

Peterlee Town Council

Appraisal and Development Policy & Guidance Notes

Adopted 6th November 2018

Review October 2020

Introduction

1. Peterlee Town Council is committed to being an excellent employer that supports its staff to be happy and successful in their roles. The Council also expects its employees to do their jobs to the best of their abilities, to behave as courteous, professional, representatives of the Council and to abide by the rules and requirements of their employment.
2. Through this Appraisal and Development Policy, the Council sets out how all employees will be appraised against the Council's behavioural Competency Framework and their specific personal objectives, and how managers will agree any personal or professional development activities that are required to help an employee be successful in their role.
3. The Policy applies to all Council employees, with the exception of casual staff working less than 8 hours per week and agency staff.

Associated documents

4. This policy and guidance notes compliment and are related to:
 - Individual role job descriptions and statement of particulars - setting out the specific elements of every member of staff's role, and terms & conditions;
 - The Council's Standing Orders and Committee Terms of Reference – sets out the role of the Council and its committees;
 - Officer's Code of Conduct - sets out detailed expectations on staff conduct both on and off-duty;
 - Disciplinary Policy - sets out the process for dealing with problems relating to an individual's conduct or capability to do their role;
 - Training & Development Policy - sets out the Council's policy on how staff and members are trained and developed for their roles.

What is performance appraisal?

5. A performance appraisal is an opportunity for an employee and their manager to meet to:
 - Discuss job performance and receive feedback on how they are doing;
 - Discuss the achievement of any previous objectives, targets and behavioural competencies that have been agreed;
 - Set specific objectives and targets for the coming year;
 - Assess current training and development needs;
 - Discuss any support required from the manager;

- Provide an opportunity for employees to give feedback to their manager about how they are being managed.
6. A performance appraisal can be thought of as a recorded conversation about the 'What' and the 'How':
 - What am I required to do? – the actions and activities that I am required to do as part of my job;
 - How am I expected to do it? – the way that I am expected to behave when I am doing my job.
 7. A performance appraisal will be part of a regular dialogue between managers and staff. Staff will already be engaged through Team Meetings, 1:1s, training events, etc and so all staff should be aware of the general requirements of their role, their current performance, etc. There should be no major surprises in a performance appraisal session!

Roles in Performance Appraisal

8. There are a number of roles in this Council's Appraisal and Development process:
 - The Council – agrees the policy framework, and sets the annual training budget;
 - Personnel Sub-Committee – carries out the Town Clerk's appraisal;
 - Town Clerk – appraises the Senior Management Team (SMT);
 - Managers – appraise their staff, as 'the appraiser';
 - Staff – all staff are 'appraisees', and receive an annual appraisal plus bi-annual (6 monthly) performance reviews;
 - Human Resources – may provide training and advice to the Council and its staff on issues relating to appraisals but would not usually be directly involved in the appraisal process.
9. All Appraisees are responsible for:
 - Gathering examples of their own performance and discussing these with their manager during appraisal meetings;
 - Giving their manager constructive feedback about the way in which they are managed;
 - Discussing any personal or professional aims and aspirations and agreeing a programme for development;
 - Self-assessment of their own performance as part of the annual appraisal process.
10. Appraisers are normally the appraisee's immediate line manager. They are responsible for:
 - Giving a minimum of 2 weeks notice before an appraisal meeting;
 - Arranging the meeting, and organising the venue;
 - Arranging a pre-meeting if necessary to clarify any points and explain the competency framework (if required);
 - Preparing well for the meeting, including checking job descriptions, reviewing performance against any previous objectives and targets, any issues that may have impacted on performance (such as absence records, etc);

- Maintain regular contact with their staff throughout the year so that they are in a position to discuss their level of performance – nothing raised in the performance appraisal should come as a surprise!
- Provide help and support to appraisees to assist them to achieve their professional and personal objectives;
- Acting on constructive feedback they receive from appraisees about their own performance;
- Completing the required paperwork and forms, and sending these to the Town Clerk for approval and filing.



Figure 1: It's important for the appraisee and appraiser to prepare for an appraisal meeting!

Conducting the Appraisal

11. The appraiser should:

- Ensure that the appraisee has a copy of the previous appraisal forms (if applicable) a minimum of two weeks before the appraisal meeting;
- Review the main duties and responsibilities of the appraisee;
- Review the previous period (if applicable);
- Discuss any factors that may have affected performance;
- Listen to what the appraisee is saying...this is their time to talk about their performance;
- Recognise work well done, and discuss any areas for improvement;
- Discuss and agree objectives for the next period;
- Review the appraisee's personal development plan and any development needs;
- End on a positive note!



Figure 2: this is not how an appraiser should behave!

Town Clerk

12. The Town Clerk will review all appraisal forms before they are filed on an individual's personnel file. The Town Clerk's role is not to give a second opinion, but to ensure that the quality of the appraisals for all employees is equitable and that line Managers have the support they need to be able to do a good appraisal. The Town Clerk will not usually be involved in the actual appraisal of staff other than SMT members, and will be the first line of appeal where an appraisee has been unable to resolve a dispute with the appraiser.

Performance Appraisal process

13. The appraisal process is divided into three stages:
 1. Preparing for the performance appraisal;
 2. Conducting the performance appraisal; and
 3. Taking agreed action after the performance appraisal.
14. The appraiser is responsible for recording the appraisal on the appropriate forms and for signing the completed document. This can be hand written or completed electronically. The completed documents should then be provided to the appraisee for comment (if they wish to) and signature. The appraiser then provides the completed form(s) to the Town Clerk for endorsement prior to filing.

The Competency Framework

15. 'Competencies' is another word for the behaviours that the Council expects effective staff to display when they are performing their duties. Competencies are observable and measurable, and they can also be improved and developed.
16. The Council's competency framework provides a link between what the council is trying to achieve as a whole, and individual behaviour and performance. The Council's competency framework is attached as appendix 2 to this policy. All staff are required to familiarise themselves with this framework, and managers should routinely discuss the behaviours in the framework during 1:1s with individual staff and in team meetings.
17. The Council has adopted 6 main competency areas that it requires its employees to work towards:
 - **Customer First:** putting the customer (internal and external) at the heart of everything we do to provide an excellent service;
 - **Working with Others:** working together to improve how we provide services and supporting each other through change;
 - **Communicating well:** conveying information clearly and effectively, in a way which helps people understand;
 - **Personal Impact:** being self-aware, acting pro-actively and accepting responsibility for achieving results;

- **Building Our Future:** wanting to be the best and working together to achieve this. Making improvements through being efficient and delivering value for money;
 - **Delivering results:** continually improving performance and introducing new ideas into the Council to achieve results.
18. The specific behaviours required for each competency depends on the level at which the employee is working, ie Senior Managers are expected to demonstrate a higher level of competency than Team Leaders/Deputy Managers, who are themselves expected to demonstrate a higher level of competency than team members.

Induction Appraisal

19. Within 4 weeks of starting employment with the Town Council, or moving to a new job with a substantial change of responsibilities, all employees must meet with their manager to undertake a performance appraisal induction.
20. During the induction appraisal interview the manager and employee will discuss:
- A date for the 6 month probation appraisal as well as 1:1s and/or observations if applicable;
 - Objectives and targets for the first 6 months;
 - Any training and development needs such as induction e-learning, H&S, etc
 - Any areas of support required from the manager, and when and how this will be provided.
21. This meeting will be recorded on the Performance Appraisal Induction Form found in appendix 3 to this policy.
22. The induction checklist should be used for any employee starting a new job or transferring to another post within the Council. The checklist can be obtained from the Corporate Services Manager or the Admin team at Shotton Hall.

Probationary Appraisal

23. As well as the induction appraisal within 4 weeks of starting their new role, employees who are subject to a probationary period will have a probationary appraisal before the end of the 6 month period. It is important that managers plan the performance appraisal probation meetings and record them on the correct form, as found in Appendix 4 to this policy.

Annual Performance Appraisal

24. The annual appraisal meeting is an opportunity for the appraisee and appraiser to have a constructive discussion about the quality of the appraisee's performance during the previous year. 'Quality' can refer to both their achievement of set objectives/targets and also their behaviour in relation to the competency framework level that is relevant to their role.
25. The appraisee should provide details and evidence of their performance against objectives/targets set and assess how well they have met those objectives/targets. The appraisee should also discuss how they have demonstrated each of the competencies and

identify their strengths as well as any areas for development. The appraisee should also reflect on any training and development needs previously identified and the outcome of any training and development received since the last appraisal.

26. The appraisee and appraiser will then set objectives/targets for the next 12 months.

Disagreement

27. If an appraisee and appraiser have a disagreement about any aspect of the appraisal they should meet to discuss this within 5 calendar days of the appraisal meeting. There must be genuine substantial reasons for the disagreement, and not merely a disagreement about the process.

28. If the disagreement can't be resolved between the appraisee and appraiser then the appraisee may write to the Town Clerk within 5 days of the meeting. The Town Clerk will seek to resolve the matter within 5 working days of receiving the written disagreement. The Town Clerk may interview the appraisee and appraiser as part of the resolution process if required and record any findings on the performance appraisal documents. The Town Clerk's decision on the matter is final.



Figure 3: disagreements can happen from time to time...

Appendix 1: Basic summary of the performance appraisal process

Customer First: putting the customer (internal and external) at the heart of everything we do to provide an excellent service		
Team Member	Team Leader/Deputy Manager	Senior Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an understanding of the range of services provided by the Town Council to customers (internal and external) • Creates a positive first impression • Shows a genuine interest in both colleagues and customers • Treats colleagues and customers with dignity, respect and fairness • Responds to customer needs in a proactive and timely manner • Delivers a consistently high level of customer service • Maintains customer confidentiality • Takes ownership in dealing with customer queries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a detailed understanding of the range of services provided by the council to customers (internal and external) • Develops systems and processes to ensure a consistent and quality customer service is delivered • Works together with partners to improve services to customers • Consults with customers and listens to what they say to develop service delivery that is efficient and offers value for money. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a comprehensive understanding and an influence over the range of services provided by the council to customers (internal and external) • Ensures that policies and strategies meet customer demands and expectations • Promotes a culture of delivering excellent customer service • Ensures our services are accessible and easy to use • Routinely evaluates opportunities and threats to the delivery of great customer service • Considers the impact of wider council initiatives or plans on delivery of service.

Working with Others: working together to improve how we provide services and supporting each other through change.

Team Member	Team Leader/Deputy Manager	Senior Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key groups and individuals you work with • Can build professional relationships with people in your own work area, other service areas and agencies • Polite, approachable, cooperative and open in dealing with others • Listens and respect the views of others • Provides support when needed to help others • Shares knowledge and learning within own team and with other colleagues • Responsive and professional in dealing with requests • Understands and respects diversity; being inclusive and treating everyone fairly • Provides specific, balanced and constructive feedback to others on their performance • Asks others for feedback on own performance for future learning and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a detailed understanding of the different areas of the council and how they operate and interact • Builds relationships with colleagues, other service areas and external partners • Encourages questions and opinions from a diverse range of individuals in order to achieve better results • Is open-minded and prepared to promote the ideas of others • Delegates appropriately and empowers employees to make decisions • Promotes and manages diversity • Provides ongoing coaching and mentoring to team members – equipping them with skills to do their job better and reach their full potential • Gives credit to team members for their contribution to team goals • Provides regular feedback and support to employees e.g. through 1 to 1 meetings and team meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a comprehensive understanding and an influence over the different areas of the council and how they operate and interact • Develops external relationships to build effective local/regional/national partnerships to aid the smooth delivery of council business and service objectives • Values and respects diversity of opinions and approaches • Looks to obtain and incorporate viewpoints of others including service users • Builds teams that are diverse, competent and motivated and able to meet service requirements • Creates opportunities for others to develop positive relationships with stakeholder groups • Ensure that their service area understands how their work contributes to the organisation’s strategy and objectives • Provides ongoing coaching and mentoring to colleagues – equipping them with skills to do their job better and reach their full potential • Actively reviews relationships with stakeholders, identifying which need to be improved • Continually works to promote good working relations between teams across the council.

Communications: conveying information clearly and effectively, in a way which helps people understand

Team Member	Team Leader/Deputy Manager	Senior Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open and transparent in communication • Communicates clearly using appropriate language and tone, explaining any technical terms • Checks that people have understood what was said • Shares relevant and appropriate knowledge and information with colleagues and other stakeholders • Identifies the most appropriate method of communication given for what needs to be conveyed • Produces accurate and concise communications for colleagues and clients • Responds promptly to letters, emails and phone calls when required • Uses clear language and 'plain English' as much as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is accessible to the team • Communicates effectively on a range of issues at all levels, presenting information in a clear concise, objective and accurate way • Confidently conveys information to others, adapts style and content to meet the needs of the audience • Encourages open discussion on key issues and/or council changes • Communicates key messages to employees • Listens actively, asking questions and clarifying points to check understanding • Shares important information promptly, with all those who need it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets the style and tone of communication for the team/ service area • Can articulate complex technical and business issues in a concise, readily understood manner • Sells ideas by exploring the concerns of others and clearly explaining the rationale behind the proposed solution • Supports others by creating opportunities for them to contribute to discussions • Facilitates cross-service area communication to ensure information flows between services • Puts procedures in place to ensure that all employees have a voice within the council.

Personal Impact: being self-aware, acting pro-actively and accepting responsibility for achieving results

Team Member	Team Leader/Deputy Manager	Senior Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a clear picture of role purpose and personal responsibilities • Shows confidence in ability by being positive and enthusiastic in the delivery of work • Proactively seeks new challenges and opportunities to learn from experience • Improves performance by learning from past experience • Approachable and maintains confidentiality • Takes responsibility for identifying own development needs • Sets achievable personal goals • Has ability to perform under pressure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is flexible, adaptable and open to change • Takes responsibility for making things happen and seek new ways of working • Proactively seeks new opportunities to develop yourself and the department/business • Takes calculated risks to achieve results, even when the full impact has not been determined • Influences attitudes and opinions • Gains support through persuasion, proposals and courses of action • Leads by example – reflecting on feedback and behaving in a way that reinforces the tone and direction of the team • Is aware of own behaviour and impact on others • Shares ideas, best practice and learning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates own commitment to change • Aims to create a learning organisation incorporating feedback from stakeholders • Generates ideas for improvements at an organisational level • Identifies where organisational improvement can be made • Influences people internally and externally in appropriate ways to achieve the objectives of the council • Leads by example – role modelling the council values and competence.

Building Our Future: wanting to be the best and working together to achieve this. Making improvements through being efficient and delivering value for money

Team Member	Team Leader/Deputy Manager	Senior Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands how your role contributes to the council's vision and corporate plans • Has an understanding of service priorities for the next year • Adapts to meeting changing service objectives and priorities • Listens to new ideas and is prepared to adapt how they work • Keeps up to date with council news and challenges • Has an appreciation of the environmental impacts of the council's work and how they can contribute to reduce carbon emissions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a detailed understanding of the council's vision and how it applies to the team and other professional and agencies • Assesses the impact of wider changes in the council on the strategy and plans of the team • Applies the council vision into local strategies and plans • Uses relevant information to inform the development of the team strategy and plans • Promotes the future vision of the council to stakeholders • Seeks out new ways of doing things, encourages innovation and constructive challenge • Works collaboratively across service groupings and external agencies to deliver improvement • Is positive about the future of the council • Celebrates success both within the team and across the wider council • Promotes and facilitates changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops and articulates the vision of the council • Connects plans, policies, strategies and services to promote one-council working • Leads the development and implementation of corporate policies at a strategic level • Anticipates future requirements and plan to meet them • Encourages others to be forward thinking and innovative in the delivery of the council vision • Proactively links with stakeholders to identify their needs and shape the council's agenda • Has an appreciation of the changing political agenda and how this impacts on service delivery • Proactively keeps up to date with Government initiatives and assesses how these impact upon the council's vision • Has a technical and political understanding of the workings of the council.

Delivering results: continually improving performance and introducing new ideas into the Council to achieve results

Team Member	Team Leader/Deputy Manager	Senior Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes pride in work and always aims to deliver quality results • Focuses on results by identifying opportunities to improve processes or procedures • Demonstrates the ability to take the initiative • Anticipates obstacles and problems and take corrective action • Puts forward new and innovative ideas or suggestions, outlining the benefits they would bring • Considers new ideas and feedback from others • Aims to meet agreed targets and deadlines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets and promotes high standards of performance • Incorporates council and service change initiatives into actions for the team • Evaluates how you and the team could deliver a better/more efficient service • Understands what needs to be done to make a new idea work within the council • Engages stakeholders early in the development of new products or services to ensure they are fit for purpose • Ensures timely, constructive action is taken to address performance issues • Constantly reviews workloads against available resources • Actively researches and benchmark against other service groupings/sectors to ensure best practice is delivered. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a culture of innovation and creativity – welcoming new ideas from all team members • Leads teamworking across the council to improve overall performance • Looks to benchmark against excellent organisations, from all industries, to identify opportunities for change and improvement • Takes a lead role across the council and service grouping in the development and implementation of change initiatives • Develops and delivers services based on awareness and understanding of Peterlee's diverse community • Defines the common goals that all service groupings are working towards • Creates the structures, roles and responsibilities to maximise available resources.

[Appendix 3: Appraisal & Development Induction Appraisal Form](#)

[Appendix 4: Probation Appraisal Form \(3 month\)](#)

[Appendix 5: Probation Appraisal Form \(6 month\)](#)

[Appendix 6: Annual Appraisal Form](#)

[Appendix 7: Group/Team Appraisal Form](#)