

Review of Long Service Award

1. Purpose of this report is to review current long service award provision and agree on a new approach to celebrate long service of staff who have reached certain service 'milestones'.
2. Nottinghamshire County Council recognises and values the contribution of all its employees. We recognise that many of our staff have worked with the Council for many years and the loyalty, commitments and high level of skill brought by these individuals is a key factor in our success. In recognition of these attributes, currently, a long service award is being given to employees with 25 years' service with the Council. The amount awarded is £100 which is applicable to all qualifying employees, whether full or part time. The award is by way of a gift(s) chosen by the employee but cannot be paid as cash.
3. Departments normally identify employees who become eligible based on continuous service. Where, however, the award becomes due based on aggregated service, the onus is on the employee to inform their line manager.
4. On an award becoming due, the employee gets consulted as to whether they wish their gift to be presented to them. If the employee chooses to do so, their line manager makes arrangements for this to take place. Employees also receive a Long Service Award certificate from the Chief Executive.

Current process of Long Service Award

5. Currently, it is costing approximately £4000 per year (8 working weeks' worth of time) to process an average 200 long service awards per year. It is a lengthy process. The process is set out below:
 - HR sends employee details of the scheme in the post. The employee buys a gift for up to £100 + VAT and sends HR the receipt for their purchase.
 - HR then checks the receipt has a VAT breakdown and number, copy it and return it to the employee and submit a vendor set up request to Accounts Payable. They complete a Payment Request Form (PRF) and attach a copy of the VAT receipt where relevant.
 - Accounts Payable process the PRF and send it to HR for coding. HR code the payment and send it to the budget holder for approval. Once approved a cheque is produced and is posted out to the employee.
6. It is clear from the above that the current process needs to be redesigned to ensure that long service awards are processed in a most efficient and effective manner as possible.

Proposed changes to the Long Service Award

7. It is important to recognise employees' service throughout their career. This helps in attracting, retaining and engaging employees. A fully engaged workforce will work hard to support the delivery of the Council's plan and produce better outcomes for the people of Nottinghamshire.

8. During the Covid-19 emergency, it would have been impossible to deliver and continue to provide services to our most vulnerable citizens without the invaluable contribution of our workforce. Therefore, we propose to reward staff on different service milestones. The minimum service required to receive a long-service award will be 10 years. Proposals are as follows:

- **At 10 years' service**, employee will be presented with a certificate by their line manager.
- **At 25 years' service**, employee will be presented with £120.00 gift voucher (Intu/Victoria Centre or Amazon e-vouchers). This will be an easier and most cost effective way of administering the payments. HR would run a quarterly report of staff who meet the 25 years continuous service condition and instruct BSC Payroll to make the award payment. HR would also advise the staff members' manager that the award has been paid and ask the manager to organise the long service award certificate.

Every 6 months, a ceremony (virtual) will be held for the Chairman to award employees with their certificates. An interactive programme will be designed to create a meaningful personalised celebration of employees' commitment and achievements over their long service. Draft programme for a virtual ceremony is attached as Appendix A.

- **At 30+ years' service**, an award ceremony will be held to celebrate, and the Chairman will present employees with certificates. As above, an interactive programme will be designed to celebrate.

9. As part of our internal process, recognised trade unions will also be consulted on the above proposals.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1) It is recommended that the proposed changes to the long service award be considered. It is a great opportunity to recognise the hard work of our employees and motivate and engage them.

Appendix A

Virtual Long Service Award Ceremony DRAFT PROGRAMME

Format of the virtual ceremony

- Conductor/Chair of the ceremony – HRWOD to nominate an appropriate officer
- Guest(s) – Chairman, other relevant Senior Officer(s)
- Duration – One and half hour to two hours
- Number of attendees: Up to 15 (on average we have 30 employees who receive Long Service Award. Not all will wish to attend the virtual ceremony)
- Frequency – Depending on number of employees, virtual award ceremony to be held once or twice in a year using Teams.
- Dress Code: Formal/Smart

Recording will be streamed for wider public to view.

Prior to Award Ceremony

- Long Service Award banner to be created to be displayed on Teams call.
- Contact eligible employees to confirm their attendance at the event.
- Work with employees to get their scripts ready for the meeting (no more than 2 minutes). One of the following options can be offered to employees to help:
 - a. HR can pull the factual information to give potted employment history.
 - b. Employee can select to say something about their experiences of working in the Council.
 - c. Manager can select to say a few words regarding an employee.
 - d. A colleague can select to say a few words about their experience of working with the employee.

It will probably work better if employees' stories can be recorded in advance of the ceremony, but this may not work in some instances.

On the day of Award Ceremony

- Long Service Award banner will be displayed as a background on the screen;
- Conductor opens the ceremony; Employees will be encouraged to relax and enjoy the ceremony;
- Chairman's welcoming speech;
- Names of the employees to be read supported by their stories;
- Chairman virtually hands over certificates to employees who attend the ceremony and read out names of the employees who choose not to attend.
- We can make the session interactive by encouraging attendees to use the Chat function on Teams or we can use Menti and ask people to use three words to describe how they feel about reaching the milestone of their career? The word cloud can be displayed at the end of the session which could be tied in with closing of the ceremony.