Towards One Council
Draft Transitional Communications Strategy

1.1 Aim

The aim of this strategy is to successfully communicate and engage with internal and external stakeholders during the transition to One Council.

The focus of the Transitional Communications Team will be to make One Council a locally, regionally and nationally recognised and highly regarded organisation. Our stakeholders will have a clear understanding of the purpose and aspirations of One Council and will feel engaged in its development and success.

1.2 Objectives

- To ensure communications across the five organisations are consistent, timely and use an appropriate variety of media
- To communicate with all stakeholders, meeting their specific needs
- To be open, transparent and accessible in all communications
- To ensure two way exchange of information and opinion
- To minimise adverse effects of change and inspire confidence in the vision of one council
- To support meaningful and constructive consultation, both internally and externally, in shaping the new organisation
- To champion the work of the transition to One Council and to celebrate achievements during the transition period
- To provide a structure and the necessary guidance to enable partners to deliver clear and consistent messages,

1.3 Scope

This strategy covers transitional communications only including:

- Vision and objectives of the transition to One Council
- Reputation
- External Communication of the transition to One Council
- Internal Communication of the transition to One Council
- One Council campaigns up to April 2009

Communications activities that will reach beyond April 2009, such as the structure of the communications function and branding of the new council, will be dealt with by the Communications Workstream. The two teams will work together and will combine on projects where appropriate.

2 Background

This strategy sets out how the communication objectives for the transition to One Council will be achieved.

Key messages will be agreed throughout the transition period by the Implementation Executive and Joint Implementation Team (JIT). This Communications Strategy sets out the tools and tactics required to communicate these messages and objectives to all stakeholders.

2.1   Who are we trying to reach?

The Transitional Communications Team aims to communicate and engage with:

- Council tax payers and residents living and working in Wiltshire (reflecting equality and diversity policies of all five authorities)
- Staff of all five authorities – Kennet District Council, North Wilts District Council, Salisbury District Council, West Wilts District Council, Wiltshire County Council
- Members of all five authorities
- Town and parish councils
- Local businesses (via Chamber of Commerce, FOSB)
- Voluntary sector
- Armed forces
- User groups & community groups
- PCT, fire authority, ambulance, police, army
- Media regional/national
- MPs - Government and MPs to promote the county and seek recognition of good practice.

2.2   What are our messages?

The key communications messages will be set by the Implementation Executive and the Joint Implementation Team. These will be reviewed on a weekly basis.

The focus of the Transitional Communications Team will be to make One Council a locally, regionally and nationally recognised and highly regarded organisation. Our stakeholders will have a clear understanding of the purpose and aspirations of One Council and will feel engaged in its development and success.

2.3   How will we reach people?

A wide range of methods will be used to target stakeholders. A strakeholder media matrix has been produced as an appendix to this strategy (Appendix B). The matrix details the information and issues that affect stakeholders, the

range of media that will be used to reach each group and the key dates and regularity of contact for each group.

The following methods will be utilised in the marketing plan.

- Extranet
- The Mag and other council staff bulletins across all five authorities
- Face2Face meetings
- Roadshows/presentations/events
- One Council newsletter
- One Council for Wiltshire website
- Member newsletter and other council bulletins from all five authorities
- Parish Council newsletter
- Parish and Town Council meet and greets
- Press releases to local and national media including radio and TV
- Press releases to specialist media eg RNIB newsletter, DB8
- Campaigns
- Tools used by the individual authorities eg council intranets, newsletters, focus groups

3. Risk analysis

Key issues that are likely to result in press attention include:
Council Tax levels
Cost of the transition
Service level in different areas
Council Tax equalisation
Balances
Transfer of assets
Grants to voluntary sector
Staff redundancies, vacancies, morale, senior management pay-offs
Housing tenants in Salisbury
Leisure centres
What happens to revenue eg car parking revenue?

Actions have been identified in the action plan (appendix A) to ensure that adverse affects of change are identified and remedied. The One Council risk register will be used as a source for identifying future risks.

4. Cost

The total cost of the transitional communications plan is estimated at £32,700.

5. Structure and membership of the Transitional Communications Team

Each of the five Wiltshire authorities will be represented on the Transitional Communications Team, with the Transitional Communications Manager

responsible for implementation of the transitional Communications Strategy and action plan.

Decisions will be made jointly by the team, with significant decisions referred to the JIT.

6.   Implementation and review

The action plan sets out the specific tasks required to implement the objectives of the strategy. The Transitional Communications team will implement the strategy.

The team has set some measures to monitor whether it is achieving the communication objectives set out in this strategy.
- Monitoring usage of Extranet
- Monitoring usage of One Council website
- Monitoring online forum on Extranet
- Analysis of attendance and awareness of issues at F2F sessions
- Analysing numbers of people at public events/exhibitions
- Numbers of One Council emails/correspondence to Programme Office
- Numbers of One Council queries to Customer Care Unit and call centres across all five authorities
- Monitoring and assessing press coverage
- Regular polls to record satisfaction of the Extranet and One Council website

The results of these measures will be regularly reported to the JIT.

Appendix A:
Transition communications action plan

Objectives:
1. To ensure communications across the five organisations are consistent, timely and use an appropriate variety of media
2. To communicate with all stakeholders, meeting their specific needs
3. To be open, transparent and accessible in all communications
4. To ensure two way exchange of information and opinion
5. To minimise adverse effects of change and inspire confidence in the vision of one council
6. To support meaningful and constructive consultation in shaping the new organisation
7. To champion the work of the transition to One Council and to celebrate achievements during the transition period
8. To provide a structure and the necessary guidance to enable partners to deliver clear and consistent messages

Action	Lead Officer	Timescale	Resource	Monitored by	Aim	Completed
Establish Transitional Communications Team and protocols	Sally Hendry	Complete	Officer Time	Joint Implementation Team (JIT)	1 - 8	✓
Produce fortnightly summary of new information from IE, JIT and workstreams.	Cath Hasted (CH) Claire Adams (CA)	Fortnightly	Officer time	Ian Cook (IC)	1 & 2	
Circulate the above information to stakeholders, using the stakeholder matrix to determine choice of media. Circulate to TCT/JIT	CH	Fortnightly	Officer time	IC	1,2,3,4,5,7,8	
Reputation						
Capture vision and key messages of One	CH	ASAP once determined by	Officer time	IC	1,2,3,5,7,8	

Council		the Implementation Executive (IE)				
Work with workstreams to identify potential issues and plan in each workstream communications plan, how to minimise the impact of each issue	CA	Ongoing	Officer time	CH/IC	5	
Respond to all press enquiries within an hour.	Low risk press releases signed off by CH. Medium risk sign off by IC. High risk sign off by George Batten or member of JIT	Ongoing	Officer time	IC/JIT	5	
Maintain a 'rumour buster' spreadsheet. All JIT/Workstream members report to CH/CA any rumours. Each rumour assessed and action planned as required. Also, rumour buster e-mail address to feature on Extranet.	CH	Ongoing	Officer time	JIT	5	
External Communication						
Update the Towards One Council website	CA	Fortnightly	£1,500	CH/IC	2,3,7	

Regular One Council entry in Wiltshire magazine	CH	Each edition	Officer time	IC/JIT	2,3,5,7	
Regular crib sheets/briefings to front line services across all authorities	CH/CA	Quarterly	Officer time	CH/IC	2,7	
Produce positive press releases	CH/CA	Minimum monthly	Officer time	IC	2,3,5,7	
People's Jury PR	CH/CA	Launch Dec 08	Officer time	IC	2,3,6	
Newsletter to Members	CA	Fortnightly	Officer Time	CH/IC	2,3,4,5,7	
Update to MPs	TBC	Biannually	Officer time	TBC	2,3,4,5,7	
Newsletters to parish and town councils	CH/CA	Ongoing monthly	Officer time	C	2,3,4,5,7	
Presentations at parish/town/ business groups/voluntary organisations	JIT	Ongoing	Officer time	CH/IC	2,3,4,5,6	
New leaflet designed and printed	CA	Spring 08	?		2,3,5	
Promote consultation activity of workstreams	CA	As required	Officer time	CH	3,4,6	
Internal Communication						
One Council newsletter	CH/CA	Fortnightly	Officer time	IC	1,2,3,5,7,8	
Extranet – restructure to increase ease of use and number of users.	ET CA to do blog	1st Feb 08	£1000	CH/IC	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	

Include blog from Jane Scott. Campaign to re-launch.	TCT					
Online discussion forum. Identify threads needing responses and push out to workstreams	CA	Daily monitoring	Officer time	CH/IC	1,2,3,4,5	
Regular information bulletins to staff in Friday e-bulletin (WCC), District Council bulletins and though other internal communication mechanisms used by the five authorities	ongoing	CH/CA	Officer time	IC	1,2,3,5,7	
Face2Face sessions	Emma Vowles, promoted by Transition Communications Team (TCT)	Next round spring 08	?	IC	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
News and Views monthly reports to	CA	Monthly	Officer time	CH	2,3,4,5,6,7	

contain Towards One Council updates (WCC)						
The Mag staff magazine (WCC). Produce 4 page One Council pull out. Print in magazine and produce 2000 run on for all DC staff	CH/CA	Jan/Feb 08 and quarterly	£3200	IC/JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Recorded information line re F2F sessions	CA	Ongoing	Officer time	CH	2,4	
Staff consultation exercises	TCT	As required (extranet questionnaire completed Nov)	Officer time	CH	4,6	
Regular member briefings about key One Council issues and progress	JIT	Monthly	Officer Time	IE	2,7	
Campaigns - It is widely recognised that people generally need to hear/see a message many times before they remember it						
Campaign to launch the Bright Ideas staff suggestion scheme	TCT supporting Vanesther Rees	January 08	£1000	JIT	4,5,6,7	
Campaign to raise awareness of the BMP system selected by One Council	TCT supporting BMP workstream	Spring 08	£2000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Campaign to promote community area boards (engaging all stakeholders)	TCT Supporting CLG workstream	Spring 08	£5000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Campaign to increase	TCT supporting Iain	TBC	£2000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	

public understanding of budget and council tax changes	Winterbottom					
Campaign to increase staff networking	TCT	Summer 08	£1000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Member recruitment campaign, pre-election	TCT supporting CLG workstream	TBC	£1000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Campaign to increase election turnout	TCT supporting CLG workstream	Dec 08	£3000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Raise profile of success of One Council at a national level	CH/CA	Dec 08	£2000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Wiltshire family campaign with the Gazette and Herald (offer free leisure for a year?)	CH/CA	Summer 08	£1000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Media campaign to get public involved in consultation – customer access. SNAP survey and consultation boxes around district	TCT/workstreams	Spring 08	£4000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
Additional campaigns as required	TCT/Workstreams	Until 2009	£5000	JIT	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	

Appendix B:

Towards One Council stakeholder matrix

Stakeholder group	Interest/Information requirements	Priority High 1 – Low 4	Media	Regularity/ Key dates
Residents & Council Tax payers	Impact on existing services• location and organisation of new structures• new structures/boundaries• impact on jobs• new arrangements– access to services• boundary issues• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	1	Council Tax leaflet Press releases One Council website Community event Council magazines Parish magazines Campaigns (see action plan) Invitation to Community Area events	Review fortnightly - see action plan
Staff	Implementation timetable• location and organisation of new structures• impact on existing services• location and organisation of new structures• new structures/boundaries• impact on jobs• new arrangement – access to services• progress	1	Extranet Face2Face Towards One Council newsletter Individual Council staff bulletins The Mag	Review fortnightly - see action plan

	with legislation• boundary issues• roles and responsibilities of new bodies			
Members	Implementation timetable, impact on existing services• location and organisation of new structures• new structures/boundaries• impact on jobs• new arrangement – access to services• progress with legislation• boundary issues• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	1	Announcements Seminars Briefings Newsletter One Council website Invitation to Community Area events Campaigns	Review fortnightly - see action plan
Town & Parish Councils	Implementation timetable• impact on existing services• location and organisation of new structures• new structures/boundaries• new arrangement – access to services• progress with legislation• boundary issues• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	1	Briefings Parish Council Newsletter Invitation to Community Area events Campaigns One Council website	Review fortnightly - see action plan
Businesses	Business rates• grants and funding•Impact on existing services• new arrangement – access to services• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	3	Council Tax leaflet? Press releases Community Area events	Review fortnightly
Voluntary sector	Funding & grants•Implementation timetable• impact on existing services• location and organisation of new structures• new structures/boundaries• new arrangement – access to services• boundary issues• roles	2	E-mail articles to Community First and Voluntary Action Kennet, for inclusion in their newsletters,	Review fortnightly

	and responsibilities of new bodies		Promote One Council Website, invitation to Community Area events	
User groups & community groups across all Wiltshire	Impact on existing services• new arrangement – access to services• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	2	Promotion of One Council website to the specific groups (use existing posters)	Review fortnightly
PCT, fire, police, NHS, army Salisbury Trustees	Implementation timetable• location and organisation of new structures• new structures/boundaries• new arrangements – access to services• progress with legislation• boundary issues• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	1	Promotion of One Council website to the specific groups (use existing posters)	Review fortnightly
County media	Costs•New structures/boundaries• impact on jobs• new arrangement – access to services• boundary issues• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	1	Regular tailored press releases	Review fortnightly
Regional/National media	Impact on jobs• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	3	Regular tailored press releases	Review fortnightly
MPs, Government & professional bodies	Promote county and seek recognition of good practice• progress with legislation• roles and responsibilities of new bodies	2	Regular tailored press releases	Review fortnightly

Diversity needs

Members of all the above stakeholder groups may also belong to one of the categories below (based on equality and diversity policies of the five authorities)

Stakeholder group	Interest/Information requirements	Priority High 1 – Low 4	Mechanisms	Regularity/ Key dates
Young people	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above	As per stakeholder group	Articles in DB8	As appropriate
Older people	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above	As per stakeholder group	Ensure availability of large text, accessibility assessments at events and promote information to Age Concern, U3A groups and other appropriate groups	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above
Black and minority ethnic groups	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above	As per stakeholder group	Consult with WREC about best mechanisms to reach these groups. Promote availability of information in additional languages	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above
People with disabilities	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above	As per stakeholder group	Ensure availability of large text, accessibility assessments at events	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above

			and promote information to disability groups (eg RNIB, RNID, talking newspaper)	
Same sex groups	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above	Consult with relevant body for advice and guidance	As per relevant stakeholder group listed above