

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

### **Pensions**

#### **Heads of agreement for new LGPS**

1. A Heads of Agreement document was submitted to Government on Monday 19 December and following clarification of the response was accepted by them on the 21 December. The agreement contains principles relating to both the design of a new scheme and its future cost management. It sets out a timetable for detailed agreements to be reached during 2012 and provides for the new scheme to come into effect from April 2014 and in doing so avoid the need for action on short term savings before that date. For their part Government have agreed to take no action as a result of the recent consultation on contribution increases whilst the process is underway. There still remains a lot of work to do in terms of the detail with the period up to April particularly crucial as this is when items with a major impact, such as accrual rates, are due to be agreed.

#### **Heads of agreement for new Teachers' scheme**

2. The Government's proposed Heads of Agreement document for the Teachers' scheme was published on 20 December. The document set out those elements of the new scheme which may be subject to further negotiation, for example the structure of employee contribution increases in 2013-14 and 14-15 and which elements are not, for example a career average basis to the scheme. The NUT has not signed up to the document and will consider what action to take in response to it in January.

#### **Mainstream staff in local government**

3. The Employers' Side met on 14 December and received feedback from the Regional Pay Consultation Briefings. In light of the views expressed by local authorities, members are due to have further discussions with political colleagues over the next few weeks before formally responding to the unions.

#### **Reviewing local reward strategies**

4. We believe that the time is now right to take a look at the reward structures that are needed in changing organisations. Further advice will be offered by the LGA and a number of regional workshops are planned to provide further support to local authorities in this context.

## **Public health workforce issues**

5. The process for appointing Directors of Public Health in the run up to the transfer of public health functions to local government and beyond remains quite contentious. As a result of intense lobbying at the highest level, a joint letter between the Department of Health and LGA has been agreed which sets out a number of considerations and emphasizes the importance of local discretion and decision-making.

## **Social Workers**

6. The first meeting of the advisory implementation group for the Employer Standards for all employers of social workers was hosted by the LGA on the 19 December 2011. The Employer Standards will be re-launched in January 2012 through a variety of media; in the meantime they can now be viewed on the Workforce pages of the LGA website.

## **School teachers**

7. The next remit to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) is expected soon. The STRB will be asked to consider the one per cent pay 'cap' and "how to make pay more market-facing in local areas for teachers" as part of a detailed remit which may also raise other pay reform issues. Members of the NASUWT teachers' union began a campaign of industrial action short of a strike on the basis of "adverse changes to pensions, workload, and conditions of service, including pay and pay progression and job losses" on 1 December 2011. Advice for employers is available on the LGA website.

## **Fire**

8. In the light of the delay in issue of the relevant cost ceiling, sector specific discussions continue on the general matter of reform of uniformed fire service personnel pension schemes. Accordingly, at this time, the Fire Brigades Union continues to maintain a position of not balloting its members with a view to taking industrial action.

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