

Resources Board Priorities and Work Programme 2022/23

Purpose of report

For information.

Summary

This report provides an overview of priorities for the 2022/23 Resources Board meeting cycle.

Recommendation/s

Members are invited to note the proposed priority areas for 2022/23.

Action

Officers to action as appropriate in line with members comments and steers.

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Resources Board Priorities and Work Programme 2022/23

Background

1. The LGA's Resources Board shapes and develops the association's policies and programs in relation to Local Government Finance, Support for Low Income Households; and Workforce Issues.
2. Members are asked to consider possible areas of work for 2022/23.

Local Government Finance Priorities for 2022/23

Council Funding

3. Continue to work on estimating the pressures on all services and press for funding that reflects current and future demand, particularly for housing, homelessness, adult social care and children's services, lobbying Government to provide sustainable funding to meet these needs.
4. Work with local and central government on a system of local government funding that supports long-term planning, is evidence-based, simpler and more transparent with appropriate transition mechanisms.

Locally raised resources

5. Press for freedoms that lead to greater local financial autonomy with a view to achieving local control over both council tax and business rates.
6. Lobby for improvements to business rates to help tackle business rates avoidance and develop proposals to improve the system, including valuation and the appeals process.
7. Consider potential work on new local taxes, reform of existing local taxes and control over fees and changes to fully recover costs.

Capital investment

8. Further develop policy on capital financing and investing and contribute to national reviews in these areas so that they support and enable prudent investment and financial management.
9. Contribute to reviews of the accounting and financial regulatory framework for councils to ensure it is appropriate, not over restrictive and balanced with local freedom and accountability.

Pensions

10. We will continue to support councils in their role as LGPS administering authorities to meet new statutory requirements on climate change risk and reporting, with regard to the investment strategy of the pension fund and considering integration of those strategies with local climate policies.

11. We will work to amend the Boycotts, Disinvestment and Sanctions Bill, once introduced, to maintain the ability of councils to make unfettered investment decisions.
12. We will continue to work with CIPFA to support councils in their role as LGPS administering authorities to find ways to ease delays signing off full council accounts which impact on and delay the publication of otherwise finalised pension fund accounts.

Workforce Priorities for 2022/23

13. Some of the workforce priorities stem from the DLUHC Grant Determination Letter, others relate to direct grant programmes undertaken with government departments. Workforce also has some income generation objectives and provides additional support to the LGA's policy agenda.
14. The workforce offer set out in the DLUHC Grant Letter will involve management of national pay negotiations on behalf of all relevant employers relating to the 2022 pay award and taking forward 2023 negotiations, with joint circulars on relevant issues agreed with Unions.
15. This offer will also support councils to build skills, enhance capacity, address challenges, including issues relating to retention, recruitment and new ways of working, including workforce planning. All councils will be able to benefit from individual support and advice on mediation, investigation, employment law issues and HR matters.
16. The 2022-23 programme consists of three parts. The 'Supporting Workforce' offer will deliver:
 - 16.1. Apprenticeship Support, including a programme of general advice and guidance, a webinar programme, updates and expansions of the LGA guidance notes and toolkits.
 - 16.2. Targeted workforce support or advice, including bespoke support around workforce planning, provided to at least 50 councils (including intensive support for 10) receiving positive satisfaction ratings.
 - 16.3. Work to support the development of local government workforce capacity, including on recruitment and retention issues and employee engagement.
 - 16.4. Specialist HR and employment law advice, as well as mediation and investigation support, carried out as part of the Joint Negotiating Committee procedure; and promoting, researching and supporting councils' internal equalities, diversity and inclusion work.
 - 16.5. Provision of key workforce information, including FAQs, guides, workforce bulletins to deliver guidance and information regarding key local government workforce developments.
17. The 'National Collective Bargaining and Industrial Relations' offer will deliver:

- 17.1. The LGA continuing to manage collective bargaining on behalf of the local government sector.
 - 17.2. The LGA will continue to provide the secretariat and officer function (providing advice, research and stakeholder management) for National Employers in the various collective bargaining units within the local government workforce (local government services, LG chief officers, LG chief executives, craft workers, firefighters, fire brigade managers, police staff, coroners, Soulbury, youth and community staff).
 - 17.3. Additionally, activity will involve renegotiating the core National Joint Council pay spine to ensure compliance with the National Living Wage and provide consequential implementation support to councils impacted by the changes.
18. The 'Equality, Diversity and Inclusion' offer will deliver:
- 18.1. Targeted and updated resources, information guides, webinars and additional support to develop the knowledge base and the application of equalities duties among councils. This support will include an expanded EDI hub, guidance on the Public Sector Equality Duty, equality action plans and service design that embeds equalities.
 - 18.2. Action learning sets for councils around the co-design of policies and services, including how they substantially integrate equalities considerations within these processes.
19. We will continue to support councils in the implementation of the McCloud age discrimination remedy into public service pension schemes.
20. We will continue to engage with HMT and DLUHC to ensure that the return of exit cap legislation provides the appropriate flexibility for employers in workforce reorganisations.

Support for Low Income Households Priorities for 2022/23

Cost of Living Pressures

21. Support collaboration across the LGA, Government, councils and the wider sector to help councils to deliver fair, efficient and effective support for households affected by the significant rise in the cost of living
22. Engage with other LGA Boards to develop a cross-cutting approach to financial resilience and wellbeing beyond the welfare system and financial services / support. Examples include: fuel efficiency and retrofitting; housing affordability; local economic strategies and recovery; devolution of employment and skills; health disparities; children's wellbeing and attainment; money and mental health; access to healthy affordable food - local food partnerships and environmental sustainability

23. Member collaboration and advice to link to delivery of improvement support on key areas including local welfare delivery and debt management / recovery
24. Strengthen the collection, use and sharing of data to understand and address impacts on particular groups
25. Integrate with wider LGA work on integrating 'lived experience' into service design and delivery, for example through the use of poverty truth commissions or similar

Welfare delivery

26. Ensure councils can collaborate effectively and share views with the Department for Work and Pensions on the continued implementation of Universal Credit, in particular the move of long-standing legacy claimants via 'Move to UC'
27. Continue to press for long-term, flexible and adequate funding for local welfare support, with an emphasis on building resilience to reduce demand for crisis support in the longer-term

Fair and effective debt management

28. Development of a 'debt maturity model' to enable councils to benchmark and identify areas for development, collaboration and improvement, with a particular emphasis on supporting households impacted by the pandemic and the rising cost of living

Implications for Wales

29. We will continue to work with the Welsh LGA to share good practice and information.

Implications for Equalities

30. ...

Financial Implications

31. There are no immediate financial implications

Next steps

32. The Resources Board will discuss and agree the 2022/23 work programme during its first meeting of the new cycle 22 September 2022.