

PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING THE
LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORKFORCE





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INTRODUCTION

Early in 2018, the Local Government Association (LGA) committed to a refreshed approach for the national strategic pay and workforce priorities for local government, having last produced a strategy some eight years ago. In order to develop the new priorities we undertook an extensive online consultation under the banner 'Great People for Growing Places'.¹ We reviewed our available workforce data and talked to government, professional organisations and senior officers. The consultation is covered in more detail from page x.

Our new shared vision for the workforce local government needs to develop over the next decade is now available. Every council has its own unique challenges and priorities, but an agreed national vision helps us to carry out our work on behalf of the sector and helps us all refine our strategic thinking.

To ensure the strategy's continued relevancy we've taken into account the most pressing issues for councils today; financial pressure, demographic change, technological change, increased demand, changing expectations and Brexit. However, most people recognise that the real measure of success is being able to recruit and retain a workforce with the right skills, that is productive and motivated, and this is best achieved if people enjoy their work, are well trained and supported, understand what is expected of them and what they can expect from their work.

As we increasingly work in partnership we are determined that our new priorities are fit for purpose, making links with the health and social care workforce plans being developed by the NHS and Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). We will engage with issues raised in response to the LGA's own Adult Social Care Green Paper: 'The lives we want to lead'². And as our people are intrinsically part of our communities we will connect to the vision for local skills and economic growth through our Work Local campaign³.

This report does not discuss the issue of workforce planning. It is vital of course that councils work together and with partners to understand the demand for services and consequent future workforce numbers and skills supply needs that they have. The strategic priorities discussed here, however, are about how local government can get the best from its most important asset: its people.

THE NATIONAL VISION FOR THE WORKFORCE AND KEY DELIVERY ROUTES

In setting out the national vision, we recognise that every council and combined authority values what makes their place different; their special circumstances and their unique approaches. These qualities are reflected in their workforce and the challenges they face.

¹ <https://www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/great-people-growing-places-working-together-future-local>

² <https://www.local.gov.uk/lives-we-want-lead-lga-green-paper-adult-social-care>

³ <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/employment-and-skills/work-local>

However, whatever the local circumstances, we believe that every organisation is striving for a workforce that is:

PRODUCTIVE – AFFORDABLE. EFFECTIVE. EFFICIENT. MOTIVATED. FLEXIBLE AND ABLE TO THRIVE IN A DEVELOPING DIGITAL WORLD

JOINED-UP AND COLLABORATIVE – WORKING IN ADAPTABLE STRUCTURES AND TEAMS THAT ARE PROPERLY INTEGRATED ACROSS ALL THE DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES ON A PARTNERSHIP BASIS

INVOLVED IN CO-DESIGNING AND CO-CREATING USER-FOCUSED SERVICES – SO THAT THE IDEAS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE PEOPLE MOST INVOLVED IN SERVICES DAY TO DAY CAN BE FULLY UTILISED IN ENSURING THAT THEIR WORK IS FOCUSED ON WHAT USERS REALLY NEED WITHIN BUDGET CONSTRAINTS

TRULY VALUED AND RESPECTED – SUPPORTED THROUGHOUT THE STAGES OF LIFE AND CAREER AND ABLE TO ENJOY GOOD QUALITY BENEFITS AS WELL AS FAIR PAY

DIVERSE – REFLECTING THE COMMUNITIES IT SERVES AND MAKING USE OF ALL THE TALENT IN THOSE COMMUNITIES.

To help achieve and sustain this shared vision we recommend that all councils and their partners take steps to ensure that it is incorporated into their own local vision and an action plan developed over the next year.

We will commit to a programme of support, together with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), that underpins our improvement work.

Although the vision is a list of positive attributes, it will be challenging to find ways to resource and guarantee the real, sustainable achievement of these aims. For example, having both affordability and fair pay involves trade-offs between competing priorities. True involvement in co-design and the creation of services, involving users, deliverers and managers, is demanding and needs to be properly organised.

To achieve the national shared vision, we believe that local government needs to focus on five key delivery routes designed to bring out the positive workforce attributes we have identified:

GREAT LEADERSHIP THAT IS VISIONARY, AMBITIOUS AND EFFECTIVE: BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF LEADERSHIP SKILLS AT ALL LEVELS

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT THAT IS FOCUSED ON PEOPLE, THEIR WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THAT IS TRULY INNOVATIVE AND FOCUSED ON COMBINING ORGANISATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

IMPROVED RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OUTCOMES BASED ON PROPER PLANNING AND USE OF BEST PRACTICE TECHNIQUES

PAY AND REWARD SYSTEMS THAT ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT, MOTIVATING AND HELPING PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THEIR CAREERS TO DELIVER WORLD CLASS PUBLIC SERVICES.

We recognise that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to a workforce strategy won't work but what we can do at a national level is help to refine strategic thinking and work with others to ensure that ideas, approaches and tools are shared, helping to enhance approaches to workforce development.

CONTEXT

The vision and delivery routes for the local government workforce are based on an assessment of the challenges facing councils as well as available data on the current state of the workforce and responses to our consultation.

With the combined challenges of Brexit and the drive to improve productivity at minimal cost, there is a continued need to reshape and remodel our public services. From Cornwall to Carlisle, local government staff are working with their local communities to deliver the services that matter to them. The sector is already thinking differently about the provision of public services and the need to address the critical challenges, to ensure public services are fit to secure the best possible future for the people of this country.

Local government needs a sufficient, suitably skilled, well-motivated and engaged workforce to continue its work through challenging times. The challenge is considerable with a workforce some 1.5 million strong, with 800 distinct occupations and a pay bill of around £22 billion a year.

THE IMPACT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGE INCLUDING BREXIT

The Brexit agenda serves in some ways to highlight longer term issues in our economy and society around skills and productivity. The workforce must be robust and resilient enough to deal with this new climate. Organisations have already been making profound cultural changes but even deeper change is needed to ensure that the workforce is ready to meet the future.

It is clear that Brexit will bring specific risks as well as opportunities to different localities and there must be continued work to understand

the detail and impact of this. In terms of the local government workforce, one key concern emerging is the recruitment of key specialist staff such as social workers, where there are already recruitment issues irrespective of Brexit.

Over the next 7 years local government faces a funding gap of £7.4 billion. Changes to the financing structure of local government and further uncertainty over social care funding, as well as the impact – both the risks and opportunities – of Brexit on the labour market, combine to make strategic planning and managing risks crucial. There is also a sustained drive to bring in service integration and partnership working under various umbrella policies; plus the implications of devolution. With all this pressure, it is clear that public services will continue to transform.

The world of work is changing as well. Just a few of the things we are already seeing are:

- demographic change, such as shifts in age and ethnicity profiles
- increases to the state pension age
- evolving consumer needs, including on-demand services and gig economy models
- a workforce that will contain multiple generations from Generation Z to those in their 60s, with different needs and expectations
- changing technologies, digital services and automation/robotics.

From these shifts, we can anticipate:

- changing work environments
- changing jobs
- changes to job opportunities due to a greater use of technology

- cross-disciplinary skills changing professional lives
- growing desire for a better work/life balance
- income uncertainty
- a more commercial, income generating approach taken by councils.

IMPROVING PRODUCTIVITY

Although there have been significant efficiency gains over the last decade and more, there is an urgent need to improve business efficiency and therefore productivity even further. Productivity has emerged as a key issue from our discussions with local leaders. There are of course many approaches to improving productivity, including technology and restructuring basic tasks to add greater value. Undoubtedly, reducing employment costs will always be a factor. However, it will be important to focus on making sure people feel more engaged by addressing issues of wellbeing and personal development, as well as making the right investments in technology and processes.

Generally, innovations will only succeed if people are equipped to make use of them. Improved internal communications, effective sickness absence management and promotion of a proper work/life balance are the next most important contributors to productivity beyond development of leadership and management. Training and development of non-managers, proper team-based working and improved recruitment and retention are also regarded as effective in boosting performance and productivity. Good relationships with trade unions and robust inclusion and equality policies are also important in building the positive workplace environment that maximises effective delivery.

WORKFORCE DATA

We made reference to the information gathered by the LGA's annual workforce survey over the last ten years or so in the 'Great People for Growing Places' consultation document. This survey will continue to be a key part of our advice and support offer and will inform national policy discussions. We recommend that the survey is used for benchmarking purposes to inform local discussions as well.

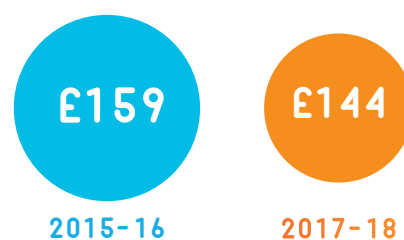
The latest survey covers the year 2016/17 and continues to show that, even allowing for sample differences, the key indicators remain fairly consistent with the picture over the last ten years or so. This suggests that the challenges we have identified remain.

Average **spending on training and development** for employees in respondent councils is lower than for last year's survey although the sample may affect this; what is clear is that no significant increase in expenditure has been contemplated recently, although around half of councils do intend to maintain current levels of spending.

The median gross training expenditure per full time equivalent employee was £144 and just over half (51 per cent) planned to maintain current levels of spending during 2017/18.

In 2015/16, median expenditure was £159.

MEDIAN GROSS TRAINING EXPENDITURE PER FULL TIME EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE



Average **vacancy rates** appear to have risen in the last year but there is **little change in turnover**. It is possible that vacancy rates reflect the availability of jobs in other sectors, especially as the survey shows that recruitment and retention difficulties remain high. Market supplements and targeted recruitment campaigns are the most common responses to difficulties. Turnover was lower in 2009/10.

- In 2016/17 there was a median average labour turnover rate of 13.4 per cent and a median average vacancy rate of 8.9 per cent.
- In 2015/16 there was a median average labour turnover rate of 13.2 per cent and a median average vacancy rate of 5.4 per cent.
- Comparable figures are available for 2009/10 which show a turnover rate of 10 per cent and a vacancy rate of 8 per cent.
- Three quarters of councils (74 per cent) said their council was experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties in 2016/17. In 2015/16, the figure was 71 per cent. In 2009/10, the overall figure was lower at 52 per cent.

The survey looks regularly at **diversity in leadership** by examining the characteristics of top earners. There has been an apparent increase in the percentage of women in the top five per cent of earners – mainly in single and upper tier councils. There is no appreciable change in percentage of people who are black, Asian or from other minority groups and people with disabilities in these top posts.



There has been a marginal reduction in the percentage of **potential working days lost to sickness absence** since 2015/16, although the more straightforward measure of average days lost per FTE employee has remained about the same. Figures for 2011/12 were about the same as the most recent ones.

- On average, 4.3 per cent of days were lost due to sickness and 8.7 days per FTE employee. In 2015/16, 4.9 per cent of days were lost due to sickness and 8.8 days per FTE employee.
- The earliest available comparable figures are for 2011/12 when on average 4.2 per cent of days were lost, 8.4 days per FTE employee.
- The most common cause of sickness absence in 2016/17 was 'stress, depression, anxiety, mental health and fatigue' (28.9 per cent of days lost).

In 2016/17 on average 48.8 per cent of the top five per cent of earners were women, 3.7 per cent were black, Asian or from other minority ethnic (BAME) groups and 2.5 per cent had a disability.

In 2015/16 on average 45.4 per cent of the top five per cent of earners were women, 4.2 per cent were from BAME groups and 3.1 per cent had a disability.

In 2009/10 an average of 40 per cent of the top five per cent of earners in councils were women, an average of 2 per cent came from BAME groups and an average of 3 per cent had a disability.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

Our consultation exercise, conversations and review of workforce data have produced a set of immediate priorities for action which we believe will help local government continue its work on each of the five delivery routes and thereby make progress towards achieving the national vision.

DELIVERY ROUTE 1

Great leadership that is visionary, ambitious and effective; building for the future through the development of leadership skills at all levels.

We have found that:

- an ageing workforce, the rise of digital economies and technological advances, together with continued funding pressures on public services, pose a new set of challenges for 21st century leaders and managers
- as part of their approach to developing skills and capacity across the whole workforce, employers need to ensure that staff at all levels can develop and demonstrate the necessary qualities of leadership.

KEY PRIORITIES:

- managing and developing internal talent, especially those with leadership potential at all levels, requires a renewed focus
- political and managerial leadership development remains a key focus and must involve partner organisations, with particular emphasis on change and performance management and political relationships.

DELIVERY ROUTE 2

Organisational change and development that is focused on people, their wellbeing and resilience.

We have found that:

- councils' understanding of their role has evolved; they are now collaborators and place leaders, rather than simply providing services to communities in a two-way transaction
- organisational development (OD) principles are critical to helping councils go through those changes and ensure that they are rolled out in a way that helps the workforce to deliver optimal results, for example through the development of self-managed teams
- but OD capacity is lacking in many councils
- using OD to address wellbeing and mental health issues can reduce prolonged absences.

KEY PRIORITIES:

- the sector needs to ensure that its workforce development goals are shared and pursued with partners
- there is a need to find ways to help councils develop and access OD capacity
- the basic working culture across local government and its partners still needs considerable change and improvement with a focus on new ways of working, especially in the new digital world
- further research and sharing of information on best and new practice is very important and the LGA needs to lead this on behalf of the sector.

DELIVERY ROUTE 3

Skills development that is truly innovative and focused on combining organisational and individual needs.

We have found that:

- budget reductions have forced many councils to focus skills spending on statutory training at the expense of continuing professional development, but they have focused on areas where there are skills shortages, or when new technology or a new business need is identified
- the key skills gap are commercial skills (how staff can be more innovative, efficient and commercially focused in their job/service) and digital skills (use of digital solutions/services/technologies), along with managers ability to manage change and performance
- occupational skill shortages continue to be seen in the professional areas of local government such as education, children's and adult social work and the regulatory services such as town planning, as well as corporate areas such IT and finance
- by working across organisational boundaries with health and social care partners, skills development can be rationalised and afforded through the apprenticeship levy system
- the use of formal off-the-job training programmes continues to decline; this may be inevitable but well-structured programmes are engaging for individuals and can provide kudos.

KEY PRIORITIES:

- cross-sector work to address organisational skills shortages
- making optimum use of apprenticeships at every level and the development of new pathways
- resources for skills development are strictly limited and so continued innovation in skills programmes is needed, with a particular emphasis on digital and commercial skills.

DELIVERY ROUTE 4

Improved recruitment and retention outcomes based on proper planning and use of best practice techniques.

We have found that:

- the recruitment and retention difficulties for a variety of professional and specialist roles, including social work, planning and building control, are a core challenge
- there has been some emphasis on recruitment, specifically in recent national programmes and campaigns, especially those led by government, with a desire to increase supply, however, the quality of service delivery can suffer if experienced staff leave – a phenomenon that is especially acute in social work
- councils will need to examine incentives and career opportunities, as well as flexible working and the quality of job design to support and nurture employees
- the development of the so-called 'gig economy' is an important factor in general recruitment –many people value the ability to work flexibly

but at the same time councils need to be able to retain people with scarce skills

- the key is to involve people closely in identifying their needs, find realistic ways to address them and create a frame of learning opportunities for employees to develop and follow their passion
- tackling these problems will require a coordinated evaluation of supply issues in education and training, recruitment policies, job design, career structures, rewards and quality of management and leadership.

KEY PRIORITIES:

- working to develop solutions to endemic recruitment and retention problems in key specialisms and continuing to debate what is needed to solve these in the long term
- working to increase the diversity of the workforce, encouraging people from black, Asian and ethnic minority backgrounds and people with disabilities in particular; it is important councils have adequate community representation and reduce their skills opportunity costs
- identifying and addressing the issues that lead to retention problems
- matching flexible working offers to the requirements of the people we want to recruit.

DELIVERY ROUTE 5

Pay and reward systems that attract and retain talent, motivating and helping people throughout their careers to deliver world class public services.

We have found that:

- existing employment benefits, including leave, training and career development are not having a significant impact on motivation and need to be examined as part of a critical appraisal of the overall reward package
- employees want to be provided with good help and support throughout their working lives; councils should look at their whole rewards and benefits package, from the major items like the pension entitlement to smaller offers such as retail vouchers as part of an effort to reward people in a targeted way to help them feel more valued
- the challenge of how to manage pay systems effectively to balance affordability, reward for effort and personal income growth is a continuing one; seven out of ten councils use annual increments, suggesting that most do not think the potential extra costs and equal pay risks of more complex systems are outweighed by gains, or that they do not have the capacity to introduce them
- careful thought is needed across the sector about how to plan for future pay changes; if shortages continue to develop in specialist roles such as planning and building control, reward packages may be needed that focus on these professional roles, as well as the lowest paid
- there is a need for career structures and development opportunities which give proper incentives for people with in-demand skills to come into, and remain in, the workforce.

KEY PRIORITIES:

- further reform of pay structures and systems is needed to make them both fair to individuals (including dealing with the gender pay gap) and relevant to organisational needs
- individuals also need much clearer career structures which demonstrate opportunities and support workforce planning.

Each one of these priorities will require time and resources, though they are familiar and considerable efforts have been put into them already. We recommend that councils review their local approaches to these priorities and set out any necessary plans. To help with this and begin providing support and resources, we have developed a roadmap for delivery.

A ROADMAP FOR DELIVERY

LEADERSHIP

Councils should:

- introduce cross-organisation processes for identifying staff with potential at all levels and provide them with development opportunities
- develop leadership exchange programmes with partner organisations
- take steps to develop common sets of values and behaviours expected of leaders across partnerships
- ensure all senior leaders undergo regular 360 degree appraisal and take part in development programmes.

We have:

- a range of leadership and officer development programmes, including collaboration with SOLACE on the Total Leadership programme.

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Councils should:

- start or further develop local workforce development groups with key partners; there are already some mechanisms in health and care but it makes sense for councils to lead overarching groups looking at engagement across all delivery partnerships, for example housing and joint approaches with fire and rescue authorities
- identify an appropriate group to take responsibility for adopting and adapting the national vision for local use; identify the actions needed under the delivery routes of OD, leadership, etc engage internal and external

stakeholders, including trade unions, from the outset to develop a clear narrative about their pathway to change

- create groups of internal facilitators who can work closely with staff, address their anxieties and encourage their ideas develop or buy-in the right people to communicate clearly with staff and carry out proper scenario planning
- do their best to take part in recommended surveys and data gathering exercises so that local government can be assured of good quality benchmarking.

We have:

- engaged with the DHSC and NHS England in the development of a workforce vision for the NHS and partner organisations
- worked with the Cabinet Office directly, and through the Public Services Forum, a group chaired by the Minister for Implementation, which brings together public service employers and unions to discuss workforce development
- engaged with the Government Equalities Office, Department for Education and trade unions
- supported the sector by providing recruitment, apprenticeships and industrial relations solutions developed a roadmap for change and case studies to support councils (www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/employment-relations/roadmap-change)
- continued to develop resources to help with working in a digital council (www.local.gov.uk/working-digital-council)
- continued to work with the Timewise Council model programme (www.local.gov.uk/timewise-councils-initiative) which helps councils make best use of modern technology to give people

more control over how, when and where they work, and reducing council office estate, as well as creating a more agile and adaptable workforce

- developed online resources to help councils ensure workforce resilience (www.local.gov.uk/wellbeing-and-resilience-work) which is one of the key factors in helping employees to thrive as councils change the way they work; LGA members can take up a Resilience at Work introductory e-learning module free of charge
- developed a re-organisational design tool which establishes the number of layers of management that an organisation needs (www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/local-government-workforce-decision-making-accountability-dma)
- carried out a new census of senior officer groups
- continued to work with the Epaycheck pay database.

We will:

- develop specialised training about compassion fatigue, vicarious stress and trauma for people in the caring professions and for those who are exposed to the distress of others; suitable for those working in social services and social care roles, as well as ancillary functions which may involve exposure to distressing material or scenes
- work with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to deliver Disability Confident Leader support to councils to enable more people with a disability to access work in a digital world
- further develop our annual workforce survey to cover key HR policy developments, as well as accessible benchmark data on key indicators such as sickness absence
- revise the Health-check for Employers of Social Workers as well as the Standards for Employers of Social Workers so that they help inform needs and priorities during changing times
- continue to share best practice examples and case studies on wellbeing and inclusion (www.local.gov.uk/wellbeing-and-inclusion).

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Councils should:

- if they have not already done so, carry out a skills mapping exercise using our skills mapping tool, to match their job roles to the appropriate apprenticeship standards, identifying opportunities for apprenticeships, including for existing staff
- consider developing a multi-year apprenticeships plan that considers the public sector target, available levy contributions, expected spend and potential upskilling or recruitment opportunities
- where possible, put in place a process to ensure that apprenticeships are considered for all new vacancies
- seek to run combined formal training programmes with partner organisations where they are needed
- properly evaluate off-the-job programmes, not just at the end of the event, but through engagement with participants at a later stage.

We have:

- developed an apprenticeships support package for local government, including guidance and toolkits
- achieved support from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to run a pilot programme – the Apprenticeships Accelerator Programme (AAP) – which will provide workforce development support to 25 councils; following a satisfactory evaluation of this pilot, a second phase will be open for up to 40 councils from spring 2019
- produced a film looking at some of the key workforce issues to consider when undergoing digital transformation; contributors include our own experts, the Work Foundation, the British Chamber of Commerce, together with and the experience of councils. (www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/workforce-videos/working-digital-council-video)

We will:

- follow up our film with a series of focused/extended interviews – the first an extended case study, followed by one on skills, and finally the issues around digital services and productivity.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Councils should:

- design jobs with recruitment and retention in mind
- continue to review their recruitment policies and systems against wider practice
- ensure they have a greater understanding of retention issues for example through the use of proper exit interviews

- ensure that flexible working offers are widely available and well understood.

We have:

- developed an independent health and wellbeing review toolkit looking at occupational health, sickness management and wellbeing policies which can help improve employee resilience and so aid retention
- achieved support from the Government Equalities Office to run five ‘return to work’ programmes for the following hard to recruit professions:
 - two to five years career break, cohort 2
 - five to 10 years career break, cohort 1
 - return to local government, ICT
 - return to local government, legal
 - return to local government, planners
- worked with DWP and DHSC to deliver a health, wellbeing and disability summit sharing best practice about healthy and inclusive workplaces where disabled people and people with health conditions can thrive; we are continuing this work with the DWP and DHSC to spread good practice, eg by supporting employer networks and highlighting/signposting information and resources
- worked with DWP to gain its Disability Confident Leader status; we can now support councils in achieving their leader status and in turn support other employers to change the way that they recruit and retain employees with a disability.

We will:

- appoint a senior councillor as a national equality and diversity champion to help drive action in this area
- aim to gather data nationally so councils understand what the diversity picture is like and where they are in relation to it
- ensure that all our surveys include good quality monitoring of the diversity of each segment of the workforce covered, starting with our chief executives and chief officers' census
- aim to support action on the issues through other projects such as the National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp), apprenticeships and leadership development.

PAY AND REWARDS

Councils should:

- take the opportunity to review their approach to career development in the light of any changes to grading structures they may need to make due to the introduction of the new pay spine for the main local government workforce in 2019, which may require some examination of grade lengths and boundaries
- explore the use of simple systems for managing progression based on good quality performance management (www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/research-report-pay-progr-827.pdf)
- focus greater efforts on developing common career structures across shared services and across the public sector, in particular with the NHS and education providers given that the lack of career opportunities within an individual council can be a problem for people

- adopt relevant aspects of the 21st Century Public Servant concept when developing new roles and the careers that go with them, in particular the view that the new public servant must be
- a 'municipal entrepreneur', undertaking a wide range of roles
- capable of engaging with people in a way that expresses their shared humanity and pooled expertise
- recruited and rewarded for generic skills as well as technical expertise
- able to build a career which is fluid across sector and services
- able to combine an ethos of publicness with an understanding of commerciality
- involved in rethinking public services to enable them to survive an era of 'perma-austerity'.

We have:

- continued to develop our advice and information on pay system development for member councils (www.local.gov.uk/our-support/workforce-and-hr-support/local-government-workforce); the team is always happy to visit and discuss issues in more detail
- a variety of resources available on the 21st Century Public Servant (www.local.gov.uk/21st-century-public-servant).

We will:

- work with the Government Equalities Office on a sector-specific webinar and will develop podcasts and events including a roundtable on the gender pay gap
- develop our thinking on the ethnicity pay gap which is also being highlighted by national government
- establish a national employers group to examine the use of career grades.

CONCLUSION

We believe that the national vision for the local government workforce presented here is widely shared and can be realistically achieved in the next ten years. By focussing on the delivery routes that we have highlighted, beginning with the immediate priorities you have told us are important, we can work together to realise this ambition.

Councils should take steps to incorporate the national vision suitably in their local vision with partners and should identify what their immediate local priorities are under the five key delivery routes.

We will continue to expand our support offer over the coming months and years, applying pressure to get extra resources at a national level to help develop the local workforce. We will also continue to monitor achievement and practice for each of the delivery routes.

With only limited resources there will be challenges to overcome, but if we really want to transform communities and make a genuine difference to people's lives, we must ensure the long term sustainability of our current workforce and be able to attract the workforce of the future.

ANNEX

LGA CONSULTATION EXERCISE 2018

As well as having a number of structured conversations with senior officers in a variety of forums, we conducted an online consultation exercise which ran from February to July 2018. Respondents were invited to look at the issues and proposals set out in Great People for Growing Places and then to answer a series of questions about the general vision for the workforce, the five routes for delivery and the priorities we suggested for each one.

RESPONSES

We received responses from 68 councils and individuals/other organisations.

| Type of respondent | Number of responses |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Shire county | 11 |
| Shire district | 15 |
| Metropolitan district | 8 |
| London borough | 3 |
| Unitary | 18 |
| Welsh unitary | 1 |
| Other | 12 |

We believe that the spread of respondent councils makes the sample representative. We have not used the 'other' responses, which are mostly from individuals, in the detailed analysis of work priorities because ours is a membership organisation for councils, however we have referred to them in the analysis of the more general questions, such as about the overall vision. We have also taken account of additional written comments from 'others' because they are useful and we are grateful for them.

We've included a selection of comments from respondents throughout this analysis.

SUPPORT FOR THE OVERALL VISION

We asked councils and other interested parties to tell us whether or not they broadly supported the vision we set out.

95% OF RESPONDENT COUNCILS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT. AS DID 83 PER CENT OF OTHER RESPONDENTS.

We feel that this is sufficiently emphatic to declare that we will use the basic vision to inform our work at a national level and the general sense of direction we will promote for the local government workforce. We don't want to waste the observations that some people have offered however, so we have made some adjustments in the final version.

One of the main areas of debate amongst those who offered comments was about the scope of the vision. We stated that as an organisation our main remit covers the directly employed workforce but quite rightly, people made points about the changing nature of service delivery across communities and partnerships. We believe that the vision can be discussed, adapted and used as a core framework across partner organisations but we have adjusted some wording to strengthen this point by referencing collaboration and partnership.

An interesting point was made about the need to be productive whilst also doing the right things. We believe that the combination of factors in the vision should lead to efforts being focused correctly on the priorities set by communities but we have made changes to reflect this by adding

wording about effectiveness and some further detail on the design of services.

Some respondents highlighted the importance of the digital future and we have reflected this with some more emphatic wording.

A question was also raised about the timescale of five to ten years that we suggested for achievement of the vision. It was argued that there should be a more refined timetable with regular evaluation. We will of course outline timetables for our work in our business plan but it will be for individual councils to agree plans and timescales with their partners. We will evaluate achievement through our regular surveys.

" INCREASED PROMINENCE FOR THE IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION/ PARTNERSHIP WORKING WOULD BE BENEFICIAL – FOR EXAMPLE... WITH NHS."

SHIRE COUNTY

" I WOULD LIKE TO SEE REFERENCE TO OUR CUSTOMERS WITHIN THIS VISION, EG [SO THAT] WE CAN DELIVER BETTER SERVICES, SERVE OUR COMMUNITIES BETTER, ETC."

DISTRICT

" WE AGREE WITH THE STATEMENT BUT THINK THAT THERE NEEDS TO BE AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE REDUCING BUDGET POSITION AND THE NEED TO BE CREATIVE WITH SOLUTIONS."

DISTRICT

" I THINK I MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED TO SEE SOMETHING IN HERE ABOUT STRUCTURES. IT IS NOT ABOUT TRADITIONAL HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE (QUITE THE OPPOSITE) BUT THERE IS STILL A NEED TO CREATE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES WHICH PROMOTE FLEXIBILITY AND DEPLOYMENT OF RESOURCES TO PRIORITIES AND HELP TO PREVENT SILO WORKING."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE WORK

In Great People for Growing Places, we discussed the five delivery routes which we believe organisations need to concentrate on to help people achieve their potential. We then asked respondents to tell us if they support the routes in broad terms

Finally we set out a number of suggestions for national priority actions under each delivery route and asked respondents to identify which would be priorities for them.

We believe that the responses are clear and we will use them to develop our national work programme and in our activity with central government and partner organisations. Here we look briefly at the responses under each of the five delivery routes.

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

96% OF RESPONDENT COUNCILS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT FOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT AS A KEY DELIVERY ROUTE. AS DID 92 PER CENT OF OTHER RESPONDENTS.

We then set out a series of suggested priorities for our national work and actions around organisational change and development. The three priorities seen as most important are:

- support councils to explore new ways of working that continue to modernise the working culture of local government

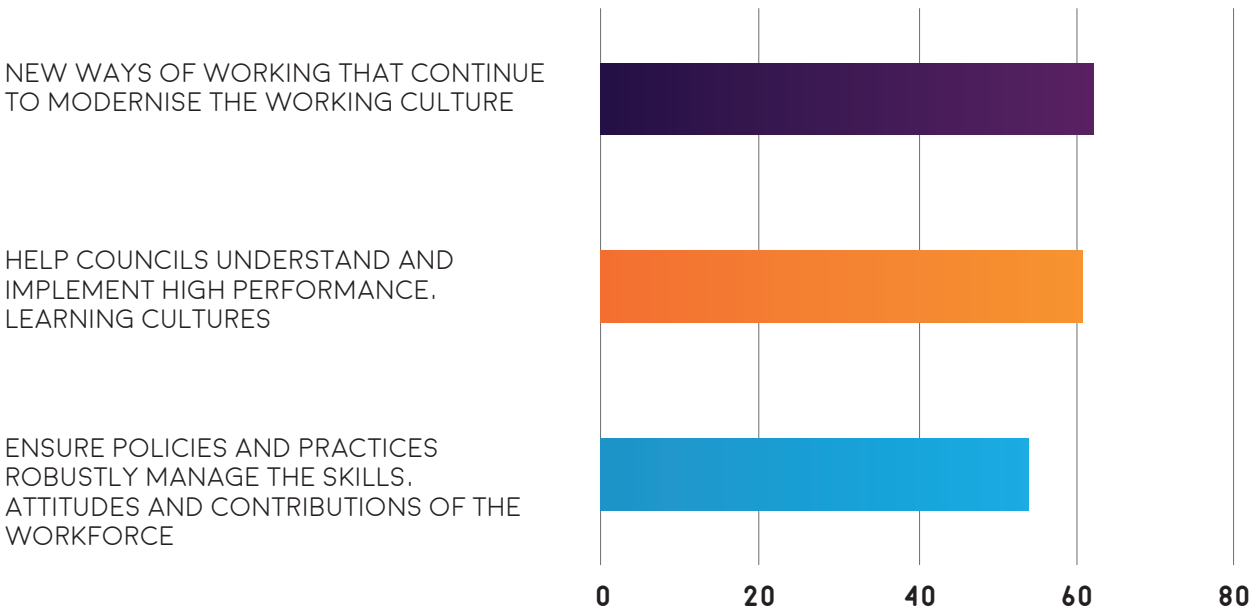
- help council leaders and HR professionals understand and implement good practice from all sectors to develop high performance, learning cultures, in their organisations
- provide a range of tools to support councils in ensuring their workforce policies and processes and employment practices robustly manage the skills, attitudes and contributions of their workforce.

Respondents ranked the top three suggestions as shown on the chart.

A top two seems to have emerged here, both related to workplace culture and we will pay particular attention to these over the coming period.

Respondents reflect a view that the general working culture of local government still demands change. Each organisation will have its own sense of what that culture is and what it should be.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES (% OF LA RESPONDENTS)



We know from many conversations though that people tend to want a blame-free culture that is more entrepreneurial in the sense of encouraging innovation and experiment with rewards for success rather than a fear of failure. Team-based working is a must as well as greater individual flexibility. This much may be uncontested but how to get there requires thought and planning. We will find ways to respond to the need for better information sharing on good practice in culture change.

There is also some interest in help with reviewing HR policies and practices. We have some established work in this area which we will maintain and keep under review.

" ENABLE PEOPLE TO GIVE THEIR BEST THROUGH INTEGRATED IT SYSTEMS, PLEASANT AND FLEXIBLE WORKING ENVIRONMENTS. PEOPLE SEE WORK AS AN ACTIVITY, NOT A PLACE."

UNITARY

" DEVELOP SHARED UNDERSTANDING OF CULTURES AND BENEFITS ACROSS DIFFERENT PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYERS."

DISTRICT

LEADERSHIP

93% OF RESPONDENT COUNCILS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT FOR LEADERSHIP AS A KEY DELIVERY THEME, AS DID 92 PER CENT OF OTHER RESPONDENTS.

We then set out a series of suggested priorities for our national work and actions around leadership. The three priorities seen as most important are:

- continue to offer a cohesive and joined-up solution on leadership and managerial development so that councils are best placed to choose effective development solutions

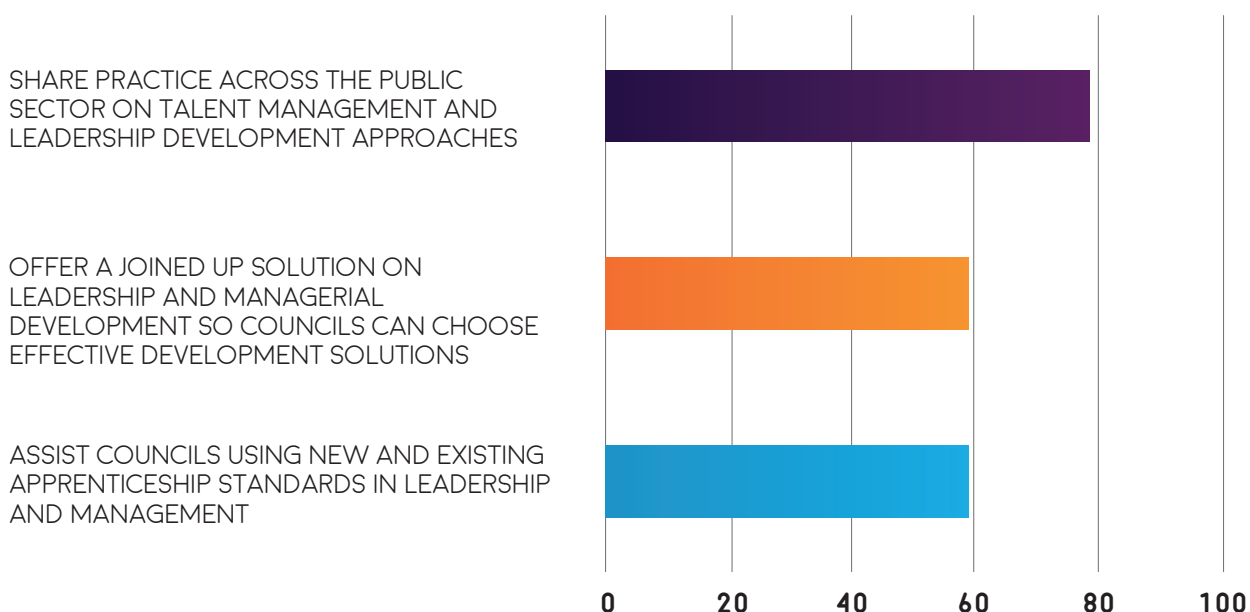
- work with others to share practice across the public sector on talent management and leadership development approaches
- assist councils using new and existing apprenticeship standards in leadership and management to maximise the return on investment of the levy.

Respondents ranked the suggestions as shown on the chart.

A clear message has emerged about the importance of sharing good practice on talent management and leadership development. We will work with others to find the most effective way to do this and will say more in due course.

It is noteworthy that there was some interest in the issue of ensuring that leadership and managerial development are more cohesive, rather than

LEADERSHIP PRIORITIES (% OF LA RESPONDENTS)



hardwiring a divide around the development of political leaders and senior officers. Again we will reflect on this.

The importance of effective apprenticeship delivery is stressed in national policy as well as local priorities and we have a funded support programme.

" GROWING OUR OWN AND OFFERING PROGRESSION OPPORTUNITIES INTO LEADERSHIP ROLES IS A KEY ENGAGEMENT TOOL AND A WAY OF RETAINING TALENT. LOCAL AUTHORITIES HOWEVER HAVE A SIGNIFICANTLY AGEING WORKFORCE AND SUCCESSION PLANNING, PARTICULARLY IN RESPONSE TO DIVERSIFYING THE POOL OF LEADERSHIP, NEEDS TO INCORPORATE CONSIDERATION OF ATTRACTING YOUNG, FRESH PERSPECTIVES."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

" LEADERSHIP IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS SOMETIMES ABOUT WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO RETIRE OR LEAVE. WITH AUSTERITY THERE IS LESS MOVEMENT AT MIDDLE MANAGEMENT TIERS AND THEREFORE TALENT WALKS BECAUSE THERE IS NO PROGRESSION. HELPING COUNCILS TO IDENTIFY THEIR TALENT POOL AND NURTURE IT BY CREATING NO TRADITIONAL STEP UP ROLES AND CROSS SECTOR WORKING TO BROADEN EXPERIENCE BREAKING BARRIERS TO MOVING IN AND OUT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT FROM HEALTH, FOR EXAMPLE."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

95% OF RESPONDENT COUNCILS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AS A KEY DELIVERY ROUTE. AS DID 92 PER CENT OF OTHER RESPONDENTS.

We then set out a series of suggested priorities for our national work and actions around skills development. The three priorities seen as most important are:

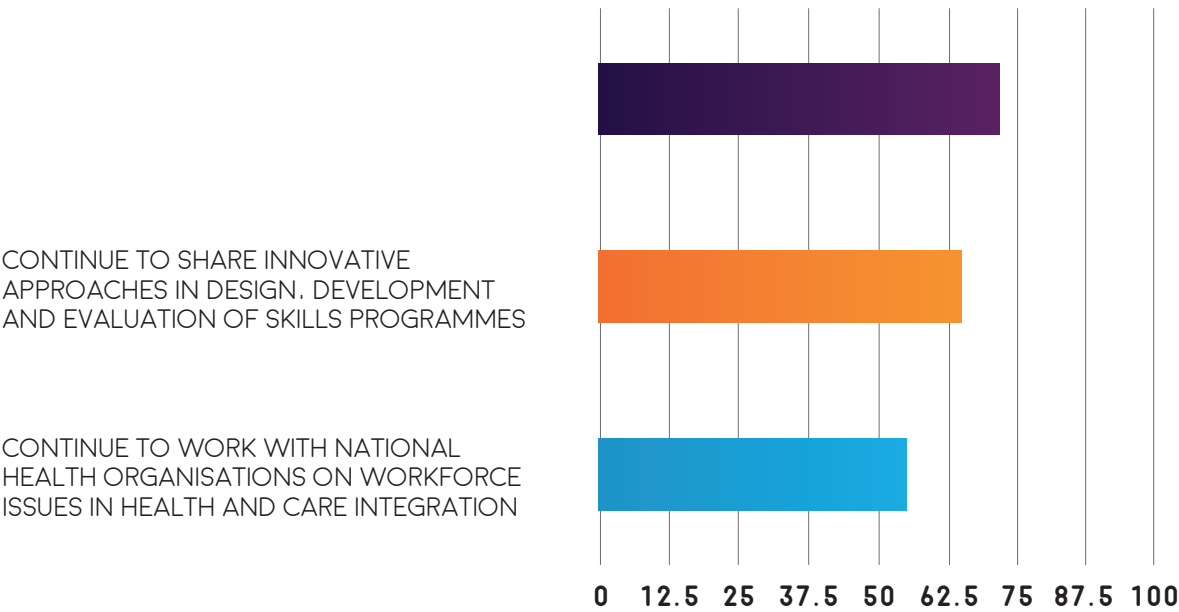
- continue to share innovative approaches in design, development and evaluation of skills programmes

- continue to work with national health organisations on workforce issues in health and care integration
- support regional and national approaches to skills development practice particular in developing apprenticeship pathways and graduate apprenticeship schemes, including converting our National Graduate Development Programme (ngdp) to an apprenticeship programme.

Respondents ranked the suggestions as shown on the chart.

Growing and enhancing apprenticeship routes emerged as the most important idea for respondents. As mentioned, we have a funded support programme and we will continue our work.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES (% OF LA RESPONDENTS)



Given the challenge to find funding for formal skills programmes it is unsurprising that respondents highlighted the importance of innovative practice. We will look at ways to share this more effectively.

We try to work as closely as possible with NHS organisations on the workforce implications of health and care integration in the context of overall discussions about funding and the need to focus on wellbeing.

" WORK WITH EDUCATORS TO ENSURE A PIPELINE OF SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE. DEVELOP THE CURRICULUM FOR APPRENTICESHIP COURSES, ETC. , BUILD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS AS THEY NEED TO BE LEAD TO THE TYPES OF JOBS WE HAVE AND NEED SKILLS FOR. NHS DO THIS WORK WITH SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES FOR DOCTORS, ETC. IT IS ABOUT INFLUENCING THE 14-19 AGENDA."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

" ALL OF THESE ARE PRIORITIES AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO REDUCE THIS TO THREE. OUR VIEW IS THAT WITHIN THE NEED TO CONTINUE TO SHARE INNOVATIVE APPROACHES IN DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND EVALUATION OF SKILLS PROGRAMMES WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE TOOLS DEVELOPED THAT WILL HELP THE ORGANISATION AND INDIVIDUAL MANAGERS TO MEASURE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND HOW IT IMPACTS OVERALL ON THE EMPLOYEE' S PERFORMANCE. WORK SHADOWING WITHIN ORGANISATIONS AND IN DIFFERENT PARTNER ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAMS [IS USEFUL]."

DISTRICT

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

93% OF RESPONDENT COUNCILS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION AS A KEY DELIVERY ROUTE, AS DID 75 PER CENT OF OTHER RESPONDENTS.

We then set out a series of suggested priorities for our national work and actions around recruitment and retention. The two priorities seen as most important are:

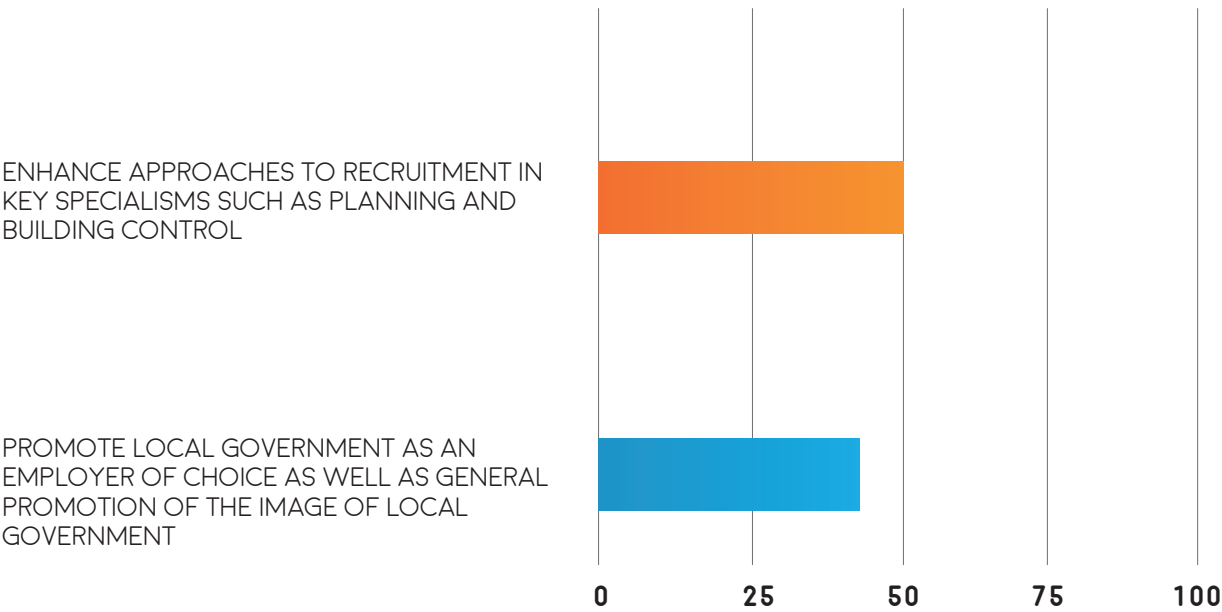
- enhance approaches to recruitment in key specialisms such as planning and building control

- work with others in promoting local government as an employer of choice as well as general promotion of the image of local government.

Respondents ranked the suggestions as shown on the chart.

Although support for the importance of recruitment and retention as a key delivery route was strong, the scoring for suggested priorities was not as high as in other routes. We will reflect on what else we might need to do and will have further discussions within the sector about this. We will carry out some further research and information sharing on recruitment and retention in key specialisms. We will also look at what more can be done to enhance the image of local government and revisit the discussions around the employer of choice concept.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PRIORITIES (% OF LA RESPONDENTS)



" THERE ARE SOME CRITICAL POINTS HIGHLIGHTED WITHIN THE SECTION, NOT LEAST THE FLEXIBILITY OF JOB ROLE OPPORTUNITY AND CONSIDERATION OF WORKFORCE WELLBEING AND RESILIENCE. STRANGELY, THIS IS AN AREA WHERE APPRENTICESHIPS SEEM TO BE FOCUSED ON THE LEAST. VOCATIONAL CAREER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, PARTICULARLY THOSE AIMED AT ACHIEVING PROFESSIONAL STATUS, ARE INVALUABLE HERE. RELIANCE ON THE POOL OF PROFESSIONALS FRESH FROM UNIVERSITY IS NOT SUSTAINABLE. PROVIDING OPPORTUNITY FOR STABLE PAID EMPLOYMENT WITH PROGRESSION TOWARDS A PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION WILL ENABLE LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ATTRACT THOSE PEOPLE WHO WOULD NOT PERHAPS ACCESS UNIVERSITY FOR ECONOMIC REASONS BUT WHO HAVE THE VALUES AND ATTRIBUTES TO DEVELOP INTO COMPETENT PROFESSIONALS."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

" IN RELATION TO KEY SPECIALISMS (INCLUDING) ENGINEERING, HIGHWAYS AND CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AS WELL AS PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL (GOOD IDEAS INCLUDE): SHARING GOOD PRACTICE ON RECRUITMENT PRACTICES AND ANY BARRIERS OR ISSUES THAT THIS MAY PRESENT TO RECRUITING THE BEST PEOPLE, INCLUDING HOW TO ATTRACT YOUNG ENTRANTS (GRADUATES AND NON-GRADUATE), SHARING BEST PRACTICE ON RETENTION OF YOUNGER EMPLOYEES."

SHIRE COUNTY

PAY AND REWARDS

96% OF RESPONDENT COUNCILS OFFERED THEIR SUPPORT FOR PAY AND REWARDS AS A DELIVERY ROUTE. AS DID 75 PER CENT OF OTHER RESPONDENTS.

We then set out a series of suggested priorities for our national work and actions around pay and rewards. The three priorities seen as most important are:

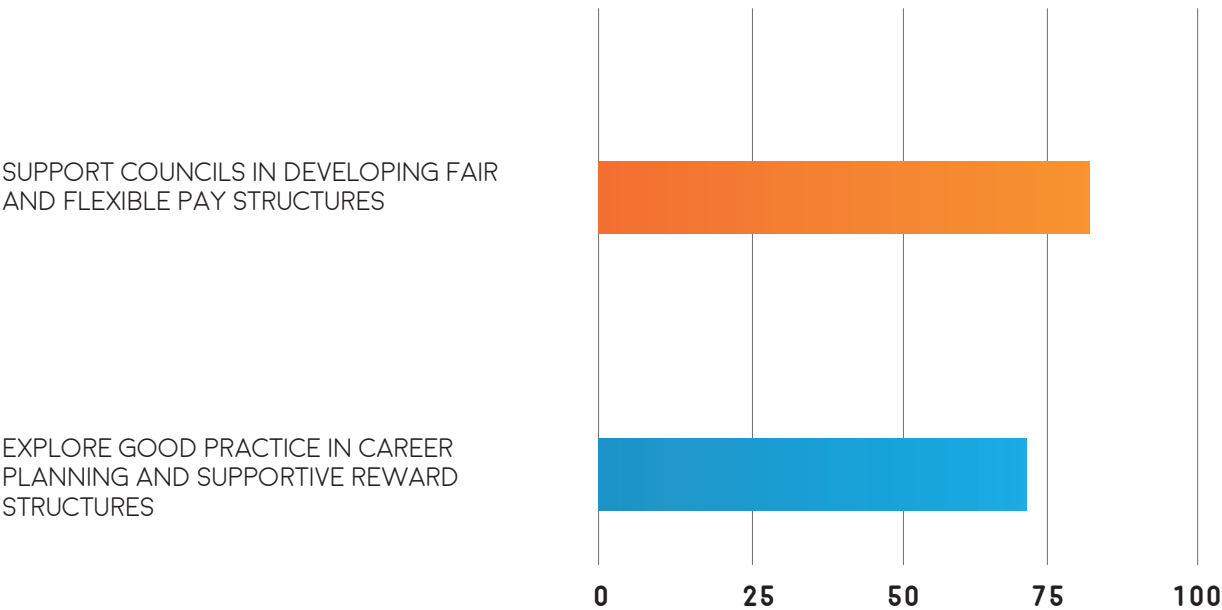
- explore and encourage good practice in supporting staff through better career planning and supportive reward structures

- support councils in developing fair and flexible pay structures.

Respondents ranked the suggestions as shown on the chart.

Respondents were clear about the importance of developing fair and flexible pay structures that reward individuals and serve organisational needs. We will look to enhance what we have to say and offer around these issues. There was also support for further work on career planning and rewards that promote wellbeing. Pay structures and career structures are intimately linked of course and when they work well, they serve to improve retention in particular.

PAY AND REWARDS PRIORITIES (% OF LA RESPONDENTS)



" I WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE FOCUS ON DEVELOPING REWARD APPROACHES FOR THE DIFFICULT TO RECRUIT PROFESSIONAL ROLES, SUCH AS PLANNING AND FINANCE. I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO SEE HOW WE RECRUIT AND RETAIN PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT COMMERCIAL SKILLS WITHIN THE NATIONAL PAY STRUCTURE."

DISTRICT

" AS A COUNCIL WHO USES NATIONAL PAY SCALES WE NEED TO SEE MORE PARITY ACROSS PAY SCALES BOTH WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA AND SPREADING WIDER INTO OUR PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS. WE SHOULDN'T BE COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER AS WE ARE CURRENTLY."

DISTRICT

" IN MY ORGANISATION I SEE THIS AS THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE FOR US AS TO MAKE ANY CHANGE (WHICH WE HAVE TO DO) IS RISKY, COSTLY AND TIME CONSUMING. BUT IF WE DON'T CHANGE WE WILL NEVER HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY IN OUR PAY AND REWARD STRUCTURES THAT WE NEED."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS

We asked respondents to set out the two or three things that the sector, with LGA support, should begin to focus on immediately. Two things really stood out:

- enhanced leadership develop programmes at all levels and also across sectors with partners, with a particular focus on change management and performance management
- further development of total reward packages with a focus on flexible packages and competitiveness with other sectors.

Other issues mentioned by more than one respondent included:

- the need to develop skills in a digital world context
- focusing on OD principles to help change senior officer structures
- improving officers' abilities to deal with the political interface with members
- further highlighting of the importance of apprenticeships.

" ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT – COUNCILS SHOULD REVIEW THEIR INTERNAL STRUCTURES WITH A VIEW TO MAKE THEM LEANER AND PRODUCTIVITY FOCUSED. MORE COLLABORATIVE WORKING WITHIN THE DIFFERENT DEPARTMENTS [IS] REQUIRED. FOCUS SHOULD BE ON DEVELOPING BOTTOM-UP LEADERSHIP. EMPLOYEES NEED TO BE EMPOWERED TO MAKE DECISIONS AND ALL SHOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

UPSKILLING THE WORKFORCE – BUDGETS MAY BE AN ISSUE, BUT COUNCILS NEED TO DEVELOP INNOVATIVE WAYS TO OFFER SMARTER AND APPROPRIATE LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES TO ALL EMPLOYEES AT ALL LEVELS NOT JUST SOME TARGETED GROUPS. THIS WILL HELP EMPLOYEES WITH CAREER PROGRESSION, JOB SATISFACTION AND COUNCILS IN RETAINING GOOD STAFF"

COUNTY COUNCIL

" I WOULD SUGGEST THE NEED FOR A GREATER FOCUS ON ' ALL THINGS DIGITAL' . THIS IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR ALL COUNCILS, FROM MODERNISING COUNCILS AS A WHOLE, DELIVERING FURTHER EFFICIENCIES, [TO] UP-SKILLING STAFF TO MAXIMISE BENEFITS AND ENSURE NEW DELIVERY MODELS, ATTRACT TALENT, ETC. IN ESSENCE TO DELIVER ALL THE PRIORITIES YOU HAVE SET OUT, DIGITAL WILL PLAY A MAJOR PART."

METROPOLITAN DISTRICT

" I THINK ONE OF THE IMMEDIATE ISSUES IS IN ENGAGING THE WHOLE WORKFORCE IN RECOGNISING AND ADDRESSING THE VOLATILE ENVIRONMENT WE NOW WORK IN AND TO EMBRACE NEW WAYS OF WORKING AND DEVELOPING RESILIENCE. COLLABORATION AND CO-CREATION OF SOLUTIONS IS KEY TO ENSURING THAT CHANGE IS MANAGEABLE AND CAN DELIVER THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES. BUT WE ALSO HAVE TO BE REALISTIC ABOUT WHAT WE CAN ACHIEVE WITH THE RESOURCES WE HAVE."

SHIRE DISTRICT

" THE WORKFORCE FEELS BASHED AND BRUISED RELENTLESSLY AS THEY ARE THE EASY TARGETS FOR OTHERS TO VENT THEIR FRUSTRATIONS AT. THIS MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO DEVELOP THE WORKFORCE AS THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BEST PERFORMERS ARE ENORMOUS OUTSIDE OF THE SECTOR AND BECOME EVEN MORE ATTRACTIVE. MANY OF THOSE THAT STAY DEVELOP DEFENCE MECHANISMS TO STAY RATHER THAN OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK BETTER FOR FEAR OF BEING TARGETED. FAILING COUNCILS MAKE BIG NEWS. THE SECTOR HAS TO ACCEPT THE CLIMATE WE WORK IN BUT FOCUS ON ATTRACTING HIGH PERFORMERS, RETAINING THEM SO THEY ATTRACT OTHERS."

UNITARY

We have taken account of these observations in the immediate priorities for action that we have identified.



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