



Performance and Development Planning

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Human Resources Employment Policies





HUMAN RESOURCES AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Quick Reference - Associated Documents

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Performance and Development Planning Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy and procedure is designed to facilitate a fair, transparent, and consistent approach to managing individual performance and personal development planning of all Council employees.
- 1.2 It endorses a new approach which aims to develop a supportive performance environment through good management practice, helpful conversations about performance, continual coaching and development from managers, and personal recognition for the achievement and contribution employees make to organisational performance.

2. SCOPE

- 2.1 The policy and procedure applies to local government employees and craft workers. Separate Policy and Procedures exist for Teachers and Chief Officers in line with their Conditions of Service.
- 2.2 The Council will ensure that good equal opportunities practice underpins the operation of this policy and will apply to all colleagues irrespective of age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The policy and procedure has been fully impact assessed.

3. KEY PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 The key principles of the policy are:
 - I. Managers and staff must work together to ensure the performance and development planning (PDP) process is meaningful and regarded as a fair and objective way for managing and discussing individual performance and identifying personal development and support.
 - II. The PDP framework is a two-way process and managers and their staff should fully understand the responsibilities of everyone within the framework.
 - III. All employees will be clear about what 'expected performance' looks like for their job and will be supported by their line manager to succeed and achieve their best.
 - IV. All employees will have opportunity to gain open and regular feedback on their performance and know how they are doing to help them develop, progress, and improve further.

- V. Managers will support staff to identify their personal development needs and ensure access to appropriate development opportunities which increase personal skill, knowledge, and competence
- VI. The Council values the achievement of all employees and managers will give positive feedback and recognise the good work of individuals and teams.

4. APPLICATION OF POLICY AND PROCEDURE

- 4.1 Performance and development planning is a means, not an end. It establishes a link between performance of the individual and the organisation and promotes direct communication between the individual and line manager.
- 4.2 A PDP framework is essential to get the best out of people but it is important to recognise that a good framework alone cannot accomplish success for the organisation. Good management practice and commitment which supports the principles must be evident not only in the system but more importantly in the overall culture of the Council and the way in which the framework is used by managers and staff alike.
- 4.3 The PDP policy and procedure intends only to highlight the key principles and stages of the process and what must happen at timely points across the annual cycle. More detailed guidance and explanation on each key stage is provided in the guidance publication 'Performance and Development Planning Framework – Guidance for Managers and Staff' (Appendix 1) and all employees should refer to this for additional support and guidance as they participate in the process.
- 4.4 In addition a development programme has been designed to incorporate workshops and guidance material which aims to help managers and staff better understand their role, responsibilities, and each component of the framework. All employees should ensure they have undertaken relevant personal development to support their understanding and application of the process.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The process will unfold systematically as each directorate engages in the key stages throughout the annual cycle. However to promote a partnership approach from everyone the following responsibilities have been identified:

Corporate Management Team

- lead the application of this framework and managing individual performance

- clearly communicate corporate and departmental objectives and priorities for the coming year
- undertake performance and development reviews and manage individual performance for their senior managers in line with the annual cycle
- ensure their managers conduct performance reviews
- offer leadership and support by committing time and resources to enable the process to operate effectively

All managers

- make timely arrangements for performance and development review meetings
- prepare adequately for meetings and support staff in their preparations by offering guidance
- guide the discussion about the employee's performance, achievement, improvement, and personal development
- consider the ideas and views offered by individuals
- support staff throughout the annual cycle to achieve personal objectives and undertake appropriate personal development

All staff

- ensure they understand the performance and development planning process
- perform to the best of their ability to achieve objectives and targets
- prepare for performance and development review meetings
- engage constructively in discussions about their performance and development
- offer ideas for improvement
- participate in relevant development opportunities

Organisational Development Manager

- ensure the framework is applied consistently and fairly
- monitor application of the framework and advise Directors where performance and development planning is not being conducted
- resolve matters of interpretation and standardisation of best practice
- provide guidelines and training in the skills required to support effective performance and development planning
- maintain regular review and update of the framework
- ensure that development needs resulting from the personal development planning are prioritised and addressed

6. LEGISLATIVE/POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1** The Policy and Procedure have been developed in line with best practice.

7 REVIEW AND MONITORING

- 7.1** The policy and procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis after implementation. Any amendments to the policy will be implemented after full consultation with the trades unions. In addition the Organisational Development team will implement a monitoring and evaluation process to ensure the framework is being operated fairly and consistently across the Council

- 7.2** Complaints about the implementation of the policy or procedure should be referred to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Procedure for Performance and Development Planning Framework

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** The procedure for the performance and development planning (PDP) framework has been developed to provide guidance and support to managers and employees on the effective implementation of the Council's PDP framework.
- 1.2** The procedure predominantly outlines the key steps which should be undertaken and managed throughout the annual cycle. Managers and staff should refer to the further guidance and explanation provided within the publication 'Performance and Development Planning Framework – Guidance for Managers and Staff' (Appendix 1) on each key stage of the framework.

2.0. KEY ELEMENTS OF THE FRAMEWORK

- 2.1** The Council's PDP system aims to link individual achievement and service delivery to the successful performance of the organisation. Through a joined-up approach to planning, improvement, and delivering high performance, it is expected this will bring a number of benefits to individuals, line managers, and the wider organisation.
- 2.2** The PDP process is a way of ensuring that managers and their staff meet at regular intervals to discuss individual performance and review work progress and achievement. It should be an open and constructive process to evaluate performance and create opportunity for individuals to receive and provide feedback.
- 2.3** The key elements of the PDP cycle are:
 - personal objective setting
 - personal development planning
 - reviewing progress and providing feedback
 - evaluating achievement and developing forward plans
- 2.4** The annual cycle will run from 1st April to 31st March and each key stage should be recorded on the form PDP1.
- 2.5** As a minimum the following standards will underpin the framework:
 - all employees will have an up-to-date job description, annual objectives, and an annual personal development plan
 - there will be a clear link between an employee's objectives and that of their service/department
 - all employees will have a formal performance review meeting face-to-face at least once per year
 - fairness, equity, and respect must be followed throughout the process

- unless mutually agreed in advance, the content and outcomes of the performance review meeting will be confidential between the individual and line manager

3.0. CORE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

- 3.1** The PDP process is not only concerned with just the delivery and achievement of personal objectives (i.e what gets done) but equally reflects on how these are achieved (i.e the personal capability and behaviours demonstrated). The framework aims to encourage clear personal objective setting and linked into this it will be essential for individuals to understand the key behaviours they will need to demonstrate in order to successfully fulfil their role.
- 3.2** A core competency framework has been introduced to help provide both managers and individuals with a clear and consistent understanding of what behaviours are required to interact and work successfully with other people across the Council.
- 3.3** The competency framework sets out a range of observable behaviours that will result from of an individual applying their skill, knowledge, and motivation in their work. These behaviours describe what managers and staff need to demonstrate to be effective at work and what is expected and needed from all employees to constitute good performance.
- 3.4** Individuals and managers will be required to use the framework during the objective setting discussion and within any performance review meetings. Individuals should assess themselves against the core competencies and identify any possible development needs.
- 3.5** In providing feedback to individuals on their performance against objectives, managers should consider the extent to which the individual meets the behaviour indicators consistently and in a wide variety of circumstances. As part of this discussion managers should consider the strengths of the individual, areas where improvement is required, and the development to support this.

4.0. STAGE 1: SETTING PERSONAL PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

- 4.1** In April each year personal objectives should be developed and agreed between staff and line managers. It is essential that the individual and the line manager thoroughly prepare prior to the meeting to support the discussion and facilitate agreement on the personal objectives. The individual should be encouraged to develop draft objectives by completing section 1 of the PDP1 and forward this to their line manager in advance of the meeting. This should then be used as a basis for discussing and agreeing performance expectations.

4.2 As a starting point the individual's job description provides an outline of what is expected in a specific role. Next consider the departmental or service objectives as this will identify the main areas that an individual's objectives should cover.

4.3 Personal objectives should set out and clearly reflect what specifically needs to be achieved by the individual. The most well known method for developing personal objectives is using the 'SMART' approach to ensure that objectives are:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Realistic**
- **Time bound**

Each objective is then underpinned by specific targets or measurements which explicitly describe the actions that will be undertaken to deliver the objective. The agreed objectives should be recorded within section 1 of the PDP1 form.

4.4 Generally an individual should have between five and seven personal objectives and this will vary depending on the level and nature of the job. People undertaking similar roles will probably have the same objectives (although their targets and measures may be different depending on personal capability).

4.5 For those individuals who have responsibility for managing, supporting, or supervising staff there should be at least one objective related to people management which sets out what they intend to deliver and achieve in relation to managing their staff.

5.0 PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

5.1 The Performance and Development Planning framework also facilitates the identification of training and personal development needs. The main rationale for personal development planning is that it is likely to be more beneficial than unplanned or random learning activities. Personal development is concerned with making a better contribution to the current role and improving potential to become more successful in securing and working in future jobs.

5.2 When undertaking personal development planning consideration should be given to:

- reviewing how individuals apply their knowledge, skills, and behaviours to meet the current demands of the post and identifying whether they have any development needs

- the individual's personal views on their current skills and the support required to enable them to deliver their objectives and role being honest about individual strengths and weaknesses
- learning from failures as well as successes
- some discussion on the individual's long term career goals
- planning to develop a range of personal transferable skills alongside those that you specifically need to carry out your role

Personal Learning Plan

5.3 Through discussion the line manager and individual should define and prioritise the development needs and discuss the variety of activities and ways in which development can be undertaken. The agreed development activities should be recorded on the Personal Learning Plan (PDP1 section 2) and reviewed regularly as development is completed to evaluate how successfully the learning is being applied.

6.0 STAGE 2: REVIEWING PROGRESS AND GIVING FEEDBACK

6.1 Managers should conduct at least one formal progress review during the annual cycle, approximately mid-way through the year. While only one progress review is required managers are encouraged to frequently discuss performance throughout the year. This is particularly critical for an individual who is not performing and it may be necessary to set-up more regular and frequent review sessions. If an individual needs to improve performance the sooner they find out about it, the sooner they can correct it.

6.2 The review meeting should be a constructive conversation about performance which helps staff to succeed and improve within their role. Key areas which should be discussed within the progress review meeting include:

- status of work progress against objectives, targets, and outputs
- demonstration of the key behaviours by the individual
- changes in priorities and the impact on performance objectives
- personal development needs
- support required from line manager to help the individual
- recognition of success
- improvement areas needed

6.3 The outcomes of these discussions can be recorded on the PDP 1 form Section 3.

Performance requiring improvement

- 6.4 At any time in the performance year where it is identified that an individual is not meeting the performance expectations, it is important the line manager takes appropriate action to deal with the poor performance promptly.
- 7.5 The line manager needs to identify the specific areas of work where the individual is not meeting the required performance expectations and provide examples of the individual's unsatisfactory level of performance. Equally there needs to be suggestions on ways that this could be improved and opportunity for the individual to ask questions and put forward their feedback.
- 7.6 By the end of the discussion, an action plan should be developed on some specific actions the individual will take to improve their performance. It should be clear on what the individual must do to bring their performance to an acceptable level within a reasonable period of time and confirm support and assistance that will be provided by the line manager.
- 7.7 Where performance continues below the standard required or no improvement is recognised then line managers should refer to the Policy and Procedure for Performance Management and implement the guidelines and procedures outlined within this policy.

8.0 EVALUATING PERFORMANCE

- 8.1 At the end of each performance year (31st March) a formal review of performance and achievement should be carried out and an overall assessment of performance completed.
- 8.2 Managers and individuals should both prepare for this stage of the process and compile an evaluation of achievements over the annual performance cycle. The central issue in the final evaluation is the performance achieved against the objectives and targets set, taking into consideration the key competencies demonstrated.
- 8.3 Both parties should go through each objective and discuss the performance areas, both negative and positive, providing specific examples where possible and explaining any changes in performance, including what may have influenced this.

Performance assessment

- 8.4 As part of the performance evaluation the line manager should award an overall performance assessment marking based on the performance achieved against the agreed objectives and demonstration of the core competencies. The performance assessment given should reflect the individual's performance as compared to what was agreed at the outset

of the performance year and take into account the outcomes of any review discussions throughout the year.

8.5 The overall performance assessment will fall into one of the following categories:

- **Excellent:** exceeds all job requirements, delivers significant additional tasks, and is a role model for the core competencies
- **Very good:** exceeds requirements and displays strong competency characteristics
- **Good:** meets most requirements and demonstrates appropriate level of competency
- **Development needed:** meets some requirements but requires improvement in other areas

Further explanation on the criterion for each assessment category is provided within the guidance publication 'Performance and Personal Development Planning Framework – Guidance for managers and staff'.

8.6 Line managers should record their marking within section 4 of the PDP1 form and provide a written summary to support the assessment.

9.0 DISAGREEMENTS

9.1 Where an individual is unhappy about any aspect of the PDP process as it applies to them, they should discuss this first with their line manager with a view to reaching a satisfactory resolution of the issue. If the issue is unresolved, the line manager's manager should become involved and aim to resolve the matter between both parties.

9.2 The line manager's manager will consider all the available information before reaching a conclusion, and advising both parties of the outcomes with reasons for the decision.

9.3 If an individual remains unsatisfied following this process and discussion the matter should then be pursued via the Council's standard grievance procedure.