Inverness Community Partnership

Image courtesy of High Life Highland

Communications Plan

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Introduction

Community Planning is described by the Scottish Government as being:

"…about how public bodies work together with the local community to plan for, resource and provide or secure the provision of services which improve local outcomes in a local authority area, with a view to reducing inequalities.'

The Inverness Community Partnership members have taken the decision to create a bespoke **communications plan** for their particular partnership area that will ensure local communities are engaged and fully informed as to the aims, objectives and outcomes delivered by the partnership.

Objectives

The members of the Inverness Community Partnership are keen to ensure that a clear, concise and consistent message is presented in an easy-to-understand way to communities across the Inverness area.

This **communications plan** will assist in outlining:

- The target audiences;
- The key messages to be presented by the members of the partnership;
- Channels of communication;
- Responsibilities for message communications; and
- The messaging approval processes.

Target Audience

The target audiences for this communications plan will include but not be exclusively limited to the following (in no particular order):

- Staff and volunteers associated with members of partnership - **internal**;
- Members of the community – **external**;
- Press and media – **external**;
- Organisations/groups not directly involved or represented on the Community Partnership – **external**;
- Other Community Partnerships across the Highlands – **internal/external.**

Key messaging from Community Partnership

Plain English

The members of the Inverness Community Partnership were keen to ensure that communities viewed the information flow as being:

- Open;
- Transparent;
- Factual;
- Clearly presented;
- Easily understood;
- Useful to communities.

Furthermore, the partnership has agreed that all communications should be presented in ***plain English*** and free from any form of ***jargon***.

Freedom of Information

As all core members on the partnership were subject to ***Freedom of Information*** legislation – it was agreed that the members adopt a default position whereby all information directly associated with the Community Partnership should also subject to the legislation.

Speaking as 'one-voice'

To ensure a **consistent message** and prevent any potential confusion as result of cross-messaging; members of the Community Partnership have agreed that all internal and external communications are presented within the terms of this communications plan.

Individual partnership member's respective Public Relations and Communications teams' are not prevented from referencing any aspirations, decisions or outcomes emerging from the Inverness Community Partnership or from sharing information that is already in the public domain – however they should be sensitive and aware that any individually released information neither creates confusion nor cuts-across information due to be released by the partnership as a whole.

Information to be made available

The partnership members have concluded that the following information will be up-to-date and readily available to the public at all times:

- The function of the Inverness Community Partnership;
- The full membership of the Inverness Community Partnership;
- Purpose and membership of any partnership Sub-Groups;
- How decisions are made by the Partnership;
- Details of any live or previous community engagements;
- Results of any community engagements/consultations;
- Meeting dates;
- Meeting agendas;
- Partnership action notes.

Partnership agendas and minutes/notes

Agenda - The members of the partnership have agreed that all meeting agendas will be made available on the Inverness pages of the Highland Community Planning Partnership website prior to the meeting taking place.

Minutes - Agreement has also been reached by members that the partnership will produce ***Action/Outcome*** notes from any meetings as opposed to formal minutes.

Channels of communication

The members of the Inverness Community Partnership identified the following communication channels as being available to support with the delivery of key internal and external messaging:

- Face-to-face meetings/consultations;
- Social media;
- Local press;
- Local radio;
- Television;
- Website(s);
- SMS Text Messaging;
- Email;
- Snail mail;
- Community Councils;
- Local noticeboards;
- Newsletters;
- Promotional merchandising/give-aways;
- Questionnaires/Surveys (digital and in-person);
- Agency project workers.

The above list is not exclusive and the partnership members accept there are many other communications channels available to support their engagement with members of the local community.

However, having considered the priorities around communication channels, the members of the partnership highlighted the following key streams/platforms as the most applicable when resources are factored:

- Local Media – resourced by The Highland Council;
- Website – content creation resourced by all core partners and subsequently input and upload resourced by HLH;
- Notice Boards;
- Community Councils;
- Questionnaires/Surveys.

Social media

The members of the partnership acknowledge the importance of using social media to promote any messaging from the Community Partnership as well as being able to have an online conversation with the communities served.

The partnership agreed that due to the resources required to ensure a positive social media campaign that they would look to work with partnership members and local organisations to support and share messaging on respective social media platforms by supplying appropriate material.

Responsibility for communicating the message

The partnership has agreed to put in place a small 'Editorial Group' made up of members from the core group.

This group will agree the public messaging and how it will be communicated.

Individual Public Relations Teams

While the group recognise that the core members of the partnership each have respective Public Relations and/or Communications Teams – it was felt important that a consistent partnership message was generated – and that the Community Partnership was not used to produce messages that were specific to only a small number of core partners.

Approval process

The members of the partnership have agreed that any messaging (internally or externally) should be generated, approved and released in a timeous manner.

Any approval process should not be unnecessarily delayed by having a complicated process through the various core partners.

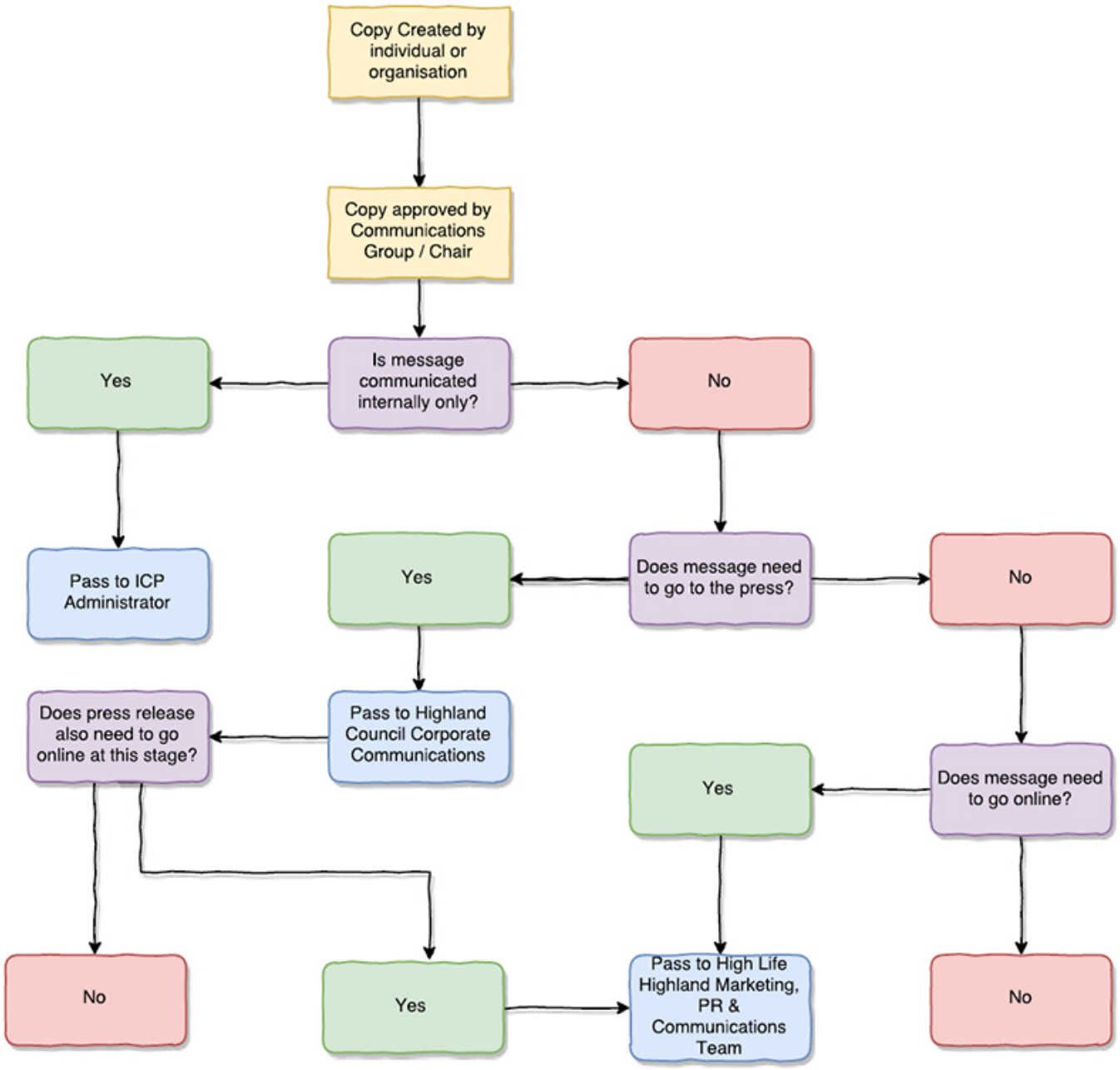
However, it was accepted that the Core members' respective PR/Communications Teams may require input to any overall messaging. However, this should not be part of a formalised approval process – in order to not introduce further layers of potential delays in messaging releases.

Production of copy

It was agreed that the copy for key messaging associated with the partnership will be generated by The Highland Council's Corporate Communications Team. This will be agreed by the partnership's Editorial Group in consultation with the partnership Chair.

Where the messaging involves a particular core partner, then it would be appropriate for that specific partner's PR/Communication Team to contribute to the final message which will be publicly released.

The flow-chart below outlines the proposed approval process for the release of a media release/response and/or public message for use in one of the above communication methods.


Copy Created by individual or organisation
Copy approved by Communications Group / Chair
Is message communicated internally only?
Yes
No
Pass to ICP Administrator
Does message need to go to the press?
Yes
No
Pass to Highland Council Corporate Communications
Does press release also need to go online at this stage?
Does message need to go online?
Yes
No
Yes
Pass to High Life Highland Marketing, PR & Communications Team
No

Implementation and review

The communication plan is designed to ensure a consistent approach to the way in which the Inverness Community Partnership communicates and engages with groups, organisations and individuals in the areas being served.

In order for this communication plan to be effective, the core members of the partnership have agreed a process for:

- Identifying the target audience(s);
- The key messages from the partnership;
- The primary methods of communication;
- Responsibilities for the release of the message(s) from the partnership;
- Agreeing an approval process for release of communications.

Review

This communications plan should be reviewed annually to ensure each section remains current, appropriate and effective.