

Resources Board – Report from Cllr Shaun Davies (Chair)

Workforce

Pay 2021

1. The [pay award for local government services](#) ('Green Book') employees, covering the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022, was agreed on 28 February 2022.
2. This was made possible as a result of both Unison and GMB agreeing to accept the National Employers' offer. Unite refused to agree (and therefore refused to sign off the pay circular) however the constitution of the NJC requires a majority (on both sides) to agree so a collective agreement has been reached.
3. Unite has completed the process balloting for industrial action and has [announced](#) it will be proceeding in a number of areas. It is not known where or when at this stage although the employers themselves will have received notification. Its ballot also covers employees covered by the JNC for local authority Craftworkers and the JNC for Youth & Community Workers.
4. As Unite are the majority trade union for Craftworkers (Red Book staff), 2021 pay for that bargaining group remains unresolved.

Temporary Pay Increase to NJC Spinal Column Points 1 and 2

5. In the absence of the NJC reaching a pay agreement for 2021 in a timely manner there was a risk that SCPs 1 and 2 would fall below the statutory NLW from 1 April 2022 if no action is taken. We therefore issued a circular to local authorities advising them to ensure that employees currently paid on those two pay points have their pay increased to £9.50 from 1 April.

Chief Executives Pay 2021

6. Agreement has now been reached for a pay award of 1.5 per cent for all officers within scope of the JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities. The pay award is applicable from 1 April 2021.

Chief Officers' Pay 2021

7. Agreement has now been reached for a pay award of 1.5 per cent for all officers within scope of the JNC for Chief Officers of Local Authorities. The pay award is applicable from 1 April 2021.

Soulbury Officers' Pay 2021

8. Agreement has been reached on the [pay award for Soulbury Officers](#) that covers the period 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022. This is a 1.75 per cent increase across all grades and allowances.

Pay 2022

9. Each of the three local government unions (UNISON, GMB and Unite) are not expected to begin to consult their members on the content of their 2022 pay claim until at least March 2022, which means that we do not expect it to be table until at least April, which will already be beyond the usual pay award implementation date of 1 April.

Teachers in Residential Establishments

10. Agreement has been reached on the pay and allowances for those covered by the [Joint National Committee for Teachers in Residential Establishments](#) (JNCTRE) which covers the period 1 September 2021 to 31 August 2022.

School Teachers' pay 2022/23 and 2023/24

11. The [School Teachers' Review Body's \(STRB\) 2022 remit](#) was published in December 2021. The [\(national employers \(NEOST\)\)](#) evidence (informed by LAs) will be submitted to the STRB and published in March. The NEOST oral evidence session is on 26 April.

Consultation on Disability Workforce Reporting

12. We are seeking local authorities' views on the Government's [consultation on disability workforce reporting](#) and whether it should be mandatory.

Social Work Health Check

13. The 2021 Social Work Health Check has now closed and is being analysed. 148 councils took part and over 10,000 responses were received nationally. Councils will receive their individual reports in February, while there is also a webinar in February for Principal Social Workers on workforce planning.

Recruitment and Retention

14. A video is being recorded for Councillors on best practice in recruitment, which should be available in March and will be based on a webinar we are running for Councillors in London in February. We also ran a session for Chief Executives in the East of England on recruitment and retention in January to share best practice and ideas.

Local Government Apprentice of the Year registration opens

15. Registration is now open for the Local Government Apprentice of the Year 2022. The virtual event is organized by East of England LGA and South West Councils and supported and sponsored by the LGA. This is the second time the competition will be held after a successful inaugural event last May. Entry is open to all current or recently

qualified apprentices at Level 2 and 3. You can read more about the success of last year's event, the plans for this year and how to enter apprentices in [February's Workforce blog](#).

T Levels

16. LGA Workforce Team has launched a new support offer to help 35 councils to be early adopters of the T Level post 16 qualification for 16–19-year-olds. LGA workforce team see T levels as an ideal way for councils to engage and attract local young people into a job and ideally a career in local government. The programme is supported by a joint partnership between Gatsby Charitable Foundation, Department of Education and the LGA.

Employment Relations Unit FAQs page updated

17. The [FAQ page has been updated](#) following the reintroduction of working from home and other changes in response to the Omicron variant in England from 13 December 2021.

NGDP: Creating a pipeline of talent

18. The [National Graduate Development Programme \(NGDP\)](#) is an easy and cost-effective way for councils to hire new graduate talent. Councils have until 31 March 2022 to sign up for the autumn intake. Email ngdp@local.gov.uk for a 'no strings' chat.

Local Government Finance

Final Local Government Finance Settlement

1. On 7 February the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities confirmed the [2022/23 Final Local Government Finance Settlement](#). There was little change from the [provisional settlement](#) which was in line with [2021 Spending Review](#). Compared with the provisional settlement, the increase in Core Spending Power changed from 6.9% to 7.4%, which was mostly due to expected data changes. The LGA issued a [press release](#) on the day of the final settlement and briefed MPs ahead of their debate and vote on the settlement on 9 February.
2. [Allocations of public health funding for 2022/23](#) were also announced on 7 February. The total for England is £3.4 billion in 2022/23 (an increase of 2.8 per cent). The grant will be £3.5 billion for 2023/24 (a 2.1 per cent increase) and £3.6 billion for 2024/25 (a 1.8 per cent increase).

Energy rebate

3. On 3 February the Government announced a new [£150 Energy Rebate](#) for 2022/23 for those living in properties in council tax bands A to D. It also announced £144 million for billing authorities to operate a discretionary fund for households in need who would not otherwise be eligible, for example individuals on low incomes who live in properties valued in bands E to H. This is a one-off payment through councils and will not affect the headline council tax level. The LGA issued a [press release](#) on the announcement and has been liaising with Central Government on the practicalities of the policy including the need for new burdens funding. [Guidance and allocations](#) were published on 23 February.

Business Rates Review

4. A [consultation](#) was published on 30 November on measures to enable more frequent revaluations, a new mandatory Improvement relief, support for investment in green plant and machinery and a number of other administrative changes. The LGA [response](#) was signed off by Lead Members of the Resources Board. Further consultations are expected in 2022 on an online sales levy and digitalising business rates, including tackling avoidance and evasion.

Local Audit

5. In early February 2022, at the request of DLUHC, CIPFA issued an [emergency consultation on temporary changes to the accounting code for 2021/22 and 2022/23](#). The proposed changes affect the valuation of operational property, plant and equipment and delays the implementation of IFRS (International Financial Reporting Standard)16 on leases. These are temporary changes being proposed as a step to help alleviate delays to the publication of audited financial statements. They should increase the capacity of audit firms by scaling back some of the less important aspects of their work. Resources Board Lead Members cleared a [response](#) to the consultation that agreed with the proposed temporary changes and highlighted the need for a more long- term solution to the problems of local audit.

Pensions and the Levelling Up White Paper

6. The [Levelling Up White Paper](#) refers to the Local Government Pension Scheme in the context of UK pension scheme investment calling on the UK's institutional investors to boost Britain's long-term growth. The UK Government will work with Local Government Pension Funds to publish plans for increasing local investment, including setting an ambition of up to 5% of assets invested in projects which support local areas.
7. Officials have clarified the 'up to 5%' (£16 billion as at March 2021) quoted is an ambition and is neither mandatory in scale nor a ceiling not to be breached. It will however be mandatory to have a levelling up plan to achieve that ambition. Furthermore, 'local' does not relate to 'the backyard' of the fund authority – investments made anywhere in the UK could be included in a levelling up plan.
8. We are informed that a consultation in the summer will cover this and other matters such as the outstanding climate risk and reporting regulations and asset pooling guidance.

Support for Low Income Households

1. The resources board continues to discuss the significant risks to our more disadvantaged households and communities from the long-term health, social and economic impacts of the pandemic. We are facing growing cost-of-living pressures, with rising inflation and energy prices, and much of the temporary financial support provided during the pandemic is being withdrawn. This presents particular challenges for councils seeking to deliver the 'levelling up' agenda and promote confident, resilient communities and inclusive, sustainable local economies. The resources board will be considering proposals for working with councils, government, and partners to deliver a more sustainable, long-term solution to reducing socioeconomic inequality and promoting resilience, whilst also ensuring that a robust national and local safety net remains in place for those who need it.

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