

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

### **Pensions**

1. In the public sector Spending Review statement of October 2010 the Government announced its intention to increase employee pension contributions in the public service pension schemes (other than the Armed Forces Pension Scheme) by, on average, 3%. The increases would be introduced progressively over the period 2012/13 to 2014/15 but with protection for the lower paid.
2. Government is now progressing with a number of options for how the increases might be achieved in the Local Government Pension Scheme and the Teachers' Pension Scheme which could have significant implications for councils and the sector as a whole. On behalf of the Board, I will be taking a paper to the February Executive to discuss our response to this.

### **Productivity – workforce and skills**

3. A series of 'quick-wins' have been produced to highlight to councils what action can be taken to improve workforce productivity and make workforce efficiency savings. The detailed examples are available on LG Group's on-line communities of practice and include the following examples:
  - 3.1 Back office consolidation through the use of methods such as shared services, call centres, and centres of expertise, etc;
  - 3.2 Delayering – reducing management layers;
  - 3.3 Employee engagement – getting the best out of people by increasing motivation and individual performance;
  - 3.4 Functional flexibility (or multi-skilling) and changing the skills mix - also known as workforce modernisation;
  - 3.5 Locational flexibility (including home working, remote working);
  - 3.6 Process modernisation of any internal processes (using techniques like lean, Six Sigma, Business Process Re-Engineering and Value Management);
  - 3.7 Reducing absence levels (the saving that accrues should come from the labour costs that arise from covering the gaps. This might be through hiring agency staff or from holding a larger workforce complement than desirable);
  - 3.8 Better resource planning/demand management, including forms of numerical and temporal flexibility;
  - 3.9 Resourcing and assignment – getting the right people with the right skills into the right jobs;
  - 3.10 Strategic partnerships, sharing with others or outsourcing.

### **Supporting councils through organisational transformation**

4. A very successful “Delivering Services Differently” practice sharing event took place on 11 January 2011. The event was delivered by LG Improvement and Development in partnership with the East of England LGA and covered alternative service delivery models and new ways of working, including outsourcing, shared service arrangements and social enterprises.

### **Agency staff costs**

5. A second online conference aimed at helping councils **improve efficiency through reducing agency staff costs** took place on 20 January 2011. [‘Regaining control of the landscape by knowing our numbers’](#) investigated the power of management information and the changing role of HR. It also gathered feedback on the development of a new temporary workers calculator, which will help councils easily calculate and compare the potential costs of temporary and permanent workers. Further work to gather feedback on the tool will continue over the next few weeks.

### **Apprenticeships**

6. LG Group will be supporting National Apprenticeship Week 2011, 7 - 11 February 2011. Confirmed activity so far includes support for a regional East of England LGA event on 11 February, an online discussion on higher apprenticeships and the A-List Apprentices recognition initiative running in the [public service apprenticeships community of practice](#) throughout the week.

### **Delivering workforce efficiencies**

7. LG Group will be running a series of intensive action learning workshops for HR directors and senior practitioners aimed at supporting councils in reducing workforce costs in a rapid, yet sustainable way. Delegates will receive tailored advice and support on how to create workforce efficiencies while minimising the need for redundancies. They will have the opportunity to consider legal implications and industrial relations issues, as well as sharing knowledge and experience, and developing practical solutions to achieve more with less. Events will take place in: London, 1 March; Bristol, 3 March; Leicester, 14 March; Newcastle, 24 March; Manchester, 29 March. For more information, please contact [liz.copeland@local.gov.uk](mailto:liz.copeland@local.gov.uk)

### **Royal Wedding**

8. The National Joint Council has provided advice to councils on the leave arrangements for local government services employees on the **extra public holiday** announced for Friday 29 April 2011 to celebrate the wedding of His Royal Highness Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton. More information at [www.local.gov.uk/employers](http://www.local.gov.uk/employers)

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