

# LGRJF

Local Government Reform Joint Forum

## JOINT COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

### RPA IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

At its meeting held on 29 April the Joint Forum again expressed frustration at the continuing lack of clarity with regard to the RPA implementation timeline. Concerns were raised about the impact on local government staff and services. Department representatives on the Forum were asked to feed back the concerns raised about the implementation timetable and particularly the impact on staff.

Following discussion it was accepted that the human resource issues associated with any work on council convergence must be subject to the Guiding Principles issued by the Public Service Commission.

### RPA STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Following the Joint Forum meeting on 24 March the agreed Staff Severance Scheme was forwarded to the Strategic Leadership Board (SLB) for consideration at its meeting held on 14 April.

The SLB, chaired by Minister Poots, agreed the proposed Staff Severance Scheme in principle. It also agreed that further clarity on the future of the reform programme and funding is needed before the proposals can be disseminated and applied. The SLB recorded its appreciation for the continuing valuable contribution made by the Joint Forum.

### SYSTEM FOR FILLING POSTS IN THE NEW COUNCIL STRUCTURES AND DRAFT RECRUITMENT DOCUMENTATION FOR THE 11 NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE POSTS

These two papers, which were agreed by the Joint Forum in March, were forwarded to the Local Government Staff Commission for comment. Following consideration at its meeting held on 19 April the Commission made some drafting suggestions and broadly agreed and supported both papers. The Sides' Leads will now have a fuller discussion on the appropriate next steps for the progress of these papers and will report to the June meeting of the Joint Forum.

Formal proposals from Local Government Employers regarding the development of a categorisation process, which forms an integral part of the procedure, remain outstanding.

*"...facilitating local government reorganisation...."*

Priority Issues for the Joint Forum:

Vacancy Control System

Staff Transfer Scheme

Consultation and Negotiating Arrangements Post RPA

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## INFORMATION ON THE JOINT FORUM

More on the Joint Forum can be accessed on the dedicated web page at:

<http://www.lgsc.org.uk/new-initiatives/local-government-reform-joint-forum/>

The following details are available for information:

Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements

Agreed Minutes

Membership Details

Joint Communication Bulletins

Agreed Circulars

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### OPERATION OF THE VACANCY CONTROL SYSTEM IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Recognising the balance to be struck between protecting staff from risk of redundancy and the business imperative to continue to deliver services, the Joint Forum has taken a cautious approach to moving the implementation of the Vacancy Control System to the 2nd Phase in light of the uncertainty about the date of reform implementation.

#### Monitoring and Review

The Joint Forum has monitored the operation of the Vacancy Control System on an ongoing basis since October. Councils were required to submit returns for the first monitoring period 01 October-31 November 2009.

At the Joint Forum meeting held on 29 April members considered returns from councils for the second monitoring period 01 December-31 March 2010. The Secretariat has been asked to provide a more detailed analysis of the completed proformas at the June meeting to inform Joint Forum deliberations on the future use of Vacancy Controls.

Members would like to acknowledge the prompt response by councils to the request to submit returns for the second monitoring period but have asked the Secretariat to make contact, as a matter of urgency, with the one Council that has yet to make any return.

#### Current Situation

Members considered a paper which outlined some of the difficulties and tensions that are starting to arise as a result of implementing vacancy controls to a restricted number of posts in the current climate of uncertainty. Acknowledging that the application of Vacancy Controls must be reviewed in light of the anticipated delay in the implementation of RPA, the Joint Forum has tasked the Sides' Leads with the development of an options paper on the future use of Vacancy Controls. The paper will be considered at the June meeting of the Joint Forum when it is hoped an announcement on the implementation timeline will have been made.

In the meantime the Vacancy Control Procedures will continue to apply only to the Phase 1 'at risk' posts of:

- ◇ Chief Executive
- ◇ Directors
- ◇ Heads of Service
- ◇ PAs to Chief Executives, Directors and Heads of Service
- ◇ Members Services

Any queries about the implementation of the Vacancy Control procedures should be addressed in the first instance to the Secretariat at Staff Commission Offices by telephoning (028) 9031 3200.

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