

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

Pensions

New LGPS project has commenced

1. A project based on the principles document agreed with unions and accepted by Government in December has now commenced. The project membership includes representatives from LGA, GMB, UNISON and DCLG. Unite have decided to withdraw from the discussions, despite signing up to the principles document, citing uncertainty caused by a letter from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government which was subsequently withdrawn. The project has a number of objectives to meet by April; these cover the design of a new scheme together with its ongoing management and governance.

Heads of agreement for new Teachers' scheme

2. Although the Government's proposed Heads of Agreement document for the Teachers' scheme was published on 20 December, the major teaching unions including the NUT have still not accepted the terms set out within it. The NUT together with other public sector unions, are considering further industrial action in pursuit of an improved offer on pensions for Government.

Mainstream staff in local government

3. Discussions are ongoing at a political level to agree the Employers' position in respect of pay for year 2012/2013.

Developing pay policy statements

4. Section 38.1 of the Localism Act 2011 requires English and Welsh local authorities to produce a pay policy statement from 2012/13 and each subsequent year. The LGA have scheduled a number of regional workshops, hosted by the regional employers organisations, in early February / March to help local authorities to comply with this requirement. These workshops will also cover issues such as 'earn back' and remuneration committees.

Public Health Workforce Matters

5. The Local Government Transition Guidance on Public Health Workforce Matters was published on 13 January aimed at HR specialists in councils that will be receiving public health staff. The Guidance Detailed has been agreed with a group of trade unions, including the Royal College of Nursing and the British Medical Association. It describes the legal basis for transfers and sets out a framework of options and good practice for local decisions. The Guidance has

been published now in order to help councils to get to grips with planning the transition. There are some issues that are still subject to discussion on which further information will be issued as soon as possible. In practice, most key decisions are rightly the responsibility of the new employer. The central plank of the Guidance is that future and current employers should set up local joint consultative groups working with the trade unions as soon as possible, if they have not already done.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

6. The LGA has issued some workforce guidance for councils to help them think through some of the issues which they will be facing during the Games. The LGA thought that councils outside of the London area would benefit from the checklist of issues in order to pre-empt any adverse effect on council services. Such issues include travel arrangements, annual leave, flexible working, internet use and volunteers.
7. The LGA will also be publishing advice on getting active and fit for the 2012 Games and beyond. The resource will be web-based and will provide tips for a healthy lifestyle which in turn should improve employee well-being and engagement. Those who log on to the site every month will benefit from updated fitness tips and will be able to link into the NHS Active site in order to participate in team events and promote public sector health, which ties in with the transfer of Public Health. The LGA is currently exploring with the NHS various opportunities for local government and other public sector colleagues to collaborate on a broader public sector challenge.

School teachers

8. In his Autumn Statement, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the Government would be asking the Pay Review Bodies to look at local pay. He has written to the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) to ask them to consider how to make pay more market-facing in local areas for teachers (letter attached).
9. The STRB is expecting to receive a letter from the Secretary of State for Education in early February with a detailed remit in relation to teachers and will formally notify all consultees - including National Employers Of Schoolteachers (NEOST) - of the remit once received. The Chancellor's letter states that the remit "may also raise other pay reform issues".
10. The autumn statement also said that the current public sector pay freeze would end in 2013/14 but that for the following two years the Government would seek public sector pay awards that of up to one per cent per year.

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