

LGRJF

Local Government Reform Joint Forum

JOINT COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

PROGRESS ON VACANCY CONTROLS

Councils have been implementing the Vacancy Controls System for Phase 1 'at risk' posts (i.e. chief executives, directors, heads of service, PAs and member services) since 01 October 2009. An Addendum to the original Circular was issued on 09 November 2009 which primarily:

- detailed posts which are excluded from the System i.e. the majority of operational posts which are necessary for the effective implementation of councils' functions
- detailed the monitoring and review arrangements. Councils are reminded to submit monitoring information for the period 1 October - 30 November to the Secretariat.

The Forum are currently considering a 2nd Addendum to the Vacancy Control Circular about applying the System to all remaining potentially "at risk" posts and giving advice on the treatment of fixed term and funded posts and acting up arrangements. It is anticipated that this will be issued when the RPA Implementation Timetable is clarified in the New Year.

HR AND LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

THURSDAY 10 AND FRIDAY 11 DECEMBER 2009

The Staff Commission and SOLACE NI facilitated this event which focussed on HR and leadership and the reform implementation issues. The Joint Forum and Public Service Commission also assisted which was attended by 120 delegates.

The seminar was an opportunity for chief executives, senior managers, HR professionals and trade union representatives to consider aspects of the work of the Joint Forum including:

- Vacancy Controls
- Establishment of the Local Forums
- Staff Severance Scheme
- Filling Posts in the New Organisations

The Conference also considered the development of a Strategic Improvement Agenda for Local Government and outplacement and other services for staff in a time of change.

COMMUNICATING HR ISSUES TO STAFF

Councils are encouraged to circulate copies of the Joint Communication Bulletins to all employees including those on any form of leave from the organisation e.g. long-term sickness, maternity leave, secondments and any agreed career breaks. Relevant employment legislation must be taken into account e.g. in relation to maternity leave.

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

Priority Issues for the Joint Forum:

Local Government RPA
Staff Severance Scheme

System for Filling Posts in
the New Council
Structures

Staff Transfer Scheme

Consultation and
Negotiating
Arrangements Post 2011

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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 now available for information:

Terms of Reference and Operating Arrangements

Agreed Minutes

Membership Details

Joint Communication Bulletins

Agreed Circulars

The next Joint Forum meeting will be held on:

**Wednesday 27
January 2010**

*“...facilitating local
government
reorganisation...”*

JOINT COMMUNICATION BULLETIN

THE JOINT FORUM MET ON 25 NOVEMBER 2009 AND THE FOLLOWING PROGRESS WAS MADE:

STAFF SEVERANCE SCHEME:

The RPA Staff Severance Scheme that will apply to all local government staff has been developed by a working group of the Forum and was discussed by the Forum at its meeting on 25th November.

The Scheme will cover staff in:

- 26 district councils (including Environmental Health and Building Control Group Committees)
- Arc21 and SWaMP 2008
- Any staff employed by Transition Committees
- Staff in the 11 new councils
- Northern Ireland Housing Executive

The Scheme is based on the provisions of the NI Executive's 5th Guiding Principle as recommended by the Public Service Commission 'Voluntary Severance Arrangements' and it is intended that the Scheme will have only minimal application.

The introduction of Severance will be phased and expressions of interest will be invited from specific groups of staff at the appropriate time linked to the recruitment of particular posts and the development of new structures. The funding arrangements, which are separate to the terms of any scheme, have still to be resolved and are subject to ongoing deliberations.

The Scheme is currently being consulted on via the Employers' Side of the NIJC and the JNC for Chief Executives.

FILLING POSTS IN THE NEW ORGANISATIONS:

The Forum will consider a paper on a system for filling posts in the new council structures at its next meeting. Legal opinion is being sought specifically to address concerns on the use of restricted recruitment pools and the equality implications thereof. Whilst there will inevitably be competition for some posts it is anticipated that the majority of staff will simply transfer to the new council structures.

Work is currently progressing on the preparation of a draft, generic job description and person specification for the new chief executive posts. A Project Plan in relation to the filling of the chief executives posts is being prepared by the Secretariat.

STAFF TRANSFER SCHEME:

The Forum has agreed to consider a first draft of the Transfer Scheme at its next meeting.