

Workforce Board Legacy

Purpose

For discussion.

Summary

This paper briefly summarises the governance context of the former Workforce Board and its key areas of responsibility. The relationship with the continuing separate employer arrangements (e.g. the National Joint Councils for Local Government and Fire) is described and key legacy issues are identified.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the contents of the paper and offer comments as necessary.

Action

Officers to respond as necessary to any comments.

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Workforce Board context, responsibilities and constitutional relationships

1. The Workforce Board grew out of the governance arrangements of the predecessor arms-length employer bodies, the Employers' Organisation and Local Government Employers, which had varying responsibilities over the years including company management that are now defunct. Following the "Getting Closer" review the on-going workforce programme of the LGA has been managed by the Workforce Team which is part of the Workforce, Leadership and Productivity Directorate. The Workforce Team section of the LGA Business Plan was overseen by the Workforce Board, covering the core issues of pay, pensions and advice/consultation on employment topics as well as the strategic workforce challenges facing our sector.
2. The Board was constitutionally separate from the employer-side arrangements for the key national pay negotiating groups because collective bargaining is carried out through "joint council" structures with the trade unions; these are sovereign bodies which can make collective agreements. So the Board in effect provided the LGA view to the employers' sides, though in practice, close working is maintained because several lead members of the Board also sat on the employers' sides. There are separate governance arrangements for pension issues also.
3. The Board also provided oversight and direction on a number of key strategic issues over the years, including for example, the equal pay crisis and the costs of litigation and pay reform; the consequences of the Living Wage campaign for local pay structures; the workforce implications of public service transformation; the transfer of Public Health staff to local government; and the development of social enterprises and mutual organisations. Some of these issues are on-going and can be expected to be on future agendas for the Resources Board and perhaps other Boards.

On-going areas of activity and arrangements for oversight

Business plan

4. Development of and progress on the Workforce Team section of the business plan will be reported to the Resources Board.

Pay negotiations

5. The Resources Board relationship with the pay negotiating functions will be similar to the out-going Workforce Board arrangements described above. The employer side arrangements will be continuing and it is anticipated that lead members of the Resources Board with workforce responsibilities will be part of the joint council arrangements.

Pensions

6. Finalise and implement new governance arrangements for the LGPS.
7. Finalise and implement Fair Deal provisions in the LGPS which provide value for authorities.

8. Lobbying government to take a sensible 'objectives based; approach to the structural reform of the 89 England and Wales LGPS funds.
9. Ensuring sufficient local authority representation on the Teachers' Pensions Scheme Advisory Board and that administrative costs for employers provide value.
10. Achieving amendments to the European pensions directive which will avoid undue costs to local authorities through excessive regulation.

Strategic pay issues

11. There are several key areas of on-going work covering all levels of the workforce for which the Resources Board will take lead responsibility:
 - 11.1 The relative position of local government pay in the wider public sector including the implications of the Living wage and how competitive the sector is in relation to other employers.
 - 11.2 The role of increments, bonuses, performance and contribution-related pay in improving productivity.
 - 11.3 The continued political interest in the pay of senior managers.

Social Worker career development

12. With the quality of safeguarding especially being a critical on-going issue, the Workforce and Children and Young People's Boards begun a joint project aimed at improving the retention of good, experienced social workers. Work in-hand includes:
 - 12.1 the development of a research report on effective management of key stages in social work careers and an associated podcast; and
 - 12.2 a joint bid for innovation funding with the College of Social Work, including development of a "developing social workers" award scheme for employers.
13. It is anticipated that the Children's and Young People's Board will wish to take a lead role in overseeing this work with updates to the Resources Board.

Workforce dimensions of public service transformation

14. There are some key practical issues about managing terms and conditions etc. which have to be dealt with as public services and therefore the people providing them become more integrated. The Workforce Team has been working with a number of key organisations to develop advice and information and will continue to do so. This includes a series of workshops run with the Public Sector People Managers' Association (PPMA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) following a successful series last year and liaison with the Cabinet Office and Public Service Transformation Network.
15. The team will continue to be closely involved in ensuring the fair and efficient transfer of staff out of local government which flow from national policies such as the introduction of universal credit and the transfer of local land searches to the land registry.

16. It is anticipated that the Innovation and Improvement Board will wish to take a lead role in oversight of this work with updates to the Resources Board.