

## **REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To approve a one-off additional day's annual leave to all of the Council's workforce in recognition of their significant and continued contribution to the Council's response and recovery to the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Information**

2. Elected Members have previously recognised the contributions made by the Council's workforce throughout the pandemic. Most notably, this appreciation was shown at the County Council meeting in March 2021, when Councillors passed a motion, unanimously, thanking employees for their commitment and dedication. During the meeting, the entire Council broke into spontaneous applause in recognition of these outstanding efforts.
3. The new Leader of the Council, placed on record his personal thanks to all employees in a video recorded on 12 May 2021 and expressed his appreciation for all that employees had done in the previous 14 months and continue to do to ensure that services for local residents continue. The Leader has also recorded a video thanking social care staff in particular for the support and care they have provided to local residents throughout the pandemic.
4. However, the COVID-19 emergency continues to have an impact on some of our most vulnerable residents. As the Council begins to build back and we are learning to live with COVID-19, the Council wants to provide a more tangible token of our appreciation to recognise the outstanding contribution of all our employees. The Council wants this to be something of real value, a benefit for our staff but also one that our residents will be supportive of.
5. The provision of an additional day's annual leave to all employees provides the opportunity for people to have a day to enjoy with their friends or family or simply to rest and recuperate from the demands they face every day. This one-off provision will be classified as "recognition leave" so employees will be reminded of why they have been given this when they book the time off.
6. It is recognised that many employees had to carry forward significant amounts of leave because they were unable to take it in the previous leave year when they were responding to the pandemic. Therefore, employees will be given flexibility around when

they can take this day off and will be able to take it up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024. This will maximise the opportunity for employees to take the leave whilst minimising any additional pressure on services which continue to face resourcing challenges.

7. It was considered important to take time to reflect on the efforts of the County Council, in responding to the pandemic, in order to determine the most appropriate and equitable way to recognise the efforts of the Council's employees. We continue to battle against COVID-19 and, regardless of the role people play in the Council, each and every one of our employees has contributed to this fight and continues to play their part as we move through recovery. It is hoped that this gesture goes some way to expressing the Council's gratitude to its workforce who have responded so well to the challenges presented.

### **Other options Considered**

8. A key work strand of the officer Workforce Recovery and Resilience Group, chaired by the Service Director Customers, Governance and Employees, focusses on recognition and reward. Work is underway to relaunch the long service award scheme and to explore other ways to recognise the achievements and contribution of employees on a more regular basis. Employees will be given the opportunity to shape this work through a series of focus groups led by members of the Corporate Leadership Team. These options are over and above the award of an additional day's recognition leave as a one-off thank you to all our employees.

### **Reason for Recommendation**

9. It is important to demonstrate in a tangible way the gratitude this Council has for the contribution of its entire workforce who have stepped up so impressively to the challenges presented over the last 18 months and who continue to do so.

### **Statutory and Policy Implications**

10. 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**

11. There are no data protection issues arising from the content of this report as no personal employee data is included.

### **Financial Implications**

12. There are no direct costs arising from this proposal as annual leave is funded from within existing staffing budgets.

## **Human Resources Implications**

13. The HR implications are contained within the body of the report. It is recognised that large successful organisations have well defined recognition schemes which build engagement and commitment across their workforce. This proposal is an initial step in developing a more overarching recognition scheme which will underpin a range of activity to develop a shared culture across the Council.
14. Trades Union colleagues have been consulted on the proposal and are very supportive of the award of an additional day's recognition leave to all employees of the Council.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty implications**

15. The proposal will be applied across the Council's entire workforce ensuring it is applied in a fair, open, and transparent way. There are therefore no identified implications under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that Full Council:

- 1) Agree to award one additional day's annual leave, known as "recognition leave", to all of the Council's employees to recognise the outstanding and ongoing contribution made by the Council's workforce since March 2020.

**Councillor Ben Bradley MP**  
**Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council**

### **For any enquiries about this report please contact:**

Marjorie Toward, Service Director, Customers, Governance and Employees on 0115 9774404 or Marjorie.toward@ottsc.gov.uk

### **Human Resources Comments (GME 14/09/2021)**

The Council recognises that its workforce is its most valuable asset and that their commitment and collective contributions working throughout the last 18 months has enabled the Council to continue to support and provide services to our most vulnerable residents. The additional day's leave in recognition of their valuable contribution is an appropriate way to show appreciation to all the Council's employees.

### **Constitutional Comments (HD – 14/9/2021)**

Full Council has the authority to approve the recommendation within this report.

### **Financial Comments (NS 15/09/2021)**

As indicated in the report, due to the length of time this additional day can be taken it is anticipated the cost will be contained within existing budgetary provisions.

**Background Papers**

- None

**Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- All