

## Employment Committee Briefing Note 04/02/21

### Use of Recognition Management

1. The report circulated with the agenda papers for the Committee's meeting on 4 February 2021 includes an outline proposal (with several variants) for one-off retention payments to Bracknell Forest employees in 2021/22, based on a simple and equitable approach linked to a percentage of staff's basic pay.
2. The report acknowledges that there are other, more targeted, approaches that the Committee may additionally wish to consider. This paper provides high level information on some alternative approaches that could be taken to promote recognition and retention for targeted groups of staff.
3. It should, however, be noted that the Borough Solicitor's advice is that, "An Equality Impact Assessment should be undertaken to minimise the risk of any Equal Pay issues arising as a result of any targeted approach inadvertently giving rise to potential indirect sex discrimination."
4. The CIPD Reward Management Report Findings 2019 explored the perspectives of employees and employers alike in recognition and reward approaches. With the changing ways of working and an increasingly diverse workforce, there is increasing demand for flexible, customised, and more personalised approaches to recognising and retaining talent and skills.
5. The research suggests that recognition and retention strategies should aim to blend the wide range of employee benefits that may be on offer. In the current environment, this will help enable organisations to:
  - Recruit and retain talent
  - Stand out as an 'Employer of Choice' in the jobs market
  - Recognise the efforts of everyone in going above and beyond to keep vital services up and running throughout the pandemic
  - Ensuring that everyone feels supported
  - Drive performance and behaviours towards core organisational values
  - Recognise the unique contributions their staff make to customers (for BFC these are the residents of Bracknell Forest) *and*,
  - Ensure that we can recognise 'in the moment' at team and service level as well as corporately.
6. Bracknell Forest already offers a wide range of employee benefit choices, which are set out on the Council's Intranet and employees can access if they choose to. These include flexible working hours, the ability to buy and sell leave (the Employment Committee excluded Directors and Assistant Directors from this some years ago) and access loans for interest free season tickets services and tax free bikes for work.

Employees can also purchase a range of goods and services with corporately negotiated discounts, including sports centre membership and shopping vouchers.

7. As is noted in the body of the main report, a number of local initiatives to attract and retain staff are also in place for specific posts and service areas, having been approved by the Employment Committee, including market premia and annual retention payments. These help ensure that the Council's overall offer is in line with that in similar organisations, though this is a dynamic position and needs to be kept under close review.
8. Building on what already exists and with general and specific challenges in certain service areas (e.g. those highlighted in the main report to the Committee), the following factors are worthy of consideration should the Committee wish to explore other recognition and retention approaches:
  - **Recognising Generational Differences**

There are a number of different generations in the workforce and research suggests not all generations value the same things. Generally, it has been found that baby boomers welcome stability and recognition of loyal service in worthwhile work, generation X look for work life balance and feeling appreciated and supported by a good manager, millennials seek autonomy and the ability to work without bureaucracy and generation Z ambitious and expect fast and nimble technology and speed of decision making.
  - **Recognising the Remote and Smart Working Context**

In the changing world of work, colleagues working from home will value good quality technology, connectivity, quality line management support, online team working and support to manage resilience and wellbeing, technology and online learning, development, and good quality communications.
  - **Quality of Leadership and Management Support**

Evidence suggests that there is a direct correlation between the quality of leadership and management, relationships with line managers and the retention and levels of satisfaction amongst staff. Senior leaders going out of their way to say hello to colleagues, a smile or simple 'how are you?' can make a huge and lasting impact, as can quality and timely line manager conversations.
9. A summary of types of flexible recognition schemes in place in other organisations (not exclusively local authorities) is appended to this briefing note. This is for information only and no formal assessment has been made of their relevance or applicability to Bracknell Forest Council at this stage.

## Examples of Flexible Recognition Schemes

Scheme Type	Advantages	Limitations	Considerations
<b>Learning and Development</b>	<p>eLearning (online) can support colleagues to access learning from anywhere at anytime supporting a culture of self-directed learning.</p> <p>Colleagues skills development can be aligned to the priorities of the organisation.</p> <p>Colleagues feel invested in and supported to grow.</p> <p>Easy to administer and manage with the right procurement framework or internal capacity.</p> <p>Supports the home working / smart working and digital agenda.</p>	<p>Time pressures on the organisation mean accessing learning can be more challenging.</p> <p>Financial pressures mean that any investment in learning needs to be focused.</p> <p>Requires a robust approach to learning with managers supporting learning with everyone having fair and equitable access.</p> <p>F2F limited by restrictions currently.</p>	<p>Ensure a blended approach to learning exploring 'on the job' routes such as coaching, mentoring and shadowing.</p> <p>Ensure eLearning content is fresh, interactive, and relevant</p> <p>Design elements of competition that provide certificates or acknowledgement for completion of learning.</p>
<b>Career Development</b>	<p>Can be a useful way of utilising skills across the organisation.</p> <p>Supports the talent and succession agenda.</p> <p>Colleagues can pick-up short-term projects which broaden their experience and knowledge.</p> <p>Effective way for the organisation to resource projects and activities.</p> <p>Provides 'on the job learning'</p> <p>Potentially negates the need to recruit externally and the associated costs.</p>	<p>Time pressures may mean this could be challenging to achieve at the present time.</p> <p>The approach needs to be transparent, fair and equitable.</p> <p>Managers willingness to release colleagues to take up projects.</p> <p>Resource planning for managers may be an issue.</p>	<p>Clear criteria for opportunities.</p> <p>Careful resource planning and forecasting of potential opportunities.</p> <p>Should be complimented with a career planning tool.</p>

<p><b>Wellbeing Schemes</b></p>	<p>Vitality</p> <p>Online Staff Apps such as Headspace, Noom, My Possible Self</p> <p>Wellness and lifestyle coaching</p> <p>Counselling and self-help guides.</p> <p>Free Health checks.</p> <p>Gym Membership</p>	<p>A wealth of online products on the market. Most are free of charge and easily accessible.</p> <p>Should be aligned with the organisations approach mental health and sickness absence policies.</p>	<p>Approach need to align to the OH and EAP Commissioning process underway.</p>
<p><b>Formal Recognition Awards</b></p>	<p>Long Service Awards</p> <p>Recognition Awards aligned to Behaviours and Values</p> <p>Acknowledgement letters from the CEX</p> <p>May be highly regarded with longer serving members of staff.</p> <p>Letters, mentions and acknowledgements can be highly effective and relatively cost neutral.</p> <p>Acknowledgement may appeal to groups with a preference for competition, gamification, and recognition.</p>	<p>Less valued over the past 5 years in favour of more 'in the moment' and developmental 'approaches.</p> <p>Recognise that rewarding long service may / will not necessarily appeal to generation X, Z and millennials.</p> <p>Pandemic restrictions mean that face to face engagement is on hold.</p> <p>Can require significant resourcing and administration and be costly depending on the approach.</p>	<p>Explore online, webinar or video conference alternatives.</p> <p>Build on the positives of what currently exists that staff value.</p> <p>Align to the Councils values and behaviours.</p>
<p><b>Manager led Acknowledgements and Recognition</b></p>	<p>Managers can provide small tokens of recognition 'in the moment' for a job well done or going above and beyond.</p> <p>This may be in the form of 'mentions', letters of commendation from the CEX or a card of appreciation.</p> <p>Managers can tailor the approach depending on the team and their local and diverse needs.</p> <p>Can be very cost effective and accessible.</p> <p>Can be online and delivered anywhere at any time.</p>	<p>Training for managers to ensure application in a fair and equitable manner.</p> <p>Needs to be separated from performance management approach but linked to the successful delivery of outcomes, behaviours and values.</p>	<p>The approach needs to be fair and equitable with demonstrable evidence to support management decisions.</p>

Discussion only