

# Report

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Report to:	<b>Employee Issues Forum</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>31 May 2011</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Corporate Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Employee Benefits Update</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ update the Forum on progress in relation to new employee benefit initiatives

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Forum is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the progress of the employee benefit initiatives be noted.

## 3. Background

3.1. As part of the Council's arrangements, a comprehensive range of employee benefits is currently in place, however, there is a commitment to research and assess other potential benefits and introduce these as appropriate. Recently an employee discount web-site has been developed and a Cycle to Work scheme introduced.

3.2. The Council recognises how important achieving a work life balance can be to an individual's health and well being and, as such, its package of benefits aims to assist in achieving this.

## 4. Employee Discount Web-Site

4.1 In April 2010 Corporate Personnel sought to identify a supplier who would be able to deliver an employee discount web-site, which centrally detailed exclusive discounts for employees of the Council.

4.2 After carrying out some market analysis and discussions with other local authorities, the decision was taken to seek an external provider who could build a Council specific web-site. As a result of this, a company called Sole Media was awarded the contract to provide this service on our behalf until November 2013. This contract is provided at no cost.

4.3 The web-site was launched in March 2011 and is proving to be very popular and a valued contribution to our range of employee benefits. The web-site also continues to be updated with new offers and every month an employee has the opportunity to be a prize winner, of which the minimum value of the prize is £50.

4.4 The web-site is accessible through the Council's intranet site via a link provided to the web address [www.slcdiscounts.co.uk](http://www.slcdiscounts.co.uk) or, alternatively, employees can access this site from home.

4.5 As part of the on-going promotion of this scheme, a Personnel Circular has been sent to all employees advising of the web launch and details on how to access the site, regular articles have appeared and are planned for future editions of The Works magazine and posters have been displayed within Council buildings.

## **5. Cycle to Work Scheme**

5.1 Cycle to Work is a government approved scheme set up to encourage employees to cycle to work and reduce their CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The scheme allows each employee to hire a bike and/or related safety equipment from their employer free from Income Tax, National Insurance Contributions and VAT.

5.2 As a result of complex HM Revenue and Customs regulations surrounding the Government's Cycle to Work initiative, the Council withdrew from the Cycle to Work scheme in 2008. However, in August 2010, the HMRC issued new guidance which provided employers with a framework; presenting an opportunity for the Council to re-instate the scheme.

5.3 Following a successful tender exercise Halfords were appointed as the supplier of this scheme. The scheme was re-launched to all employees in February 2011 with an application window of 14 February to 14 March 2011.

5.4 The scheme proved popular with 79 employees participating at this time. It is the intention to continue with this scheme and the 2<sup>nd</sup> launch is planned for July/August 2011.

## **6. Employee Implications**

6.1 The development and introduction of new employee benefits links to the Council's objective of being an "Excellent Employer" and increases staff morale.

## **7. Financial Implications**

7.1 There was no financial cost in implementing the Employee Discount web-site or the Cycle to Work Scheme. The Cycle to Work scheme will result in small savings through reduced employer costs.

## **8. Other Implications**

8.1 Employees participating in the Cycle to Work scheme will reduce their carbon footprint and contribute to the overall sustainability agenda of the Council.

8.2. There are no risks in terms of the information contained within this report.

## **9. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

9.1 This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

9.2 Consultation has taken place via the JTUC Executive and Personnel Managers.

**Robert McIlwain**  
**Executive Director (Corporate Resources)**

16 May 2011

## **Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes/Values**

- ◆ Sustainable Development
- ◆ Excellent Employer

**Previous References**

None

**List of Background Papers**

None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

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