

**Agenda Item No:** 7 **Report No:** 17/09  
**Report Title:** Staff Suggestion Scheme  
**Report To:** Employment Committee **Date:** 19 January 2009  
**Ward(s) Affected:** All  
**Report By:** Head of Business Services  
**Contact Officer(s):** John Clark, Head of Business Services

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**Purpose of Report:**

To update the Council's Staff Suggestion Scheme

**Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 That the scheme set out at Appendix A is adopted.

**Information**

- 1 The Council has had a staff suggestion scheme for a number of years and although some valuable suggestions have been made over the years, the number of suggestions made has never been high and are now practically non-existent.
- 2 The Performance Management team and I still think that there is some merit in having a scheme and that it could provide opportunities for service improvements, the sharing of good ideas and practice and for identifying efficiency savings. Therefore we wish to relaunch the scheme and try to stimulate take up by the staff.
- 3 The scheme has been substantially rewritten and the proposed new scheme is attached at Appendix A. The Performance Management Group consists of representatives from every department who help co-ordinate and share good practice and ideas on performance issues.

**Financial Implications**

- 4 The scheme has been designed so that the value of any savings arising from the suggestions made will be greater than the value of any awards given. The budget for any initial awards (up to a maximum of £1000) is available within the current approved budget for Corporate and Best Value initiatives

### **Staff Suggestion Scheme**

The Council values the contribution staff can make to the smooth running of the organisation and therefore invites any member of staff to make suggestions as to how the organisation can improve services to the public, performance and efficiency.

The Council encourages its staff to make suggestions through the following procedure.

#### **Policy**

1. All employees can take part in the Suggestion Scheme. However, senior managers (those graded PO15 and above) are exempt from receiving any awards through the scheme.
2. The Performance Management Group (PMG) will evaluate all suggestions and employees may be rewarded for their suggestions. The award given will vary and will depend on the suggestion made. Awards may be monetary or a gift.
3. Suggestions that have been or will be adopted will be eligible for a performance award. Suggestions that will not be implemented but which the PMG feels have merit, possibly because of the effort made or the level of initiative shown, will be eligible for an encouragement award.
4. Awards will not be given for suggestions that the PMG considers to be part of an employee's normal duties and responsibilities. This decision will be taken in consultation with the employee's line manager.
5. However suggestions made that arise during an individual's normal duties are still warmly welcomed and will be recognised and publicised along with other suggestions. These may be recognised materially through the Council's honorarium system, if appropriate.
6. The Staff Suggestion Scheme will be reviewed periodically (annually) to ensure it remains appropriate and effective. As part of this review employees will be invited to suggest improvements to the Scheme.

#### **Procedure**

7. Employees may make suggestions at any time by completing a suggestion form (available on Infolink both online and to download and complete).
8. The PMG will meet regularly and at least quarterly to consider all suggestions made. All suggestions will be considered following the Council's agreed method.
9. Following each meeting, employees will be informed of the recommendation of the PMG. All suggestions will be recorded and published on Infolink along with the recommendation of the PMG.

10. Suggestions will be evaluated through the following method:

- The relevant senior manager will be asked to comment on the practicality of the suggestion and the likelihood of it being adopted
- He or she will also be asked to give an estimate of any efficiency gains (both cashable and non-cashable) that the suggestion will produce
- The PMG will consider the suggestion, the effort that has gone into it, the relationship between the suggestion and the employees' normal duties and the manager's comments.
- The PMG will then recommend to Corporate Management Team (CMT) whether an award should be given or not
- CMT will make the final decision on whether to make the recommended award or not.
- The suggestions and decisions of CMT will be published on Infolink.
- Decisions of the PMG and CMT are final and are not open to appeal through any of the Council's procedures.

**Awards (Guidance for PMG and CMT only)**

11. Our aim is to keep any awards made at such a level that they remain tax-free. The guidelines below do just that. In exceptional cases where both the PMG and CMT feel that a larger award is justified, advice on the tax position should be sought before the final decision is made.

12. Encouragement awards will be £25 or less.

13. Performance awards should be assessed based on:

- The degree of improvement in efficiency and/or effectiveness likely to be achieved, measured by reference to the prospective financial benefits
- The period over which any benefits would accrue
- The importance of the subject matter to the Council

14. Any performance award can not exceed 50% of the expected net financial benefit during the first year of implementation or 10% of the expected net financial benefit over a period of up to five years subject to an overriding maximum of £5,000

15. Where a suggestion is put forward by more than one person, the performance award is divided between them on a reasonable basis i.e. a maximum of £5,000 can be paid to share between them, but not to each of them

16. Members of PMG may not take part in discussions or decisions on suggestions that they themselves have submitted