WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL (WPC)

Purpose

1. This report provides members with an update on developments concerning the Workforce Partnership Council (WPC), and seeks views on: -
   a. The proposed Strategic Priorities and Work Plan
   b. Decision-making processes
   c. Representation from local government

Background

2. Members will recall that the WPC is a tripartite social partnership across the public sector including Welsh Government, public sector employers and the Welsh public sector trades unions and has been in existence for a number of years; the WPC is normally chaired by the First Minister or appropriate Minister.

3. The WPC arrangements have been subject to review over the past year to make them more effective and to ensure that there is more transparency and clarity around its role and function, which has also seen the introduction of a Joint Executive Committee (JEC) at which local government is represented by the WLGA Chief Executive.

4. The role of JEC is to work with the independent secretariat to develop structures and proposals for consideration by the various sectors, in advance of the formal meeting arrangements of the WPC.

5. The review of arrangements has been introduced to ensure that any decisions, or any agreements made at the Workforce Partnership Council have been properly considered by the various sectors. This is to ensure that all parties are able to influence and shape any agreements so that they can be ‘co-developed, co-commissioned or co-adopted by all three parties’.

Vision, Mission, Strategic Priorities and Annual Work Programme

6. One of the criticisms of the WPC previously was that issues were raised in an ad hoc, unplanned manner. Having a clear understanding of its’ role and purpose, and placing it on a strategic footing was a priority of the review process.
7. The development of this strategic context for the WPC has enabled focussed discussion to ensure that any issues considered fit with the vision and strategic priorities. This supports the development of an agreed annual work plan and avoids any issues being 'parachuted' in for consideration.

8. The partners, through the JEC, have drafted the Annual Work Plan for 2019/20 which has four strategic priorities, underpinned by a range of key deliverables identified for that period in relation to:
   - Fair Work
   - Future of Work
   - Workforce Equity
   - Workforce Mobility

9. Members are asked to consider the role and strategic priorities within the Annual work plan for 2019/20 - this is currently undergoing amendment/redrafting and will be circulated once it becomes available, and before the WLGA Executive Board meeting on the 24th May.

**Decision Making Processes.**

10. In striving for clarity around its agreements the WPC is proposing to categorise its decisions and outcomes as either WPC Agreements; WPC Guidance or WPC Best Practice. It is still unclear at this point what the status of each description will mean.

11. The expectation is that within the limits of sovereignty, partners’ representatives will be expected to agree or otherwise on behalf of its constituent sector having first had the opportunity to consult on the various matters under consideration.

12. The local government sector is part of the wider employers' arm of the tripartite. It will be important to ensure that as much consideration as possible is provided to the issues before representatives are charged with discussing and making agreements on behalf of the sector. It is important that members are clear around what decisions they are making in considering any future draft agreements so that the Association's representatives can ensure their best endeavours to reach outcomes that are satisfactory to all.

13. The WLGA would wish to engage with Chief Executives through SOLACE and HR Directors through their networks before the WLGA Executive Board gives its consideration to any issues in the work plan. It should be for the WLGA Executive Board to consider any draft agreements and determine any outcomes from the deliverables in the work plan.

14. The Draft protocol on WPC Agreements is currently undergoing drafting amendments but will be forwarded ahead of the Executive Board meeting for consideration by Members.
Membership of the Workforce Partnership Council

15. The full Workforce Partnership Council next meets on 1st July 2019 in Cardiff. The proposal for membership to represent local government is consistent with previous arrangements

  Councillor David Poole  WLGA Spokesperson for Workforce
  Chris Llewellyn  Chief Executive WLGA
  Jonathan Lloyd  Head of Employment WLGA
  Michelle Morris  SOLACE - CEO Blaenau Gwent
  Sharon Carney  Chair HRD – Head of HR Flintshire

Substitutes are also possible.

16. This arrangement will allow the views and opinions of the professional groups to be voiced but importantly that Members have the final decision through the Executive Board which are conveyed to the meeting through your Spokesperson.

Recommendations

17. Members are asked to:

  17.1 Note and comment on the report;

  17.2 Consider the Draft Strategic Context and The Workforce Partnership Council Annual Work programme 2019/ 20 for agreement;

  17.3 Consider the decision-making protocol for agreement;

  17.4 Agree the decision-making process for the Executive Board;

  17.5 Agree the membership from local government to representatives the sector at the Workforce Partnership Council.

Report cleared by:  Cllr David Poole
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