INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Executive summary

1. Leadership Group considered the Review of Internal Communications report at its last meeting. It asked that recommendations under the section entitled ‘Feedback, Measuring and Improvement’ be revised. This paper sets out the context in which this section of recommendations was developed and suggests a revision to the recommendations based on this context and Leadership Group’s comments at the last meeting.

2. Leadership Group is invited to approve the revised recommendations.

3. Leadership Group is also asked to agree the proposed next steps for implementing the recommendations and how to communicate the recommendations to staff.

Contact: Mary Ann Masson (x85304)

Issues and Options

4. Revised recommendations under “Feedback, Measuring and Improvement” appear at Annex A.

5. The changes to the recommendations, in summary are:

   - A clarification of what the purpose of LG Drop-Ins is and how they would differ from other feedback mechanisms. The purpose is to help the organisation’s leaders to communicate topical issues and change in a face to face setting. This is self–selecting, although we will aim to promote arrangements which make it an attractive opportunity for staff. The feedback from staff was that they did appreciate the drop-ins.

   - Revision of the recommendation for LG members to take feedback from staff. This would now take the form of an LG member hosting a meeting (probably of around 8 to 10 staff) with the purpose of taking feedback and discussing issues staff wish to raise. We aim to develop an approach so that a wider cross section of staff gets the opportunity to participate. It would not be based on a Group Head’s functional area. We’d envisage this being quarterly.

   - A clarification that measurement of the internal communications would be undertaken as part of the staff satisfaction survey which was currently being scoped by HR.

6. LG is asked to consider all the recommendations in this section in the context of:

   - the findings of the “Defining Leadership and Management” (Action Learning Sets) consultation.
• the evidence presented in the Review of Internal Communications report;

**Defining Leadership and Management**

7. At the beginning of this year, the Organisational Development programme facilitated a consultation with staff at grade 5 and grade 6 to take views on the approach to leadership and management in the organisation. LG (2017) Paper 019 set out a summary of the findings and drew a number of key points to LG’s attention. The paper stated that there was:

“a perception among LAN colleagues that LG is not always committed to change initiatives or does not take the time to ensure that change is fully communicated, understood and embedded.”

8. The paper’s annex listed a full list of themes raised at the consultations. The points relevant to our recommendations are:

**Developing leaders and managers**

- Leaders don’t ask for feedback on how they are doing as leaders
- LAN would be more useful if it focused on collaboration and networking/relationship building

**Behaviours**

- Leaders don’t check that communications have “landed” and been fully understood before being cascaded further
- LG members not good at casual conversations with staff around the building
- Tendency to avoid challenge and conflict

**Decision-Making**

- Organisational priorities need more thought/collaboration/planning; lack of transparency in developing the strategic plan
- Too much change at once/arbitrary deadlines/no time to embed before next change rolled out/not always adapted to local needs
- Mixed messages from LG when communications are poor – do they believe in the change?

9. Following on from this, the internal communications group found the same key themes of feedback being highlighted through its work. For instance, the following statements were recorded during our consultations

- Not all Leadership Group members are visible or available
- There should be a consistent approach to communication at Leadership Group level
- There is an assumption that information is being cascaded but this is not always the case – it is important to check that the message gets through and how it lands
- Leadership Group need training to communicate well as they should be models of good communication for the rest of the organisation
• We need to effect a fundamental change in attitude – staff views and input should be genuinely welcomed

• We need to do more and better with lessons learned – capture, share and put them into practice

• There is a lack of transparency about when to give feedback and what feedback to give

• Consultation is sometimes seen as a "box-ticking" exercise. Lack of consultation has led to poor decision/processes especially in operational areas. Implications of this have been serious for the provision of business services.

• There is a perception that decisions are often already made and won’t be influenced by feedback

• [Things work well when] staff are specifically encouraged to feed up their views. However, this does not always happen, is inconsistent and personality driven.

• There is a reluctance to embrace healthy conflict or receive and respond to feedback which is seen as negative

10. It is also worth noting that Grades 7 and 8 were consistently positive in responses throughout the staff internal communications survey suggesting that there is a disconnect between communication available to them and to other SPS staff which needs to be bridged

11. With this staff feedback in mind, LG is asked to endorse the revised recommendations which will provide LG with two vehicles for meeting with staff and listening to them in an informal setting. The implementation of 2 different, visible ways for LG to engage as members of the Leadership Group, rather than Group Heads, with different cross sections of staff is also likely to send a positive message to staff about LG’s commitment to acting on the feedback already received through the internal communications and the organisational development programme. The Chief Executive/Clerk and ACEs would also play an active role in these initiatives.

**Resource Implications**

12. The LG staff meetings will occur once a quarter. The LG Drop-Ins will happen on an ad-hoc basis as themes emerge but are likely to be 4-6 months on average. These will be attended by, on average, 3 LG members.

**Dependencies**

13. The new Internal Communications function would work with Leadership Group to support it in fulfilling its responsibilities in this area. It would also advise on the themes for LG Drop-Ins, capture actions and support LG members in following up these actions.

**Governance issues**

14. Internal Communications is an essential part of good governance. The issues drawn out in this paper have come from two significant consultations with staff covering their views on communications and on leadership and management in the organisation.
Publication Scheme
15. This paper can be published.

Communications
16. If Leadership Group is happy to endorse the Review of Internal Communications report with the revised recommendations above, the next step would be to communicate the recommendations to staff. Key messages and support will be supplied by the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office.

Channels

- Message to staff from Leadership Group with promise to speak to staff about this at team meetings—w/b 2 October
- LG members to speak to staff at Group/Office meetings about the key messages from the internal communications report and the behaviour changes we will need to make to improve internal communications.
- Followed up in corporate bulletin (reminder of report and request for staff to assist and LG members’ intention to speak to staff about it) early October and repeated
- SP Snippets (following development of implementation plan) – November, December (awareness raising on new communications function, communications tips)

Next steps
17. The next steps are:

- Communicate the report recommendations to staff by early October with key messages provided to LG by the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office
- Produce an implementation plan, with the working group, by end of October to be circulated to Leadership Group for information.
- Create a steering group to carry forward the work in the implementation plan
- Develop a Snippets session on Internal Communications for November/December and to be repeated in 2018

Decision
18. Leadership Group is asked to approve the revised recommendations in the report and to agree to the next steps outlined above.

Office of the Clerk/Chief Executive
September 2017
Recommendations on Feedback, Measuring and Improvement

**Objective 1: Improve understanding of what the Parliament is trying to achieve and how your role supports this.**

- **R21.** Introduce a set of specific measurement indicators to measure success against strategy that can be monitored and reported on via the Quarterly Performance Report.

- **R22.** An on-going and formal assessment of how staff feel about internal communications is required. This to be achieved in liaison with Human Resources who are currently scoping the next staff satisfaction survey.

**Objective 2: Improve a sense of community/belonging**

- **R23.** Leadership Group Drop-Ins to be re-established, re-structured and themed. The purpose of the drop-ins would be to provide staff with the opportunity to meet with between 2 and 4 Leadership Group members in a room in an informal setting to discuss a particular topic. The purpose is to help the organisation’s leaders to communicate topical issues and change in a face to face setting. This is self–selecting, although we will aim to promote arrangements which make it an attractive opportunity for staff.

**Objective 3: Improve collaboration to deliver our work**

- **R24.** Support a new staff body to replace the current staff forum.¹ We propose that one of its objectives should be to support the delivery of the internal communications strategy by acting as a sounding board for proposals, providing a feedback loop and administering the quarterly feedback interviews (recommendation 25).

**Objective 4: Reinforce and support our values**

- **R25.** One member of Leadership Group (on a rotational basis) to host a meeting of around 8-10 staff on a quarterly basis to sit down, listen and engage with staff on feedback and issues they wish to raise. We would develop an approach so that a wider cross section of staff gets the opportunity to participate. It would be a cross section of staff, not a Group Head’s functional area.

¹ *Focus Group Summary – Feedback and Consultation*
R26. Leadership Group and other managers to be clear about whether staff are being consulted or informed about a decision. If consultation is sought, ensure that there is sufficient lead time to undertake the consultation and review findings before a decision is taken or a plan developed. Also to ensure that staff hear the outcome of the consultation they have been involved in.

R27. The working group leading on developing the organisation’s values to consider how our values might support a feedback and consultation culture.