DELIVERING THE HR AGENDA FOR REFORM

PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

CONFERENCE REPORT

Thursday 26 June 2014

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1. INTRODUCTION

The People and Organisation Development Conference was held on Thursday 26 June. It was attended by some 70 delegates, including council Chief Executives, HR Professionals and Trade Union Representatives.

2. CONFERENCE OBJECTIVE

The objective of the conference was to re-focus the various components of the People and Organisation Development Strategic Framework (Strategic Framework) in order to revise and re-launch it in November 2014.

3. PROGRAMME AND MATTERS CONSIDERED

Those attending initially heard a range of presentations designed to set out the up-to-date context for the Strategic Framework. The topics considered were:-

- **The People and Organisation Development Challenges Facing the New Councils**
- **The Work of the Local Government Reform Joint Forum**
- **The Capacity Building Plan Supporting Implementation of Local Government Reform**
- **Communications Support**

The conference also received updates in respect of the progress made under each of the Strategic Pillars within the Strategic Framework, as follows:

<u>Leadership and Talent Management</u>

The topics considered were:-

- Leadership Academy for Local Government
- Talent Identification Toolkit and Local Government Jobs NI
- Situational Judgement Tests

<u>Employee Relations and Pay & Reward</u>

The topics considered were:-

- New Industrial Relations Framework for Local Government
- Unified Pay and Reward Model for Local Government
- A New Approach to Recruiting and Developing Local Government Staff

Performance Culture and Learning Organisation

The topic considered was:-

- Performance Culture Model for Local Government

4. WORKSHOP SESSIONS

Workshop sessions were held to consider key issues surrounding each of the Pillars and to determine the topics which each Working Group should focus on as priority issues for the next 12 month period.

The topics and associated actions are set out below.

4.1 Leadership and Talent Management Workshop

Matters to be considered:-

- Review the existing membership of the two working groups to ensure cross-council representation
- Integrate new staff coming in from civil service/planning into the working group
- Review what has been achieved so far
- Engage with the 11 new Chief Executives through consultation in conjunction with the HR teams
- Require some governance changes to be made in the overall programme management
- Provide better resourcing for the groups
- Integrate into the new council's corporate plan and community plan
- Strategy should underpin the entire local government sector and should receive the support of all 11 councils
- Look at branding – for the local government sector
- Talent should be looked at from different perspectives
- Linkage with the other groups and iESE toolkit
- Link Leadership and Talent toolkits in with the Capacity Building Plan

Actions for next meeting of the working group:-

- ❖ Update on work to date within both groups
- ❖ Defer next steps until Strategy re-launch?
- ❖ Some amendments to the actual wording in the Leadership and Talent pillars in the strategic framework were suggested

A Working Group meeting was subsequently arranged for 14 October 2014.

4.2 Employee Relations and Pay & Reward Workshop

4.2.1 Employee Relations

Matters to be considered:-

- Confirm the aim which was agreed at the workshop as:
  - Implementation of a new IR Framework to support the changed environment of working with 11 new councils
- No consensus on whether or not to retain the link to NJC (pros and cons of this and any alternative framework needs to be identified and examined). Establishing a regional mechanism and breaking away from NJC could be a major exercise – would it be achievable by 2015?
- Single table bargaining or separate arrangement for Chief Executives/ Chief Officers?
- NIJC has not delivered and finishes constitutionally on 31 March 2015
- LGRJF has a limited time horizon linked to the implementation of reform
- Model IR Framework received widespread support within the sector
- New model must have buy-in and needs adoption in councils – where do you get validation?

Actions for next meeting of working group:-

- ❖ Develop plan to promote the new IR Framework to:
  - New Chief Executives
  - New Councils Operating in Shadow Form
  - HR Professionals
- ❖ How to get new model established – a Task and Finish WG?

4.2.2 Pay & Reward

Matters to be considered:-

- Need to confirm the aims which were agreed at the workshop as:
  - A common set of Terms and Conditions rather than 11
  - Recruit to grade across all councils
  - Develop a regional approach in which Local Government seen as a unified sector for employment
- There is a multiplicity of different rates/add on payments for posts in the same functional areas
- Staff will be joining local government on different Terms and Conditions
- Some ‘specialist’ posts can be difficult to attract applicants for
- How well will existing HR and Payroll systems integrate into new structure?
- It may be hard to break away from current practice and culture, for example in relation to application of sick pay and holiday arrangements, etc.
- Practice has shown it has not been possible to get 26 councils to agree a common job description – yet the new 11 would need to sign up to this approach. This may be a longer term goal.
- Pay relativities between top and bottom in an organisation could be important
- Need to separate pay and grading from pay structure
- With 26 different existing approaches culture needs to change to understand and accept the concept of a unified pay and reward framework
- Need an accepted mechanism for Job Evaluation – each of the 26 existing councils approached Single Status differently
- New appointments after April 2015 present opportunity to standardise across all councils, for example, Administrative Assistant in Payroll, HR, Finance, etc. – all are Administrative Assistants
- Chief Executive posts have different bands – could this be an issue across the sector?

- TUPE protects existing staff – their T&Cs only change if they go for an opportunity post – but it is therefore a voluntary change

- New 11 councils could apply the living wage to NI as a positive step

- Have pay research and keep NI in line with elsewhere

- NICS has 11 departments, but common pay structure operates – separate generic banding family and pay. JE in NICS is not individual – they check/verify that pay families are correct.

- Health have nine pay grades, which shortens length of pay spines

- In Education there is a link between Scale 3 and Scale 4 and staff can progress through these grades (needs to satisfy equality considerations)

- Terms and Conditions are broadly similar and therefore can be used as a baseline.

Actions for next meeting of working group:-

- ❖ Benchmark/seek examples of best practice in other sectors/areas

- ❖ Refine requirements for workforce profile for local government and progress with new data collection

- ❖ Define what is it that employers want to reward:

  - Need for performance standards?
  - Get the basics the same then have salary sacrifice for other things

Working Group meetings were subsequently arranged for 20 August and 6 October.

4.3 Performance Culture and Learning Organisation

Matters to be considered:-

- Need a clear focus on what the priorities are in the Strategic Framework

- May be useful to identify and prioritise the pieces of work which generate wins across the whole sector versus those where the wins are more specific to individual councils?

- Use the force of Reform to harness the opportunity to innovate and change – what does good performance look like? Don't waste the opportunity.

Actions for next meeting of working group:-

- Convene a meeting of the Pillar Working Group in August when OPES have progressed work on the Model. Invite all who expressed interest at the Workshop. The work to progress will be:

  - The need to devise a 1-page 'map' showing the linkages across all 6 Pillars with Performance Culture at the top and everything underpinned by the Learning Organisation

  - Populate the people, processes, culture, structure segments to complete the Performance Culture Model

  - Cross reference Performance Culture Framework against iESE Toolkit

  - Collate the learning and information from projects supported by the Staff Commission and Training Group to use as case study examples

  - Find out what else is out there to be benchmarked against

A Working Group meeting has been arranged for 16 October.

5. RE-LAUNCHING THE PEOPLE AND ORGANISATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Framework will be re-launched at a Conference on 25 November. This will bring together the outputs from the Working Group up to that point and agree the future governance and resourcing for the Framework.