

Prudhoe Town Council

Performance and Development Process

(1) Introduction

- a) The Performance and Development process (commonly referred to as 'appraisal') is a process designed to not only review past performance but to also look to the future in terms of individuals' potential, objectives and development needs. It involves a two way open and constructive dialogue.
- b) The process should link to the culture, values, aims and objectives of the Town Council. It is important for employees to be clear about what is expected of them and how they can contribute to the effectiveness of the organisation. It is intended to be a motivational process and not one that is merely 'tolerated' just because the process exists. A badly managed appraisal that lacks clarity and focus can be counterproductive and a de-motivating experience.
- c) The process involves setting and agreeing annual objectives for the employee coupled with identifying training needs associated with the achievement of the objectives where appropriate. There may be occasions where training needs not immediately linked to the objectives are discussed and agreed.
- d) The phrasing of objectives needs to have SMART characteristics.
- e) An effective appraisal process has benefits for both the Town Council and its employees. The process is focused on discussing the needs of the organisation and the individual which in turn can provide a greater sense of 'belonging' and improve feelings of being a valued contributor to organisational success. Training/development needs identified during the process can feed into training plans. Addressing the needs can then be planned and not just addressed in an ad-hoc manner.
- f) There should be a panel of two members responsible for the appraisal of the Town Clerk. This panel should consist of the Chair of Council and Chair of Human Resources or other Member nominated by Council. The make-up of this appraisal panel can be varied depending upon the wishes of the Council. The appraisal of the Town Clerk should be undertaken first to allow any issues of 'cascading' to be considered where these could impact on the objectives to be set for the Administrative Assistant.
- g) The Town Clerk plus one member will be responsible for the appraisal of the Administrative Assistant. The Member involved will be either the Chair of Council or Chair of Human Resources or other Member nominated by Council. However for consistency the Member involved should also have been involved with the appraisal of the Town Clerk.

(2) SMART Characteristics

- a) **Specific** – assessment of what is required to be done stating why something is to be done and who may be involved.
- b) **Measurable** – this relates to how successful achievement of the objective will be assessed.
- c) **Attainable** – attainment looks at how achievable the objective is. An objective should be stretching enough to keep the employees interest but not so challenging/extreme that it can never be attained.

- d) **Realistic** – an employee must have a realistic chance of achieving an objective. An objective must be relevant and worthwhile. There needs to be a discussion/assessment of any issues/barriers that could make the objective unworkable.
- e) **Time-bound** – this aspect relates to when the task needs to be completed by. A target date should be included.

(3) Process

- Council set organisational priorities/objectives for the year
- Preparation (appraiser and appraisee)
- Initial meeting for the year
- Review meeting
- Assessment meeting of achievement meeting

a) Council set priorities

- *Process detail and timescale required for priorities/objective setting.*

b) Preparation:-

- To ensure that the discussions between the appraiser and appraisee focus on relevant issues, it is important that some time is spent by both parties preparing for the appraisal meeting by completing the preparation forms.
- Appraiser will agree dates for the initial meeting with the appraisee and choose a location for the meeting that allows the appraisee to feel comfortable in his/her surroundings with no interruptions. Given the office space constraints placed upon the Council this could be done at an offsite location if necessary.
- Consider the Councils mission, objectives and priorities and how they affect the roles/responsibilities of the appraisee.

c) Initial Meeting:-

- Clarify the purpose and structure of the meeting and check that preparation forms have been completed.
- Clarify job description and key roles/responsibilities of appraisee.
- Agree objectives and phrase them using the SMART characteristics. Careful consideration needs to be given to how many objectives are set.
- Discuss training and development needs with the appraisee. These link to both what is necessary for the achievement of the objectives and the future ambitions of the appraisee. It must be remembered that not all appraisee ambitions can be addressed by the employer.
- Set a date for the review meeting. This would normally be 6 months after the objective setting.
- Areas for discussion in relation to performance and training/development needs may include budget, tools to do the job, equipment, communication, direction, career development, support and commitment. It may be useful to clarify budget availability and explore any innovative ways of providing training and development.
- Explore and encourage appraisee contributions to service improvements.

d) Review Meeting:-

- Monitoring progress on achieving objectives and training/development activities should be an ongoing process. Whilst a date for the formal review will have been set it may be of benefit to have regular informal discussions especially where objectives may be extremely challenging or there is significant pressure.
- Discuss progress against the objectives set and issues relating to training and development. The appraisee should feel free to comment on effectiveness of training completed and its contribution to their meeting their objectives and those of the Council.
- Discuss any unresolved issues and agree any action to be taken.
- Discuss possible new objectives should circumstances have changed.

e) Assessment Meeting:-

- Discussion should focus on achievement of objectives, what has gone well, what has gone less well, what could be improved upon. Discussion can also include what the appraisee liked and disliked.
- Appraiser should seek feedback on their own performance and contribution.
- Any unresolved issues should be discussed and any consequent action agreed.
- This meeting can also provide an opportunity to discuss how well the individual is coping with their role at the Council, and whether there are any issues affecting their performance and possibly their health. If any sensitive issues are raised (for example personal problems, respect and dignity issues) it should be carefully agreed with the individual what action is to be taken to assist them resolve the issues. Any information they wish to remain confidential should be respected.
- Any information they wish to remain confidential should be respected, unless you feel that their health and well being are being compromised, for example it may be an issue related to bullying and harassment, in which case you should state that you feel you must act to ensure their well being at work.
- Agree and set date for next meeting.

(4) Notes

1. In practice, after the first year, the assessment meeting will also double as the initial meeting for the setting of new objectives for the coming year unless it is agreed by both parties to have two separate meetings.
2. Whilst there is guidance given as to indicative issues appropriate for discussion at various stages of the process these are not exhaustive and are flexible and interchangeable as circumstances dictate.
3. Both parties to the appraisal should complete their preparation forms and exchange them at least two weeks before the appraisal meetings. This is to ensure that there are no surprises on the day.
4. Once an appraisal has been completed, type or write up the appraisal based on the previous discussion. Appraisals are confidential and should only be completed by an appropriate person.
5. Both parties are to retain a copy of appraisal document.