

Workforce Programme Board – report by Mayor Sir Steve Bullock (Chair)

Local government services

1. The Employers have responded to the Trade Unions' notification of a formal dispute over pay and LG Employers' document 'Reducing Workforce Costs', confirming their position that any increase in pay for 2010/11 remains unaffordable.
2. In respect of 2011/12 the employers will be consulting councils later this year once the outcome of the forthcoming spending review is known. At that stage, councils will be able to assess what might be affordable. The employers will consider the feedback from councils in the context of the Chancellor's budget statement before deciding their position on local government pay for 2011/12.
3. A constructive meeting with the unions was held in August, where the Employers also reiterated that they would not agree to participate in arbitration over these matters.

Transfer of school staff to academies

4. LG Employers has developed web guidance and information on key employment issues relevant to the transfer of schools from maintained to academy status, including TUPE and continuous local government service. Links to LG Employers' guidance relevant to the transfer process, and to the Department for Education's FAQs on academies are also provided, together, providing a resource for local authorities going through this period of change. Go to www.lge.gov.uk for more information.

Integrating local public services

5. Today's economic context urges the public sector to find radical new ways to deliver more efficient services better tailored to local needs. Many councils and their public sector partners are aiming to achieve this by integrating services. A new LG Group web resource, developed with councils and other partner bodies, considers the workforce issues in this complex and rapidly developing area. It can be accessed at www.idea.gov.uk/integratingservices

Promoting local government's talent

6. The winner of the first ever Local Government Challenge competition was announced at the LG Group conference in July. Rachel Allen, a Business Improvement Officer from London Borough of Merton, was the eventual winner out of ten contestants, receiving the Bruce-Lockhart Scholarship worth up to £10,000. The competition, run by the LG Group in partnership with the Local Government

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Channel and sponsored by Liberata, seeks talented individuals working in local government with the potential to become the top executives of the future.

7. Over the first five months of this year, the Local Government Challenge contestants were put through a series of gruelling challenges in councils across the country testing their ingenuity, creativity and ability to lead. The challenge generated a great deal of positive energy and enthusiasm from contestants and participating councils and covered issues such as voter turnout, the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the night time economy, country parks and empty shops. The semi-final and final took place during the LG Group conference in Bournemouth and the winner was announced at the Council Worker of the Year awards.
8. As well as offering career enhancing opportunities for all ten individual contestants and providing some excellent outcomes for participating councils, the Local Government Challenge has been a great success for cross-LG Group working and promoted a positive image of working in local government and the skills, calibre and value of its workforce.
9. Find out more about the challenge at www.lga.gov.uk/lgchallenge or watch all the challenges on www.localgovernmentchannel.com/lgchallenge .

Employment law

10. The Advisory Bulletin provides a monthly update on legislative and case law developments, and guidance on how they impact on local authorities. Advisory Bulletin 568 reports cases on age discrimination and the default retirement age, equal pay and changes to terms and conditions following a TUPE transfer. Go to www.lge.gov.uk for more information.

Connecting councils through communities

11. The communities of practice continue to be a central hub of activity for all workforce related discussion and shared learning and have been playing an increasing role in connecting individuals seeking solutions and good practice examples. In recent weeks colleagues across local government and the public sector have been sharing experiences and expertise on issues such as management skills frameworks, corporate training and development, talent management tools, the minimum wage for Apprentices, the future of Apprenticeships for all ages, setting up employee panels and general good management practice. The communities of practice can be accessed at www.communities.idea.gov.uk

Contact officer: Helen Newman
Position: Service Director, LGE
Phone no: 020 71877315 email: helen.newman@local.gov.uk