



consultation response form

delivering a rewarding future: an approach to pay and benefits in local government for the 21st century

delivering through people:
big challenges, big questions

May 2007

You can use this response form to note your views – or you can use another format if you wish. Tell us what matters to you; you don't need to answer every question. Please return the form to:

Mayor Steve Bullock,
Chair HR Panel,
Local Government Association
Local Government House
SW1P 3HZ

Or email: mayorstevebullock.workforce@lga.gov.uk

If you have any questions please call 020 7187 7370

Please include your contact details

name	Elaine Orchard
title	HR Team Leader
authority	North Wiltshire District Council
email	eorchard@northwilts.gov.uk
telephone	01249 706338

deadline for submitting views is Friday 29 June 2007

IDeA, LGE, LGA

delivering through people: big challenges, big questions

what are the most important workforce challenges your council faces?

A major restructuring of the council to create a new corporate, customer focused organisation to meet future customer and legislative demands. This involves a major change management programme , culture change and significant impacts at senior management level.

At the same time the council is introducing a new pay and grading structure to fulfil the single status requirements. A decision is also awaited within the next six months on whether the council will become unitary.

what are the biggest barriers and constraints that prevent you from addressing workforce issues locally?

1) Bureaucratic processes that restrict negotiations, making any change to NJC (Green Book) terms and conditions complex and slow. This can mean that any changed NJC terms and conditions create policies that just seem to become longer and more complex over time. Employee awareness and understanding of these can be quite difficult and to private sector employees joining the organisation it adds to the image that the public sector appears slow and bureaucratic.

2) Greater Freedom and flexibility to change NJC terms and conditions and look at pay and benefits differently- we are interested in flexible benefits and a total rewards approach , but complex NJC terms and conditions create a barrier to this.

what are the most important actions all authorities, with their partners, should take to address shared current and future workforce challenges as a sector?

Change management – councils need employees that embrace change, be more customer aware and business focused.

Performance management – clear objective setting, personal development and moving towards valuing contribution and moving away from service based pay progression. More leadership training to create right management skills to move towards delivering this.

Development of moves towards a total rewards approach

Succession Planning- retaining key posts and creating career paths. Encouraging greater diversity in the workforce in terms of age and ethnic mix

Re branding councils to make them appeal to a wide candidate base as a place where they would like to work.

what are the most important actions that national local government bodies (with other national and regional partners) could take to support you in addressing shared workforce challenges?

Review the approach to national agreements and the NJC terms and conditions (Green Book). The HR function spends much time on processes as well as employment law related people issues. We need support to simplify our processes so we can focus on the strategic issues shown above. Many of these processes are largely driven by NJC terms and conditions.

Support HR professionals to develop greater expertise in pay and benefits, change management. The demands on HR are moving away more from service support to strategic provider and we will need more support in these areas.

Simplify the NJC terms and conditions, make them less complex and bureaucratic and easily understood by all. There is a strong emphasis on basic pay and numerous kinds of allowances, making future development of total reward difficult.

will the proposed vision take us in the right direction? Does it capture your ambitions and needs?

Yes it does – we are keen to know timings of any changes so we can plan our proposed, more creative HR strategies for the council.

can your council provide a good practice case study that others can learn from?

As explained in first question, unfortunately we are undergoing a great deal of change at the moment so are not an ideal case study.

LGE, delivering a rewarding future: an approach to pay and benefits in local government for the 21st Century

1. are you satisfied with the **process** for agreeing the new strategy, and **what it should look like** as outlined on page 3?

Yes

2. Do you have any views on the **core principles**?

Yes – they are excellent

3. In the context of a national agreement what would be **most useful** to your authority in the **medium to long term**:

- a) working towards harmonizing pay and conditions of all public sector staff e.g. local government services, health, police etc. to reflect new and future working arrangements for service delivery?
or
- b) maximizing support to council's to further determine their own arrangements for pay and conditions at a local level? **or**
- c) seeking to retain common national conditions in respect of issues such as maternity and sickness benefits but keeping pay level determination at local employer level?

B – It is important that this would be in the form of practical hands on support , not just case studies and handbooks

4. What are your views on the:

- a) **short term objectives** on page 3
- b) **medium term objectives** on page 4, in particular
 - the move towards a Total Rewards Framework
 - multi-year deals aligned with CSR settlements
 - incorporating pensions in pay and conditions negotiations
 - whether the Strategy should aim to encourage moves towards pay progression systems that reward contribution
- c) **Longer term goals** on page 5
 - national public sector rewards framework
 - service specific job families

We would be interested in knowing the timings relating to each of these once they have been developed.

The medium term objectives outlined match our own council aims, it's just a shame for us that these are medium term, these form part of our current thinking.

- A) Short term objectives – We support these, there is an increasing need for good salary matching information as we need to identify market premiums in a rational approach that avoids equal pay issues. Increased use of private sector comparison information would be v helpful. This acts as a good foundation for the long term objectives you have outlined.
- B) Medium term Objectives-
 - Fully support move towards total rewards as identified as part of the Pay and Workforce strategy.
 - Agree with multi year deals aligned to CSR settlements
 - We are happy for pensions to be included in national pay and conditions negotiations, but not locally
 - We agree on the suggested move towards pay progression systems rewarding contribution
- C) Long term objectives – We support these - the new public sector rewards framework with local frameworks beneath sounds very rational.
Pay agreements that focus on service specific job families sound sensible, however a move towards pay structures that reflect service specific job families although rational could be complex and open to challenge. Large authorities will need to work together. Pay structures require sound market data to remain robust and all should be reviewed every 5/6 years – this highlights need for an significant increase in rewards knowledge in HR functions.

5. what would be **most useful** to your authority:

- a) **continuing to try and unify national agreements**, for example seeking to incorporate craft workers into the green book? **or**
- b) seeking to take some groups out of the single status agreement and set up **new negotiating groups based on service specific job families?**

B) It is important that this would be in the form of practical hands on support , not just case studies and handbooks

6. what are your views on the model for reforming the negotiating machinery as outlined in annex a?

We support this framework

Good strong swift feedback from negotiating bodies upwards. It only works if communication and feedback is clear, focused and works quickly.

We agree with suggested supplement outlined in 11)

7. are there any major issues that you would like to see dealt with by LGE that we have missed in the discussion paper?

Simplifying the Green Book to enable HR to have more time on strategic issues and less on related processes, which do not add value to our customers in the council.

Thank you for taking the time to give us your views

