



BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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# Appraisal Scheme Policy

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## **1. Purpose**

- 1.1 Performance appraisals are essential for the effective management and evaluation of staff. Appraisals help develop individuals, improve organisational performance and feed in to business planning.
- 1.2 Annual performance appraisals enable management and monitoring of standards, agreeing expectations and objectives, delegation of responsibilities and tasks, and career and succession planning – for individuals and the Council as a whole.
- 1.3 Performance appraisals are important for staff motivation, attitude and behaviour development, communicating and aligning individuals and Council aims, and fostering positive relationships between management and staff.
- 1.4 Performance appraisals form part of the performance management of employees. The performance management system aims to improve performance, develop individuals and manage behaviour. Line managers are crucial in this system in ensuring that their team members know and understand what is expected of them, they have the skills to undertake the role, that the Council will support their development, regular feedback is given on performance, and employees have the opportunity to contribute to the team aims and objectives.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1 This policy applies to all employees of the Council with the exception of casuals who work on an ad hoc basis, but are performance managed in other ways.

## **3. Appraisal Process**

- 3.1 Formal performance appraisals are conducted annually for all permanent staff in the Council, usually in July. The Deputy Town Clerk and Operations Manager will be appraised by the Town Clerk and office staff/groundsman will be done by the Deputy Town Clerk and Operations Manager. The Town Clerk is appraised by the Town Mayor, and Chairman of the Finance & Policy Committee
- 3.2 The Council's aim is to have an appraisal process that is people, not paper driven and that aligns employee's development and skills to the Councils objectives.
- 3.3 In order to be effective, it is important that both appraisee and appraiser are comfortable with and have bought in to the appraisal process and purpose. Technical training in conducting appraisal meetings will be made available to line managers or councillors to ensure they have a good understanding with what is expected from them, and their responsibilities as an appraiser.
- 3.4 Each member of staff will complete an appraisal form (*as attached at Appendix A*) and submit this to their line manager by a pre-agreed time. Staff and line managers are issued with a guidance document on preparing for the appraisal meeting and the skills needed and techniques to get the most out of the appraisal process (*as attached at Appendix B*).

3.5 The line manager will arrange an appraisal meeting at a suitable time and date, in a room free from distractions. The meeting will take the form of a free-flowing conversation during which a range of views is exchanged.

3.6 Key Elements of the Appraisal Process:

- **Measurement** – assessing performance against agreed targets and objectives, and behaviour and attitudes against espoused values;
- **Alignment** – with Brackley Town Council's Strategic Objectives and Aims.
- **Feedback** – providing information to individuals on their performance and progress and on what is required to continue to perform well in the future, particularly in view of any change programme and evolution of job roles;
- **Positive Reinforcement** – emphasising what has been done well and making only constructive criticism about what might be improved, and drawing out the importance of how things are done, as well as what is done, and ensuring effort is directed at value-adding activities;
- **Exchange of Views** – a frank exchange of views about what has happened, how appraisees can improve their performance, the support they need from their managers to achieve this and their aspirations for their future career;
- **Agreement** – jointly coming to an understanding by all parties about what needs to be done to improve and sustain performance generally and overcome any issues raised in the course of the discussion.

#### 4. Follow Up

4.1 After the meeting the appraiser will write up their appraisal form with notes from the meeting, showing their understanding of the conversation that has taken place. The form will detail the objectives set and timescales. The form is then agreed and signed off by both appraisee and appraiser.

4.2 It is important to remember that performance appraisals are not just a review of the staff member's ability to carry out and meet the needs of their role; it is a chance to look at personal development too, not just job specific development.

4.3 The Town Clerk will review all appraisals carried out and produce a report for the Staffing Sub-Committee with a generic overview of the appraisals and training needs identified.

4.4 Training will be arranged in accordance with the Council's Training & Development Policy, and reviewed afterwards for effectiveness.

4.5 Both the appraisee and appraiser will be expected to review performance against objectives on an ongoing basis as part of the ongoing performance management of employees.

4.6 It is vital to remember that an appraisal process will be most effective when regular one-to-one discussions take place between managers and staff throughout the year.

## APPENDIX 1



### CONFIDENTIAL Staff Appraisal Form

<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Job Title:</b>	
<b>Appraisers Name:</b>	
<b>Appraisal Date:</b>	
<b>Appraisal Period:</b>	

#### **Purpose of the Staff Appraisal Meeting:**

To enable you to discuss with the Council your job performance and how you and Council can improve and develop.

The discussion should aim at a clearer understanding of:

- Your role and your achievements
- Agreement on your objectives and tasks
- Ideas for improvement
- Any training that needs to be identified

You should prepare for this discussion by completing this form. You can use it for your own guidance and should show it to your reviewer at least a week before the meeting. It will not be copied or filed without your agreement.

After the review, you will be given the opportunity to read the completed form; you will be able to add your comments and sign the review form.

You should bring to the meeting:

- This form or a copy of it
- Your job description
- Details of any training or courses undertaken during the last year

What do you see as the main purpose of your job? Has this changed in the last year?
Overall what do you feel has gone well in the last year? (Achievements and successes, including learning and development activity)
What do you feel went less well? (Lessons for the future)
Which parts of your job do you enjoy the most and why?
Which parts of your job do you enjoy the least and why?
Are there any parts of your job description that you are not doing? Do you feel it is an accurate reflection of the role? (job description provided with the appraisal form)
What would/could help you improve? (including any help or support from your manager or any training and development)

How effective was any training or development you received?

If there is anything further that you are wishing to raise at your appraisal meeting please use the space below to provide details. If it will help, please also attach any additional documentation that may assist in the discussions at the meeting.

## PART B: Evaluation by Appraiser

Please comment on the following areas of work. Please recognise good and excellent work, but also indicate any areas needing development.	
Quality of Work	
Productivity	
Use of Initiative	
Team Skills	
Customer Care Skills	
Training Skills (if applicable)	
Supervisory Skills (if applicable)	

### REVIEW OF THE APPRAISAL PERIOD:

Comments about the progress and/or achievements of the objectives set at the previous appraisal?
How effective do you think any training and development has been? What improvements have you noticed?
Areas, tasks or projects that the appraisee has undertaken particularly well?



Are there any areas of work currently requiring support, training, guidance or clarification?
What do you feel could be done to improve the appraisee's performance or skills further?
How do you see the job developing over the next year? Are there any tasks/responsibilities that can be delegated?

**PART C: Objective Setting and Training Needs Identified**

<b>OBJECTIVES</b> Objectives should be <b>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timed</b>	<b>Target Date:</b>

<b>TRAINING &amp; DEVELOPMENT</b> Consider future potential and development, in particular highlight areas for training (specify whether attendance on a course of in-house training)	<b>Target Date:</b>

**PART D: FURTHER COMMENTS**

<b>Comments by Appraisee</b>
<b>Comments by Appraiser</b>

	<b>Signed:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Appraisee</b>		
<b>Appraiser</b>		
<b>Town Clerk</b>		

## APPENDIX 2

### Appraisal Guidelines

#### Preparing for the Appraisal Meeting:

Both parties should prepare for the review meeting beforehand if a successful outcome is to be achieved.

Points for appraisers and appraisees to consider include:

- How well the individual has performed since the last meeting and what they have achieved, with examples or other evidence;
- How successfully objectives and development plans from the last meeting have been implemented;
- Factors that have helped or hindered performance;
- How the appraisee has responded to challenges;
- Current learning and development and support needed;
- Potential actions that could be taken by either party to develop or improve performance;
- Potential directions the individual's career might take;
- Potential objectives for the next review period.

It may also help for the appraisees to consider what they most enjoy about the job and how they might want to develop the role. For appraisers it will also help to consider what feedback, positive as well as negative, that they would like to give.

In some instances it may be helpful to guide appraisees through a self-assessment process encouraging them to assess and analyse their own performance as a basis for discussion and action. This can improve the quality of the appraisal discussion as individuals will feel more actively involved in the process.

#### What a Good Appraisal Looks Like:

A constructive appraisal meeting is one in which:

- Achievement is recognised and reinforced;
- Appraisers listen actively to what appraisees say;
- There is scope for reflection and analysis;
- Performance and behaviour analysed, not personality;
- The whole period is reviewed and not just recent or isolated events;
- The meeting ends positively with agreed action plans to improve and sustain performance in the future.

A bad appraisal meeting:

- Focuses on a catalogue of failures and omissions;
- Is controlled by the appraiser;
- Ends with disagreement between appraiser and appraisee;
- Leaves the appraisee feeling disengaged or demotivated by the process.

## **Appraisal Skills:**

All managers expected to carry out performance appraisal should have some training. Ideally this should not just include the skills of performance appraisal but also the reasons for it, in particular how the process aligns with business strategy and value creation and fits into the wider strategic process of performance management.

Nonetheless, the skills to carry out an effective appraisal are crucial. In particular, this means that appraisers need to ask the right questions, listen actively and provide constructive feedback.

Asking the right questions:

It is important for appraisers to ask both open and probing questions.

Open questions are general rather than specific; they enable people to decide how they should be answered and encourage them to talk freely. Examples include:

- How do you feel things have been going?
- How do you see the job developing?
- How do you feel about that?
- Tell me, why do you think that happened?

Probing questions dig deeper for more specific information on what happened or why. They should indicate support for the individual's answer and encourage appraisees to provide more information about their feelings and attitudes, while they can also be used to reflect back to the individual and check information. Examples would be:

- That's very interesting. Tell me more about ...?
- Why do you say that?
- Have I got the right impression? Do you mean that ....?

Listening:

To be good listeners during the review meeting, appraisers should:

- Concentrate on the speakers and be aware of behaviour, body language and nuances that supplement what is being said.
- Respond quickly when necessary but not interrupt.
- Ask relevant questions to clarify meaning.
- Comment on points to demonstrate understanding but keep them short and not inhibit the flow of the speaker.

## **Giving Feedback:**

Feedback should be based on facts, not subjective opinion, always focusing on evidence and examples.

The aim of feedback should be to help employees understand the impact of their actions and behaviour. Corrective action may be required where the feedback indicates that something has gone wrong, but wherever possible, appraisees should be given the opportunity to shape this and it should not be dictated. Feedback should be used positively to reinforce the good aspects and identify opportunities for further positive action, as much as to discuss weaknesses.

Giving feedback is a skill and those without training should be discouraged from doing so. Feedback will work best when:

- Individuals are given access to readily-available information on their performance and progress
- Feedback is related to actual events, observed behaviours or actions
- events are described rather than judged
- Feedback is accompanied by questions soliciting the individual's opinion why certain things happened
- Individuals are encouraged to come to their own conclusions about what happened and why
- There is understanding about what went wrong and an emphasis on 'putting things right' rather than censuring past behaviour.

### Setting Objectives:

Individuals achieving their agreed objectives will help the Council achieving its own. Both appraisee and appraiser will need to have considered the specific job role and how it contributes to the overall performance of the Council. Objectives must be discussed and mutually agreed with each person.

It is key to remember that objectives should not be the routine tasks that are the requirement of the role (unless it is a training role). An objective may however be to improve certain skills or attend training to develop in order to meet the requirements of the role; not carry out the task itself.

Each objective set should be SMART:

- **SPECIFIC** – there must be a full understanding of what is expected, if there is any doubt then the objective ought to be rewritten;
- **MEASURABLE** – in terms of quantity, quality, time and cost. It enables progress to be measured and useful feedback to be given, by both appraisee and appraiser;
- **ACHIEVABLE** – it must be an achievable objective or it may act in demotivating the staff member. If there is concern, reframe it or break it down to achievable parts;
- **RELEVANT** – it must be relevant to the job function and the Council's overall aim;
- **TIME-FRAMED** – having timescales as to when each objective needs to be started, reviewed and completed helps plan workloads and increases the chances of achieving them.

When phrasing an objective consider using the following format:

Beginning – use an active verb – e.g. reduce/increase/develop/produce/research

Middle – what might be achieved – e.g. project costs/internal processes/alternative methods

End – end with a measure – e.g. by 20% over the past year/by the end of November

Build in milestones to track progress and give each objective a priority.