

By: Gary Cooke – Cabinet Member for Corporate & Democratic Services
Amanda Beer – Corporate Director Engagement, Organisation Design & Development

To: Personnel Committee **Date:** 4 November 2015

Subject: Employee Voluntary Benefits

Classification: **Unrestricted**

Summary: Building upon the success of the previous employee benefits platform a new contract has been awarded following a suitable procurement process that will provide an opportunity to enhance awareness of our reward strategy and its component elements.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Reward Strategy has been developed to meet business and organisational needs and is especially important during economically challenging times for both the authority and our employees. The Council aims to communicate the **value** of the overall employment package, and especially the non-financial elements. A key outcome of the Voluntary Benefits Platform is to increase employee engagement levels which should result in higher customer satisfaction and service delivery outcomes.
- 1.2 As a local authority, Kent County Council has sought to maximise the best voluntary benefits, non-financial rewards, salary sacrifice schemes, employee focused employment policies, Health and Wellbeing initiatives, employee support and financial awareness. For salary sacrifice schemes there is significant tax and National Insurance savings for both employees and employer. To evaluate discounts in practice assuming the level of take home pay for lower paid employees, eg grade KR5 is £13,000 and given the amount saved is £500 per year (the current actual for the scheme), this equates to approximately a 4% increase in the spending power for this salary.
- 1.3 The Council has designed, developed and delivered a far reaching and national award winning Total Reward Strategy, the approach being outlined in Appendix 1. The purpose of this is to ensure that the Council has the ability to attract, motivate and retain quality staff. The components of the total reward are given in Appendix 2. The continuation of an Employee Benefits scheme is intended to be a key, integral part of the Council's approach to Reward.
- 1.4 There is a desire to develop ways which can improve and promote the discussion and dialogue between managers and staff about their wider employment package.

1.5 A review of the market has been undertaken along with a full tender process, in conjunction with Procurement, to establish the most appropriate supplier given our new requirements. This resulted in the reappointment of our current provider.

2. Success to Date

2.1 The Council is currently running an Employee Benefits Platform called Kent Rewards. This is a web based site (not owned by KCC) that delivers valued, beneficial and relevant employee benefits. It is available to a total employee base of approximately 35,000 which includes schools and non-schools staff.

2.2 There are currently over 14,000 users registered on the current Kent Rewards website. Spend at national retailers is in excess of £49m to date with savings over £2.25m, currently monthly expenditure is c.£700k and over 70% of non-school based staff have used the scheme at least once in the past year. The most popular categories include supermarkets, home improvement, car insurance and holidays. A staff survey undertaken in 2012 indicated that employees view Kent Rewards very positively.

3. Next Steps

3.1 Building upon this high level of use and value we propose to use the Voluntary Benefits platform to address the following points:

- Enhance the Council's objectives to attract, motivate and retain staff.
- Distinguish KCC from other employers.
- Develop an approach to use the portal as a strategic yet practical employee engagement tool.
- Enable managers to communicate with and engage employees about their Total Reward / wider benefits package.
- Maximise the use of mobile technology.
- Engage and communicate in a variety of ways.
- Provide an opportunity to maintain and expand the discounts scheme, provided by Kent businesses.

3.2 The underlying aims of employee benefits within this strategy are to be inclusive, provide something for everyone and treat people as individuals. Also, to be exclusive by offering a tailor-made package unique to Kent County Council and to offer flexibility, relevance and choice for a diverse employee base. By bringing together a number of provisions in this way, the Council has unified all its benefits within a Total Reward framework which the Voluntary Benefits platform is intended to deliver in practice.

4. Equality Impact Assessment

4.1 The development of the Voluntary Benefit platform is a continuation of the scheme in place for the previous 8 years and this paper is to inform Personnel Committee of progress. There is no formal decision required therefore an Equality Impact Assessment has not been undertaken.

5 Time Scales and Communication

- 5.1 In order to capitalise on the high usage the intention is to launch the new platform prior to Christmas. The Reward Team and our provider, Reward Gateway will be working closely with Internal Communications to devise and deliver a communication plan which will create excitement and interest, capitalising on our partners extensive knowledge, experience and expertise.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 The introduction of Kent Rewards has helped set KCC apart as an employer over the past 8 years. We need to ensure that this success is capitalised on as we seek to develop this further both in terms of the discounts offered, however especially broadening this into the aspects within the wider employment package and helping both employees and manager maximise the value of this.

7 Recommendation

- 7.1 Personnel Committee note the success of the scheme to date and endorse this approach and timescales.

Colin Miller
Reward Manager
03000 416483

Background documents – None

Appendix 1 Kent County Council Total Reward Strategy

KCC has taken a broad approach to defining its reward package and includes all non-financial and financial elements in the wider employment offering.

The underlying aims of employee benefits within this strategy are to be inclusive, providing something for everyone; to be exclusive by offering a tailor-made package unique to Kent County Council; and to offer flexibility, relevance and choice for a diverse employee base. By bringing together a number of provisions in this way, the Council has unified all its benefits within a Total Reward framework.

To help staff fully appreciate their unique KCC reward package, the Council has developed 'Kent Rewards', an integrated web-based platform providing a 'one-stop-shop'.

As a local authority, Kent County Council is not able to provide the typical reward offering of many private sector companies such as stock options, share plans and a flexible benefits platform. However, it aims to compete with this market by providing excellent voluntary benefits, non-financial rewards, salary sacrifice schemes employee focused employment policies, Health and Wellbeing initiatives, employee support and financial awareness.

The strategy is appropriate to meet business and HR needs during economically challenging times for both the authority and our employees. By communicating the value of the overall employment package, and especially the non-financial elements of it, the Council aims to help its employees understand, use and engage in a way which focuses on them as individuals. The key aim is to maximise employee engagement levels with their employer resulting in higher customer satisfaction and service delivery outcomes.

Appendix 2 Components of Total Reward

Benefit Category	Benefit
Pay	Fair pay for job
	Being paid for your personal performance
Pensions and retirement	Local Government Pension Scheme
	The ability to make Additional Voluntary Contributions to my pension
	3 times Life assurance / Death in Service
	Redundancy pay
	Maternity / Paternity / Adoption Pay
	Sick pay
Allowances	Overtime - enhanced rate of pay after 37 hours
	Time off in Lieu (Toil)
	Stand by
	Sleep in
	Out of hours payments
	Disturbance Allowance
	Loss of earnings protection
Leave	Maternity Leave
	Parental Leave
	Adoption Leave
	Carer leave
	Personal Leave (Compassionate Leave)
	Career break
	Study Leave
	Religious observance
	Trade Union activities
	Unpaid leave
	Public duties
	Medical screening
Recognition	Appraisal process
	Manager saying 'thank you'
	Cash awards
	Non-cash awards
	Team or peer recognition
Learning & Development	Development programmes
	Gaining qualifications
	Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
	Supported progression through career grades (if applicable)
	Commitment to 5 days personal development

Personal Development opportunities	Induction
	Regular appraisals & 1:1s
	Personal development plans
	Funded training
	Coaching for performance
	Volunteering
	Secondments
	Work shadowing
	Informal opportunities
	Talent management -Active, recognition, development and progression
	Succession planning - preparing for the next career step
	Career progression and / or promotion opportunities
Employee focused support initiatives	Action planning / review / appraisal cycle to enable to do your job effectively
	Support line
	Help Fund
	Work place mediation
	Access to work assessments (support for disabled staff)
	Keep in touch days (maternity returners)
	Work / life balance
	Health & Safety
	Pre-retirement support / counselling
	Stress Management
	Financial counselling
	Redeployment support
	Display screen equipment assessment
	Occupational Health Department
Employee focused policies	Dispute resolution
	Redeployment
	Redundancy
	Equality & Diversity
	How to deal with Harassment
	Whistle Blowing
Voluntary Benefits	KentRewards.com discounts & cashback
	Value Plus Local - Discounts from Kent based businesses
	Adult Education 10% discount on courses
	Fitness activities
	Reward Viewer - online explanation your total reward package
Tax efficient savings	Childcare Vouchers

	Cycle 2 Work
	Gym & Health Club discounts
Wellbeing & Health promotion	Health screening
	Kiosk health check
	Fitness DVD library
	Resilience and pressure management tools
Flexible Working	Part time working
	Flexitime
	9 day fortnight
	Term Time working
	Annualised hours
	Job Sharing
	Zero Hours
	Working from home
Travel	Car sharing
Equity & Fairness	County wide approach to grading of jobs
	Equal pay audits conducted
	Right to appeal against decisions
	Equality Impact assessments undertaken
Union / Key interest Groups	Trade Union membership
	Staff Groups