government Reform Programme Communication Group Council CEX's	Joint Secretariat	