



“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel”.

maddocks, sandra
Maya Angelou

APPENDIX 1 TOTAL REWARD & RECOGNITION

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1) Introduction from Samantha Beck-Farley, Chief Organisational Culture Officer

The Medway Council Total Reward and Recognition Strategy 2024-28 will help us embed a workplace culture where all our people feel genuinely valued for playing their part. Where like-minded individuals, who share our values, and are looking for a fulfilling, purposeful career with good prospects choose us to work for over and above our competitors.

Medway Council takes pride in its workforce, the talented and dedicated individuals and teams that share our vision and our values. It's crucial to us that those individuals feel valued for their contribution, that they are listened to and are rewarded with the desired rewards and recognition that sustain their motivation to work here.

This strategy sets out the substantial range of benefits that highlight the investment the council, as an employer, is making in its employees. These benefits seek to enhance Medway Council's reputation as we aspire to become an 'employer of choice'.

- Employer of Choice

That reputation is closely linked to how valued our employees feel.

We're an ambitious and constantly evolving council, where facing challenges on a daily basis and changing to adapt are a way of life. We rely on all our workforce to help us through these challenges, and we understand that meeting our challenges head on is more easily achieved with a motivated and healthy workforce who feel valued for the part they play.

We want to attract and retain top talent, not just through financial rewards but through an holistic approach to employee satisfaction, an approach that has financial and non-financial rewards to form our proposition for both our current and future workforce.

This strategy maps how we'll achieve this.

- Our culture

Our culture is founded on shared values and beliefs about what is important to us - the behaviour our people display and everyone's experience of working here. The strategy supports and builds upon that culture, to create a sustainable and productive work environment where all our people feel:

- **Motivated** to perform well,
- **Valued** for the work they do, and
- **Recognised** for the contribution they make.

These three goals are a common thread throughout the strategy and should lead, over time, to higher employee engagement, reduced turnover and a stronger ability to attract top talent.

- Our priorities:

- Delivering quality social care and community services
- Benefitting from good education, quality jobs and a growing economy
- Enjoying clean, green, safe and connected communities
- Improving health and wellbeing for all
- Living in good quality and affordable homes

These are what drive us – they form part of the One Medway Council Plan. The strategy will help achieve our priorities through developing a motivated workforce, where our people feel valued and supported, and have a fulfilling career path.

- Our Values and Behaviours

These are our values and behaviours (see below). Embedding these into our reward and recognition processes will help reach our objectives. A common approach in how we work together, make decisions, treat each other, and our customers and partners will help drive excellence in service delivery.



- Linking our total reward and recognition strategy to council strategy

The strategy is a key element in the council's broader Workforce Strategy 2028 which in turn feeds into the One Medway Council Plan and the Strategic Improvement Plan (SIP).

- Our People Promise

The image to the right shows the main elements of our 'People Promise'.

Our People Promise summarises to existing and potential employees the benefits of working here and the council's investment in its workforce.

Our People Promise is designed to attract and retain people who share the same values, behaviours and priorities that we share.

(A more detailed version of our People Promise can be found in appendix one)



The components of our People Promise are used for this strategy to highlight the main strategic work areas that will steer us toward a workplace culture that will help us thrive as we go forward.

We will:

- Empower, encourage and support our employees
- Be fair, flexible and support our employees wellbeing
- Recognise, reward and provide great benefits
- Develop and release employee potential

The focus for action to support these aims form a total reward and recognition approach encompassing the following work streams:

- **Recognition:** implementing new recognition processes that are valued and welcomed by employees and reinforce our values and behaviours.
- **Compensation, performance and progression:** completing the Medpay Performance, Progression, Pay review.
- **Employee Benefits:** introducing new benefits that are sought after and valued.
- **Giving employees a voice:** building upon our current two-way communication processes (at both corporate and local level) to enable employees to have their views heard and feel valued in doing so.
- **Wellbeing (and work-life):** building upon current practices and evidencing to employees that we take their health and wellbeing seriously.
- **Development:** developing our leadership and management training programmes, enabling fair access to learning and development for all staff, and building our talent pipeline.

The strategy sets out our objectives for these work streams for the next four years and the action plan attached as appendix two details how we will all work to achieve this. Some of the actions are intentionally 'high-level' as some of the work streams, recognition, for example, need to be flexible to meet the needs of the workforce at both corporate and local level.

Together we will make our organisation a place where our people genuinely want to work; where they can experience meaningful relationships, great networking, a strong sense of community and have purpose-driven work where people see working here as not just a 'job' but having a fulfilling career path, amid a culture that values their wellbeing.

Samantha Beck-Farley
Chief Organisational Culture Officer

2) Recognition

Our current employee recognition processes allow us to show our appreciation to our employees for their contributions. We currently have a mix of recognition processes including:

- **Informal, local recognition** (often takes place within services and divisions) such as a personal, verbal ‘thank you’; sending an email or personal note to an individual or team; a job well done certificate or making a point at a team meeting to recognise the overall team and individual contributions and achievements.
- **Formal recognition** such as the annual Make a Difference Awards enable recognition at both directorate and corporate level.
 - At local level there are opportunities for formal recognition through the performance, progression, pay process and regular 1-2-1’s between manager and individuals.
 - Long service is recognised in the form of additional annual leave at five, ten and, 15 year anniversaries. Going forward the intention is to celebrate long service publicly within the workforce.

Developing a range of recognition processes that are valued by employees is one of the key enablers to workplace motivation. Our employee survey tells us that we are getting it right locally, at line manager level, but need to do further work at corporate level.

As an organisation we want to reinforce our desired values and behaviours. An effective way of doing this is by building these into current and future recognition processes. to acknowledge ‘publicly’ those employees who demonstrate our values and behaviours during the course of their work.

In the survey, we asked employees what additional forms of recognition they would value. The most sought-after forms of recognition were a mix of time off, verbal and written recognition and training. Going forward we will work to ensure our employee preferences are considered and implement recognition processes (at both local and corporate level) that are valued by employees, are fit-for-purpose and achieve the desired outcome for our organisation.

3) Compensation – performance, progression and pay

As a local authority, accountable to our local community, we understand we cannot offer significantly high salaries to our workforce. We supplement our salaries with the wide range of other benefits that are highlighted within this strategy which we endeavour to maintain a competitive edge against other local authorities inside, and outside of the area.

However, for us to not only attract top talent, we need to also strive to grow and retain individuals. This requires us to be able to offer genuine opportunities for career progression. To help achieve this we are investing in a new performance, progression, pay scheme.

- Our new performance appraisal process encourages regular discussions throughout the year between manager and individual where employees can discuss their aspirations, what support they need to achieve their potential and also be assessed on their performance. These discussions also are an opportunity for the employee to agree their personal development objectives,
- discuss their career aspirations, and
- discuss how their role relates to our values and behaviours.

Each role in the council will have a ‘career progression framework.’ setting out the level of competency required for the role and helping to identify career pathways. It also shows how individuals can progress within the salary range through the performance appraisal system.

MedPay is the name of the council’s pay structure and contains the ranges upon which all job roles fall within. Ranges can be different dependent on the level of responsibility for each role. Pay is normally increased annually through a cost-of-living pay award agreed by elected Members. This is separate to any pay increase an employee may receive through the career progression framework.

Through the significant investment being made in the new performance, progression, pay scheme the council is showing its workforce, (and future workforce), that Medway Council is a place that values an employee’s contribution, takes their career aspirations seriously, and commits to invest in their future.

4) Employee Benefits

We understand that having a significant range of valued employee benefits will contribute to a positive work environment where our employees feel valued and appreciated. This environment helps foster innovation and employee engagement and encourages employees to go the extra mile in their work.

The council currently offers a wide range of benefits with a mix of voluntary benefits (i.e. benefits paid for by employees, normally at a corporate rate), contractual and non-contractual benefits, and benefits paid for by the council. The employee survey 2024 tells us that employees greatly value a number of our benefits for example:

- the Local Government Pension Scheme;
- the generous annual leave provisions;
- the many flexible working options,
- generous sick pay entitlements and
- green travel schemes.

Survey results revealed that, going forward, employees would also value more benefits that will have a positive impact on their health, wellbeing and work-life balance.

We are committed to listening to what our employees want and throughout the lifetime of this strategy will introduce a range of new employee benefits, taking into consideration the following:

Is the new benefit:

- Relevant and valued by current employees, and for future employees.
- Supporting our values, behaviours and priorities,
- Mindful of our demographics and employee life stages,
- Accessible by the majority of staff,
- Income-generating (such as salary sacrifice scheme)
- Affordable if the benefit is not a voluntary benefit (i.e., the council pays for the benefit)

The first tranche of proposed new benefits are highlighted in the action plan (appendix two).

Some benefits, such as those implemented as part of a salary sacrifice scheme (e.g. our green car scheme 'Tusker') will bring savings to the council in the form of lower employer National Insurance contributions. We'll look to introduce more salary sacrifice schemes in the future to take advantage of these savings.

An internal communication and engagement plan will be developed to ensure all employees are aware of their employee benefit package and develop a more streamlined way for employees to access the benefits – taking a 'one-stop-shop' approach.

Satisfaction with the employee benefit package will be reviewed through take-up rates of individual benefits (where available) and as part of the annual Employee Engagement Survey.

5) Giving employees a voice

68% of those who responded to the employee survey agreed they had enough opportunities to tell us what they think – that's 32% who do not believe their voice is being heard.

We aim to improve on this figure year-by-year as we understand that when our employees are feeling heard and valued, they are likely to be more engaged, and more likely to go the extra mile when needed.

We will show employees how their whole contribution whilst at work is valued by encouraging and listening to their ideas and suggestions on how best to do things and implementing suggestions when possible.

We will provide regular feedback through implementing a range of opportunities for two-way communication at both corporate and 'local level'

6) Wellbeing (and work-life)

We want our employees to be healthy, and able to flourish and reach their full potential in a supported, healthy and safe work environment. This is why prioritising and promoting employee wellbeing and supporting and creating an inclusive workplace are key priorities for us.

Wellbeing: A considerable amount of work has already been done to support our employee's wellbeing, in particular support for mental health. However, we understand that there is still more to do. We will implement HR policies, and network with colleagues within Public Health to ensure our people enjoy a positive working environment through the provision of awareness, education and support for our managers and employees.

The Healthy Mind and Wellbeing Working Group, (created following the 2022 employee engagement survey) seek to implement, support and raise awareness of the help and advice available to employees in relation to employee wellbeing. The group has introduced initiatives such as the Press Pause campaign, the Managers wellbeing resource hub and virtual hobby groups. The employee survey 2024 will form the basis of an action plan for further interventions by the group.

An inclusive workplace – is one where employees feel valued, involved, and respected for their viewpoints, ideas, perspectives, and experiences they bring. We want all our employees to feel supported, included and valued for their contribution. and where they can be themselves at work without fear of discrimination. Our Workforce Strategy 2028 commits to a framework and action plan to promote and support equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.

Work-life balance - we want to strive for our employees to achieve a good work-life balance, and we do this through offering (where service delivery allows) a number of flexible working options which, our survey results show, are considered a significantly valued employee benefit. We plan to review our ways of working, not to take any flexible working opportunities away but to look at how we can provide further support for colleagues to ensure they have safe and productive working environments and sharing further guidance around remote working to support managers, individuals and teams.

7) Development

The theme running through this strategy is how we aspire to ensure our workforce feel valued, by investing in them.

A keyway of investing in our employees is to ensure all the workforce have access to relevant learning and development opportunities. This may be in the form of professional development, management development, apprenticeships, on-the-job development or another form of skill and/or knowledge growth. We understand that if our employees can see that we care about their goals and aspirations and we are willing to take action, to improve their skills, knowledge and career opportunities, they will feel valued, satisfied and motivated in the work they do.

'Enabling our people to develop' is one of the key objectives of our Workforce Strategy. Going forward we will be:

- Focussing on leadership development programmes to enable people to lead and be led effectively
- Strengthening line management capability
- Ensuring fair access and better signposting to quality and timely learning and development opportunities for all.

- Building our early “talent pipeline, by working with the community on work experience, internships and apprenticeships.

8) Monitoring and review

The annual Employee Engagement Survey is the main vehicle for monitoring the effectiveness of the strategy. For each workstream there are metrics to measure how well the strategy is progressing and suggested target increases to aim for. These are detailed within the action plan.

Furthermore, as implementation of the strategy progresses, we expect to see a positive impact on turnover, sickness levels, service delivery and employee and customer satisfaction levels. These, where appropriate, will be measured through existing HR information systems and wider performance management processes.

9) Summary and actions

In summary, the strategy acknowledges the council’s objective of building a reputation as an ‘employer of choice’

It does this by taking a total award approach combining both financial and non-financial incentives to show employees the investment it is making in them and their future.

The action plan (appendix two) is achievable, it will be driven by HR Services and has the commitment of our leadership team.

By working together and investing in our employees’ future, we aspire to create a workforce who feel valued and supported, who choose to build a career with us, and help us achieve our ultimate goal of providing excellent services to the people and place of Medway.

Appendix one: Employee Value Proposition



Appendix two: Action Plan

Work stream	Action	Source
Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Medpay review and policy, including the career progression scheme. • Aim to increase year-on-year by ten percentage points or more, the results for the staff survey question “I am satisfied with the total pay and reward package” (2024 / 30% agree) • Aim to increase year-on-year by five percentage points or more, the results for the staff survey question “I have opportunities to develop my career” (2024 / 50% agree) <p>(nb detailed actions for pay and reward can be found in the Workforce Strategy 2028)</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 1 Goal 1.3) & Employee Engagement Strategy 2023-28</p> <p>Reward and Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward and Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p>
Employee benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement new employee benefits to build on our offer and promote current benefits to increase awareness and usage. The first set of benefits to be considered include (i) salary sacrifice cycle to work scheme, (ii) salary sacrifice AVC purchase scheme, (iii) discounted leisure centre membership, (iv) buying additional annual leave, (v) wellbeing options e.g., dental plan, health cash plan etc – to be purchased voluntarily by the employee who will be benefitting from a reduced corporate price. • Improve/streamline the way in which employees are made aware of, and can access, the existing benefits. • Investigate whether savings made from salary sacrifice could be used to fund the introduction of new non-voluntary benefits for employees. • Continue to develop elements of our People Promise) and regularly engage with the workforce to measure accuracy. 	<p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 3 Goal 1.5) & Employee Engagement Strategy 2023-28</p> <p>Reward and Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward and Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Employee Engagement Strategy 2023-28 and Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 3 goal 1.8)</p>
Work stream	Action	Source
Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider employee preferences for recognition at both corporate and directorate level with a view to implementing new recognition schemes that are welcomed and valued by employees, ensuring our values and behaviours are embedded within new recognition schemes. • Expand upon the long service recognition scheme. 	<p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 3 Goal 1.6) & Employee Engagement Strategy 2023-28</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to increase year-on-year by three percentage points or more, the results for the staff survey question “Do you feel you get enough recognition for the work that you do?” (2024 / 65% agree) 	Reward and Recognition Strategy 2024-28
Wellbeing (and work-life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement HR policies to ensure our people enjoy a positive working environment through the provision of awareness, education and support for our managers and staff • Review OWOW guidance to support safe and productive working environments, implementing tighter remote working policies to guide and support our staff and managers in the transition to longer term remote/blended working during the transition with our HQ. • Develop a framework to promote well-being and support staff in the areas of physical health, mental health and emotional health; informed by the output of the Mental Health and Wellbeing project. • The Healthy Mind and Wellbeing working group will review the 2024 Employee Survey results and develop interventions to support employee wellbeing. • Develop a framework and action plan to promote and support equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace. • Propose, plan and implement a number of education and awareness events to highlight diversity and inclusion themes to foster an open, positive, inclusive, and supportive workplace culture. • Aim to increase year-on-year by three percentage points or more, the results for the staff survey questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “The council provides me with the wellbeing support I need” (2024 / 55% agree) - The Our Ways of Working Policy encourages a good work-life balance (2024 / 50% agree) • -by two percentage points or more, “I feel comfortable to be myself at work without fear of discrimination” (2024 / 81%) 	<p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 2 Goal 2.2)</p> <p>Workforce Strategy 2028 Theme 2 Goal 2.4 & Employee Engagement Strategy 2023-28</p> <p>Workforce Strategy 2028 Theme 3 Goal 1.2</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 3 Goal 2.2)</p> <p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 3 Goal 2.3)</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p>
Employee voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a range of opportunities for two-way communication at both corporate and local level. • Promote awareness training and develop our managers on the value of employee engagement, including giving feedback. • Aim to increase year-on-year by five percentage points or more, the results for the staff survey question “I have enough opportunities to tell you what I think” (2024 / 68% agree). 	<p>Employee Engagement Strategy 2023-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p>

Work stream	Action	Source
Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the Learning and Development Strategy and action plan. • Aim to increase year-on-year by three percentage points or more, the results for the staff survey questions “I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities” (2024 / 67% agree) <p>(nb detailed actions to support our managers can be found in the Workforce Strategy 2028)</p>	<p>Workforce Strategy 2028 (Theme 3 Goal 1.3) Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p>
Monitoring and review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure the effectiveness of this strategy through the annual employee engagement survey. • The 2024 survey showed that 67% of respondents felt valued. Aim to increase this percentage by three percentage points, or more year-on-year. • The 2024 survey showed that 67% of respondents would recommend the council as a place to work. Aim to increase this percentage by three percentage points, or more year-on-year. • The 2024 survey showed that 63% of respondents felt proud to tell others they work here. Aim to increase this percentage by three percentage points, or more year-on-year. • The 2024 survey showed that 57% of respondents wanted to stay working here for the next three years. Aim to increase this percentage by three percentage points, or more year-on-year. 	<p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p> <p>Reward & Recognition Strategy 2024-28</p>