

## **Workforce Board – report from Cllr Jim McMahon (Chair)**

### **Pensions**

1. Regulations for the reformed Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) have been made and laid and implementation of communications and systems is underway to prepare for an April 2014 start.
2. The LGA is assisting DCLG and the Shadow Scheme Advisory Board with analysing a call for evidence on the structure of LGPS funds with recommendations due to go to the minister before the end of the year.
3. A consultation on draft regulations for the reformed Teachers Pension Scheme to be effective from April 2015 is currently underway.

### **Local Government Services Local Government Services**

4. At a meeting on 5 November of the NJC Executive the Trade Union Side formally tabled their detailed pay claim for 2014 for, "*A minimum increase of £1 an hour on scale point 5 to achieve the Living Wage and the same flat rate increase on all other scale points*".
5. The National Employers have undertaken to consult councils through a series of regional pay consultation briefings that we aim to conclude by 31 January.

### **Fire**

6. Fire Brigades Union (FBU) members took part in discontinuous strike action on 25 September, 1 November and 4 November in connection with its dispute with Ministers in England and Wales on the matter of pension scheme reform. Whilst the dispute (and discontinuous strike action ballot) does also cover Scotland, separate negotiations are taking place with the Scottish Government. The FBU has consulted its members in Scotland on progress made and as a consequence decided that sufficient progress had been made for strike action not to take place in Scotland as talks continue.
7. Whilst not party to the dispute we do have an interest given the impact on fire authorities and continue to work closely with DCLG and the FBU to assist the parties to the dispute in England where it is appropriate to do so.
8. As part of this work with the FBU, and under the auspices of the National Employers, a number of potential principles on a way forward have been discussed in respect of related fitness and capability issues. This led to an FBU decision to cancel its strike action planned for 19 October.
9. The principles have been explored with Chairs of fire authorities and Chief Fire Officers at a very well attended meeting on 24 October in London and our discussion has since continued with the FBU, informed by views at that meeting.
10. Whilst that discussion has been positive in nature the FBU has been clear that there are eight points contained in its trade dispute with Ministers. In the absence of what it would regard as sufficient progress on other matters directly cited in the dispute (particularly in England and Wales), the FBU has now decided to also ballot all its members, other than in Northern Ireland, on the potential for industrial action that is

short of a strike, i.e. not carrying out the full role. That additional ballot closes on 4 December and will not affect the strike ballot which remains live.

### **School Teachers School Teachers**

11. The Secretary of State for Education has asked the School Teachers' Review Body to make its recommendations on a September 2014 pay award by 16 May 2014. Specifically it has been asked to report on:
  - 11.1. What adjustments should be made to the salary and allowance ranges and scales for classroom teachers, unqualified teachers and school leaders to reflect the 1 per cent pay award for public sector workers?
  - 11.2. What adjustments should be made to salaries and allowances in payment?
12. NEOST must submit written evidence to the STRB on these matters by 20 December 2013 and is currently gathering authorities' views.
13. As last year, the Government has made it clear that it wishes to see an average 1% pay award for teachers overall.

### **Soulbury**

14. The Soulbury Committee met on Tuesday 22 October to consider the 2013 Trade Unions' pay and conditions claim. The National Employers decided to make an offer to the Trade Unions of 1.0% on all pay points and allowances for this year. This decision was reached following a consultation of authorities (via regions) which showed a clear majority in favour for a pay offer for this year. The Trade Unions will now consult on this offer and have stated that they will respond to the National Employers this month.

### **Strategy Team**

#### **Public Health**

15. Two national events are planned on in Leeds on 25 November and one in London on the 3 December. The events are titled 'Beyond the transition' and are intended to provide practical support to local authorities past the initial transfer of public health functions.

#### **Northern Ireland chief executives**

16. We have completed a review on behalf of the JNC for chief executives in Northern Ireland and made recommendations on salary levels for the chief executive posts in the new councils post review of public administration.

#### **Case work**

17. We have provided support to a number of local authorities dealing with complex employee relations case work.

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