EMPLOYEE APPRAISAL SCHEME

Introduction

The County Council requires all Directorates to use this Corporate Employee Performance Appraisal template. All employees must have a formal annual appraisal (and six-monthly review), which includes:

- Assessing performance against agreed objectives.
- Evaluating impact of learning and development on individual performance.
- Planning further objectives, learning and development.

Appraisals maximise the employee’s contribution to the Directorate, the Council and the public.

The employee’s objectives and personal performance targets should be consistent with the objectives of their team, Unit and Directorate. The appraisal process focuses on how the employee’s work contributes to the achievement of overall targets and standards of performance.

The appraisal process plays a key role in our organisational development and is the cornerstone of linking our standards to the Investors in People framework. It is a central feature of good management practice that employees are given regular and accurate feedback on their work.

Employee appraisal is also part of the ongoing management process whereby the employee and manager keep in touch with support needs, performance and the context of the person’s work activities. Performance Appraisal is a continuous activity, rather than something which is done once or twice a year.

Embedding Equality and Diversity

Equality and diversity is about removing prejudice and discrimination from society. Local Authorities have a major part to play in promoting equality and diversity.

By building equalities into the appraisal process, we ensure that good practice is captured, and that all employees have the opportunity to embed equality in the way they work.

From April 2006 all employees must have at least one equality objective. Some posts will have specific equality responsibilities in delivering their Directorate Equality Plan, or delivering their service, and objective(s) will be written to reflect those responsibilities. For more general posts appropriate wording for an equality objective would be:
“Understand how equality and diversity affects my job and how I work with colleagues and the public”

The appendix to this document gives practical examples of equality objectives.

**Appraisals and the Council Plan**

Every employee of the Council contributes to the delivery of our Council Plan (formerly known as the Corporate Strategy). Appraisals provide the opportunity to make reference to it so that the Council can plan and deliver services that improve the quality of people’s lives in a joined up way.

The good news is that you do not need to read the whole plan to try to work out where a particular post fits in.

The plan details the main aims that the Council wants to achieve in the next three years, but connections between it and each service have already been made. Directorate, service and unit service plans tie in key activities or targets to those of the Council Plan.

Before an appraisal takes place, managers and employees need to prepare by looking at the relevant service plan and taking a look at the Council Plan summary.

Attached is an appendix which sets out the six key themes in the plan together with the Council’s values and mission. Also included is an electronic link to the intranet site so that more information can easily be found.

**Aims of employee appraisal**

The process involves self appraisal and line manager appraisal in order to achieve the following:

- **Service delivery**
  - To define and ensure the quality of services.
  - To ensure flexible services that address equality and diversity issues.
  - To monitor and evaluate performance in order to promote continuous improvement.

- **Communication**
  - To give employees an opportunity to reinforce the main purposes and priorities of the Council and how their objectives relate to the Directorate Service Plan and the Council Plan.
To enable employees to discuss their role in the changing face of the Council. During the appraisal interview, the employee’s Job Profile should be reviewed to ensure it reflects what the role requires.

To understand the equality implications of working for the Council.

To foster a pride in the organisation through positive leadership, and recognising everyone’s contribution.

- **Performance**
  - To give appraisee and appraiser the opportunity to review performance of objectives and the context against which these have been carried out.
  
  - To agree targets and objectives for the next period that relate to the Directorate’s Service Plans and the Council Plan, with clear time-frames for achieving these.
  
  - To agree on how equality impacts on the appraisee’s job, including their relationship with colleagues, service users and the wider public.
  
  - To enhance performance, motivation, self-confidence and mutual understanding of both appraisee and appraiser.

- **Development**
  - To reinforce the Council’s commitment to underpinning performance improvement with appropriate learning, training and development opportunities.
  
  - To review how previous learning and development has contributed to the achievement of specific Council Plan and Service Plan objectives.
  
  - To review learning and development received – what was learned, how it was used at work and who has benefited.
  
  - To identify individual learning and development needs, agreeing time-frames for meeting these needs according to priorities, budgets, and existing knowledge and competence levels.
  
  - To ensure that all employees have the e-skills needed to underpin effective delivery of e-services throughout the Council
To consider possible learning solutions and methods of measuring the effectiveness of the learning and development.

To support workforce development within the Council

To give employees an opportunity to discuss career aspirations.

Principles

Appraisal is based on a balance of accountability between the Council and individual employees.

The Directorate and Managers are accountable for:

- Ensuring that appraisals are taking place for all employees.
- Ensuring that managers operate effectively, through supervision, communication and the provision of resources within allocated budgets.
- Providing clear direction to employees on tasks, priorities and required standards of work.
- Providing opportunities for learning and development in relation to policies, priorities and objectives.

The individual employee is accountable for:

- Actively engaging in the appraisal process.
- Performing allocated tasks effectively, and within agreed time-scales.
- Adhering to defined standards of performance and legal requirements.
- Assisting in identifying their own learning and development needs, and cooperating in meeting those needs.

Learning and development methods

These may include all types of formal and informal ways of gaining skills, knowledge and confidence, such as ‘one-to-one on the job training; informal coaching, mentoring; secondments; work shadowing; reading; watching videos; internal workshops and corporate and department-based events as well as external courses.

Evaluation of learning and development activities and outcomes

This can only be done properly if we identify criteria at the outset which will then be used later to assess whether the new skills/knowledge have been successfully applied to the job and the service provided.
Evaluation is critical to ensuring that the learning has been effective, that performance (and service outcomes) improve, and for planning future learning and development activities.

**Appraisal and Supervision**

Appraisal interviews will take place annually, with six monthly reviews. However appraisal is part of the wider employee management processes of the County Council and complements ongoing supervision. Managers must meet with their employees regularly to jointly review progress against objectives, to discuss and resolve issues arising, take appropriate actions as necessary, and to ensure that appropriate support is provided.

This will also provide the opportunity to ensure that learning and development outcomes are discussed and embedded and to ensure Health & Safety issues, including risk assessments are covered.

**The Appraisal Format**

**Section 1  Review of main objectives and contribution**
A review of the individual’s performance and achievement of their main objectives and contribution to the Council Plan, and Directorate / Service /Team Plan over the past year.

- The manager and appraisee are both responsible for completing an initial draft of Section 1 on their own.
- The manager completes the column “Appraiser Comment” and the employee completes the column “Appraisee Comment”.
- The manager is then responsible for completing the final version, during the appraisal meeting with the employee. The comments of the postholder should be included in the final version.

**Section 2  Review of Past Individual Learning and Development**
This section should be drafted by the appraisee and amended as appropriate following discussion with the appraiser.

**Section 3  Future Objective-setting**
Before the interview, both appraisee and appraiser map out the appraisee’s future objectives. These will then be jointly agreed at the interview and be

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic and
- Time-bound

A maximum of 7 objectives should be set, at least one of which should be an equalities objective.
Section 4  The Learning and Development Plan
This should reflect the learning and development necessary to support the objectives and any further learning needs of the individual, within available resources.

Section 5  Other General Feedback
This section provides an opportunity for the manager and appraisee to discuss other areas linked to work performance and could include matters such as stress, future career plans and communications issues.

Preparation check-lists
Both appraiser and appraisee need to prepare for the interview. The following check-list is a prompt to ensure that the process is fully effective and focuses on appropriate activity.

Appraiser
1. Find a neutral venue and consider room arrangement. Confirm date and agree venue with appraisee.

2. Gather relevant information: job profile, Service Plan, Council Plan, previous appraisal form, records of recent learning, training and development activities.

3. Review appraisee’s individual targets as agreed at previous meeting.

4. List the appraisee’s successes and set-backs over the review period. How did the appraisee respond to challenges?

5. Assess past performance of agreed standards and objectives.

6. Reflect on:
   • the contribution that informal/formal learning and development activities undertaken have made to the achievement of the appraisee’s objectives. You may ask yourself the question, ‘how is the appraisee doing their job differently?‘ ‘what can the appraisee do that they could not do before?‘.

   • the appraisee’s strengths and learning and development needs in skills, knowledge, attitude, competence and confidence. Reflect on possible training solutions to meet these learning and development needs, bearing in mind the learning style of the individual.
• existing skills that are not being fully utilised for the benefit of the individual and/or the rest of the team.

7. In Section 3, as well as task-related future objectives, consider how the employee can help contribute to the Council’s organisational values (more detail can be found in the Council Plan). These are:

- Caring about what we do
- Respecting and valuing each other
- Celebrating our culture and heritage
- Improving through learning
- Acknowledging and celebrating our diversity
- Aiming for excellence and standards we can be proud of
- Recognising our successes and inspiring others

8. Make a diary date for the next appraisal meeting.

**Appraisee**

1. Approach the appraisal meeting with a positive frame of mind and undertake an accurate and rigorous self-review.

2. Read again your Job Profile and those parts of the Service Plan and Council Plan information to which you make a contribution, whether directly or indirectly.

3. Review progress in meeting the performance targets agreed at your last appraisal meeting.

4. Summarise your key successes and set-backs over the review period from your point of view. How did you attempt to overcome any obstacles? (Normally speaking, you will already have discussed these matters with your line manager at the time)

5. Reflect on the contribution that informal/formal learning and development activities undertaken have made to the achievement of your objectives. You may ask yourself the question, 'how am I doing my job differently?' or 'what can I do that I could not do before?'

6. In considering your current and future contribution to the Service Plan and Council Plan, think about what learning and development needs you may have to fill in gaps in your skills, knowledge, attitude, competence, and confidence. You might like to reflect on possible solutions to meet these learning and development needs, bearing in mind the way you like to learn.
7. Consider any existing skills that you have that are not being fully utilised for the benefit of you and/or the rest of the team. Are there any skills that you have that could be passed onto your colleagues?

What do you need to achieve during the next period by what time-frames and to what standards? In Section 3, as well as task-related future objectives, consider how you can help contribute to effective organisational values.

These are:

- Caring about what we do
- Respecting and valuing each other
- Celebrating our culture and heritage
- Improving through learning
- Acknowledging and celebrating our diversity
- Aiming for excellence and standards we can be proud of
- Recognising our successes and inspiring others

9. What do you wish to achieve for your career as a whole?

**Collation of Individual Development Plans**

Directorates and departments need to collate all the Individual Development Plans and put together a Directorate Learning and Development Plan. (A Template is available on the Council’s Intranet and also as an Appendix to the Council’s Service Planning Guidance). It will also be relevant to create Department, Unit and Team Learning and Development Plans.

Once created, these Learning and Development Plans must be reviewed and kept up to date throughout the year. The Directorate senior management team will regularly evaluate the outcomes of the Learning and Development Plan against the achievement of business goals and targets to see what contribution learning and development made to service improvement and people development.

The Directorate Learning and Development Plan must also be sent to the Principal Human Resource Development Officer to inform the creation of the Council’s Corporate learning and development programme.

**Access to appraisal records, confidentiality and quality management**

The content of the appraisal should remain confidential. However, the appraisal is a key part of the organisation’s performance management process and as
such, needs to be accountable for its quality and effectiveness. When Directorates collate the Individual Development Plans, this should act as a means to check the quality of objective-setting and evaluation.

**Monitoring Frequency and Equality monitoring**

Directorates need to have in place a mechanism for monitoring that all appraisals are taking place at the required frequency, so that managers know they are accountable for completing appraisals and are monitoring ethnicity, disability and gender. This should also then be picked up at manager's own appraisal interviews as a standard item.

**Use of Employee Appraisal Template**

In order that the Council manages its performance effectively, individual performance appraisal activity needs to be consistent across the Council – so that objectives are cascaded, set, actioned and monitored in the same fashion everywhere.

This template will be used by all Directorates and at all levels within each Directorate. The whole process must be used. Directors may apply to make small additions to the process if felt necessary and these additions must be formally agreed and signed off by the Head of Equality and HR before they can be implemented.

**March 2006**
Examples of equality objectives

The new “standard” equality objective recognises that equality and diversity has the potential to enhance all areas of work carried out by the Council. This appendix shows the range of possible ways to use the new objective or to develop more specific equality objectives where appropriate.

Example 1: David from Finance and Central Services.

David works as an administrative support officer to the finance team. His main task is to record information on financial transactions. Prior to his appraisal David’s manager had talked to him about an incident where a person with learning disabilities contacted the office and David insisted that she spell her name before he can take a message. The caller could not read or write and was offended at David’s lack of flexibility. David and his manager had agreed that David needed to attend Equality Works training and find out how best to deal with occasional callers to the office.

At his appraisal they agreed that, following the training, David will develop a short protocol about how to deal with public calls to the office.

How could this look on the appraisal form?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What should be your main objectives be for the year?</th>
<th>How do these objectives relate to the Council Plan and Directorate Service Plan?</th>
<th>How will your success in achieving these objectives be measured?</th>
<th>What can your line manager do to support you in achieving these objectives?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand how equality and diversity affects my job and how I work with colleagues and the public.</td>
<td>Links to “Improving council services” for customers within the Council Plan. The Directorate Equality Plan also details a list of staff objectives relating to equality and diversity</td>
<td>1. Levels of feedback on calls from the public. 2. David’s protocol will be sent to all staff in Finance and Central Services.</td>
<td>1. Manager to discuss with David prior to the course what he will achieve from it and what he has learned afterwards. 2. Manager to ensure that the protocol is checked by the Equality Officer, implemented across the unit and shared with the rest of the Directorate.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example 2: Arvin from Children’s Services

Arvin manages the musical instrument leasing scheme. Arvin’s previous Learning and Development Plan identified that he should read the Equality and Diversity Policy. At his appraisal he explained how reading the Equality and Diversity Policy challenged him to think about who uses the service. From this discussion Arvin identified ways to make the service more accessible.

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<td>1. Evidence of requests for interpreters and translators responded within a week. 2. Evidence of Gypsy/Traveller education unit promoting the service.</td>
<td>1. Ensure that there is budget set aside to either produce information in other formats, or meet one off requests. 2. Work with the Directorate Equality Lead Officer to make sure that the music leasing scheme is part of an integrated approach to engaging with Gypsy/Travellers.</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Example 3: Indra from Community Division

At her appraisal Indra identified the community groups she has worked with in the past year, and how the Equality Works training helped her focus on working with new groups. She spoke about an emerging gay community. Her line manager agreed that her objective would be to support community groups to access County Council funding. This will involve the following actions:

- To develop links with the gay community and provide them with information on community funding.
- To research key languages spoken in the district and arrange for translation of funding information into those languages.

How could this look on the Appraisal form?
What should be your main objectives be for the year?

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<th>What can your line manager do to support you in achieving these objectives?</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>How do these objectives relate to the Council Plan and Directorate Service Plan?</td>
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<td>How will your success in achieving these objectives be measured?</td>
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(Up to seven objectives)

**Support community groups to access Council funding**

Links to “Improving council services” for customers within the Council Plan. The Directorate Equality Plan also details a list of staff objectives relating to equality and diversity

Successful and unsuccessful funding applications are monitored to ensure that community funding is targeted at groups who experience discrimination.

Work with Community Division and the Equality Officer to develop a consistent approach.

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**Example 4: Joe from library services**

Joe has shown an interest in making libraries more accessible for people with disabilities. He has attended training, and has been given an objective to contribute to an Equality Impact Assessment of the libraries function. This will involve the following actions:

- Review and assess existing information on library users with disabilities.
- Interview people with disabilities who use and do not use the library service to find out their perceptions.
- Feed issues back to the Directorate Equality Group
- Draft a disabilities access and inclusion action plan that can be added to the Full Equality Impact Assessment.

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(Up to seven objectives)

**Contribute to ensuring that disability issues are addressed in the Equality Impact Assessment of the Library function**

Links to “Improving council services” for customers within the Council Plan. The Directorate Equality Plan also details a list of staff objectives relating to equality and diversity

1. 20 interviews carried out with people with disabilities, 10 interviews with people who are not active borrowers.
2. Findings of interviews on Equality Impact Assessment along with an action plan for overcoming any obstacles.

Work with Lead Officer for the Directorate’s Equality Impact Assessment to ensure that Joe has the right support.