

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR CUSTOMERS, GOVERNANCE
AND EMPLOYEES**

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek the approval of Elected Members to develop a new approach to employee recognition, including an annual awards event, an expanded long service award scheme and to consider a possible future corporate employee recognition scheme.

Information

2. The report provides options to consider as part of a new corporate recognition scheme which builds on the provisions already made to recognise the contributions of all employees during the Covid pandemic. As well as the thanks of elected members and senior officers, this contribution was recognised at Full Council on 23 September 2021 by the award of one day's recognition leave. This new approach seeks to develop a future corporate recognition scheme which will deliver a more consistent approach across the Council whilst appreciating that there is not a "one size fits all" solution as employees are motivated by different options.
3. The Recognition and Reward workstream of the Workforce Resilience and Recovery Group, chaired by the Service Director, Customers, Governance and Employees, initially looked at non-financial recognition and reward to develop appropriate and consistent mechanisms for doing this across all Council departments and to draw on the good practice being developed in some areas notably ASCH and Place.
4. Discussions have taken place with the Corporate Leadership Team and it was agreed to avoid providing financial recognition to employees for a number of reasons and the issue of a one-off payment for frontline workers and those working at home was dismissed. However, there was a clear desire to have a range of options available to meet differing expectations. In some respect, any recognition scheme is by its very nature divisive as the employer is choosing to recognise the contribution of one person over others. Elected members will be aware that the Council is part of national pay bargaining arrangements and there are therefore limited actions which can be taken in respect of pay and it is important to maintain an equality proofed pay system using job evaluation to avoid equal pay claims.

5. Whilst there is support for some kind of recognition for nominated colleagues' contributions during the Covid emergency, there is also an expectation that a longer-term option would be developed. The longer-term proposals are outlined later in this report and could form the basis of future employee engagement sessions to identify if the scheme would have widespread support or if other options need to be explored. The recent award ceremony held for Inspire employees provides a useful example of how this can be done effectively at relatively low cost and work will be undertaken to learn from the Inspire approach.
6. The report also includes the proposal to extend and alter the current arrangements to recognise long service which currently is applied at 25 years to take account for the changing nature of employment in public services.

Recognition Events for Employee Contributions during the Pandemic

7. The group working on this workstream considered a series of face to face events would be a suitable vehicle to recognise the contribution of a number of colleagues who have consistently and significantly gone over and above what is expected during the Covid pandemic. The suggestion is for a series of afternoon tea parties, hosted by the Chairman and the Chair of Personnel Committee for nominated employees and would involve light refreshments being provided plus the presentation of a certificate. These events would include relevant Elected Members (the Leader, the Chairman, Committee Chairs for example) and members of the Corporate Leadership Team to provide an opportunity to say thank you in person.

Options for a future non-financial recognition scheme

8. There are several schemes already in place which could have a wider application. It is not intended for any corporate scheme to prevent what is already in place from continuing but rather to build on the existing schemes and to enable a more consistent approach to recognition to be developed across the whole Council.
9. Non-monetary rewards have a number of benefits over other forms of reward. They are more cost efficient because the recognition itself is the focus, and the value from the employee's point of view is derived from the act of recognition. They tend also to have a more immediate impact if delivered promptly. The categories for an annual award scheme need to be further developed alongside a set of validation criteria. The panel of judges will need to come from across the departments and include a member of the Corporate Leadership Team. At this time, elected members have not been included in the process but this may be part of further discussion on how the scheme evolves.
10. Outside of the formal recognition award scheme, there are a range of activities that can be better utilised to provide positive comment on employees' contributions all year round. These include:
 - Giving employees time to work on their own projects
 - Allow time to do volunteer work
 - One-to-one meetings with senior officers and Committee Chairs
 - Give employees the chance to show appreciation for each other by developing a virtual "Thank you" wall
 - Reward employees with more responsibility.

- Give employees the opportunity to attend educational events/workshops
- Recognise employees on social media and on message boards in Reception areas
- Showcase Thank you messages from members of the public, service users and their families.

Next Steps

11. Subject to the approval of Personnel Committee, planning for the events can begin immediately using an existing list of nominations, subject to Covid restrictions being relaxed as identified in the national roadmap.
12. In terms of the annual award scheme, we need to develop a presentation to be used as part of the engagement events to gauge the level of support for this proposal. This can be both as part of a future Q&A session as well as inviting comment from across the workforce. We may want to include an “apprentice of the year” and/or “Learner of the Year” award to build on the developing list of categories.
13. In developing the proposals, we have kept in mind the following requirements:
 - Any scheme needs to be fair, open and transparent and available to everyone
 - The number of awards needs careful consideration to ensure nomination and achievement are valued
 - Awards must be of an appropriate value to ensure political sensitivities and external criticism are not triggered but the recipients still have something of value
 - The assessment process must be credible
 - A revised long service scheme is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

Other Options Considered

14. Members of this Committee have regularly recognised that our employees are the Council’s greatest asset. It therefore seems fitting to create a system to recognise those whose contribution goes over and above what is required. Recognition schemes, if correctly developed and applied, can create enhanced engagement across a workforce. The last eighteen months has demonstrated how flexible and committed our employees are and to not recognise this seems inappropriate.

Reasons for Recommendations

15. The last 18 months have highlighted the importance of recognising the contribution of all our employees during the global pandemic. However, as we return to the “new normal” there will be further challenges to meet in delivering modern public services to our residents. Members have previously confirmed that our workforce is our most valuable asset and therefore it is appropriate to develop a range of measures to recognise their ongoing loyalty and contributions.

Statutory and Policy Implications

16. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Data Protection and Information Governance

17. There are no data protection issues arising from this report as it does not contain any personal information.

Financial Implications

18. The various schemes we are seeking to develop will be at relatively low cost and be funded from existing service budgets.

Human Resources Implications

19. The Human Resources implications are contained in the body of the report. It is recognised that people respond to different motivators. The intention to seek a range of employee views as part of the programme of question and answer sessions will seek to develop broader engagement in developing the new recognition scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Elected members:

- 1) Agree to the organising of a series of events hosted by the Chairman and involving elected members of this and other relevant Committees.
- 2) Agree to the development of a longer-term recognition scheme including an annual award ceremony.
- 3) Agree to the expansion and amendment of the current Long Service Award scheme.

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For any enquiries about this report please contact: Gill Elder, Head of Human Resources on gill.elder@nottsc.gov.uk or 01159773867

Constitutional Comments (EKH 19/10/2021)

20. This report is appropriate to be considered by Personnel Committee and they have the power to make any resolution resultant upon the recommendation.

Financial Comments (SES 15/10/2021)

21. There are no specific financial implications arising directly from this report.

HR Comments (JP 20/10/2021)

22. The Human Resources implications are set out within the body of the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- None

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All