INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN THE SPS

Executive summary

1. At its meeting on 31 January 2011, the Leadership Group considered a paper on options for the future management of internal communications within the Scottish Parliamentary Service (SPS). LG was asked to consider the effectiveness of internal communications within the SPS as well as the next steps in relation to the Internal Communications Strategy (ICS).

2. At the January meeting, LG recognised that significant improvements to internal communications had been made in recent years, but that more still needed to be done in order to reflect the revised structure and focus of the organisation. This paper invites LG to consider the next steps in relation to internal communications and the proposed six monthly communications plan.

Issues and Options

3. As a result of the recent review of corporate support functions (the ‘other’ offices review), responsibility for monitoring and maintenance of the ICS moved from SCMO to the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office. Since taking over responsibility for the strategy, and internal communications more generally, the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office has been considering the future of internal communications in light of the impact of the Change Management Programme and the revised Strategic Plan.

Role and Future of Internal Communications Strategy

4. The current ICS was established as part of the Corporate Change Programme and was designed to reflect and support the management structures which were established as a result (SLT and OMG). It also reflected feedback received during the 2008 Survey of Members Needs relating to communication to Members and their staff. The strategy was designed to have a broad scope with a small number of key principles which complemented the Strategic Plan and risk register in place at the time.

5. At the meeting on 31 January 2011, LG considered the strategy and agreed that this should be revised to increase its relevance and usefulness. Whilst it is clear that changes need to be made to the strategy, there still remains a question about the timing for making these changes.

6. There is no doubt that the organisation has changed significantly since the ICS was first developed. The results of the VER/VES scheme and
the on-going Change Management Programme mean that the shape of the SPS will continue to change in the months to come.

7. The importance of responsiveness and agility in taking the organisation forward have been reflected in the new Strategic Plan which contains a clear vision and values and the revised ICS will need to reflect these new values. There is no doubt that the ICS will become increasingly important in helping the organisation move forward. For example, there will be a greater need to ensure that the bigger corporate messages are communicated to all staff before these are tailored to give context and understanding within groups.

8. However, the Change Management Programme is not yet completed and so the final shape of the organisation is not yet known. In addition, the Strategic Plan has not yet been launched and so has not yet had an opportunity to ‘bed in’ and so there is perhaps a case for postponing the review of ICS until early next year.

9. LG is invited to discuss the issues raised and consider the next steps. There are three options:

- Undertake a ‘light touch’ review now such as making the revisions required to reflect the new management structures and Strategic Plan and undertaking a larger scale review following completion of the Change Management Programme.
- Undertake a full review now, including discussing the plan with stakeholders, followed by a review once the Change Management Programme has been completed.
- Leave the plan as it is and undertake a review once the Change Management Programme has been completed.

**Internal Communication in the SPS**

10. In considering the internal communications in January, LG was asked to consider the devolution and ownership of communication. LG was clear that it had responsibility for leading communication. Given this role, it has been suggested that it would be beneficial for a communication plan to be developed to give LG overview of the timing and subject of messages due to be issued. This plan, which would be reviewed by LG twice a year, would be maintained by the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office. It would include all planned Chief Executive messages to staff and as well as those relating to corporate projects – such as the Change Management Programme - and those coming from other offices.

11. A draft plan is attached at annex A and, following initial discussion at LG, this would be developed more fully with a final version being circulated for comment/approval. LG is invited to comment on the plan and discuss any possible additions.
**Resource Implications**

12. As was stated above, responsibility for internal communications has moved from SCMO to the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office. The current strategy, developed by SCMO (then SDO) took a significant amount of staff time to develop as well some considerable time for SLT to consider, refine and agree it. A full scale review would have an impact on the Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office as it continues to implement the outcomes of the review of corporate functions ('other' offices review).

**Dependencies**

13. No specific dependencies have been identified around this paper, although the ICS itself has a degree of interdependency with the Performance Management System. It is also used as a point of reference in a number of internal training courses. Depending on the decision taken by LG, some minor revisions may be required to associated policy documentation and training materials.

**Governance issues**

14. There are no specific governance issues relating to this paper, although there may be a requirement to carry out some further work based on decisions taken by LG. For example, an EQIA would need to be undertaken in the event of significant changes to, or the replacement of, the ICS.

**Publication Scheme**

15. This paper may be published in line with the SPCB publication scheme.

**Next steps**

16. The next steps are to be agreed by Leadership Group as discussed under ‘Issues and Options’ above.

**Decision**

17. The Leadership Group is invited to:

- Discuss and agree the next steps in relation to the Internal Communications Strategy as set out in paras 4-9 of this paper; and
- Discuss and comment on the proposed communications plan.

Clerk/Chief Executive’s Office  
September 2011
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<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
<th>Action/Subject</th>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<td>Late September/Early</td>
<td>Strategic Plan ‘launch’</td>
<td>SPCB Staff (plus Members?)</td>
<td>CE Office/Stewart Gilfillan</td>
<td>Message to ‘launch’ Strategic Plan following SPCB approval</td>
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<td>October</td>
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<td>Mid October</td>
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<td>All Users</td>
<td>CE Office</td>
<td>Message following the launch of the new website and intranet</td>
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<td>SPCB Budget Bid</td>
<td>SPCB Staff (plus Members?)</td>
<td>CE Office</td>
<td>CE Message following the submission of the SPCB’s budget bid to Finance Committee</td>
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<td>Christmas Message to</td>
<td>SPCB Staff</td>
<td>PO’s Office</td>
<td>Message from the PO to staff ahead of Christmas recess</td>
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<td>Mid January</td>
<td>Possible CE Message</td>
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<td>CE Office</td>
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<td>to Staff</td>
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<td>March /April</td>
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<td>SPCB staff</td>
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<td>Communication of the savings and the changes to services where they impact on Members</td>
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