



Newark Town Council

Appraisal Policy

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Appendix 1 Appraisal form

APPRAISAL POLICY

APPRAISAL SYSTEM

The Council undertakes appraisals with all staff on a regular basis. The purpose of appraisals is to monitor and evaluate staff performance and development at an individual level as part of the Council's normal managerial function. The review enables the Council to:

- Consistently measure individual performance against departmental/organisational objectives
- Focus staff performance on organisational objectives.
- Encourage continuous improvement.

Following an appraisal, a training plan may be created, based on an exchange of views between the individual and their Immediate Manager. At the end of the review meeting, staff should have an agreed individual action plan (with targets and timescales), and where appropriate, an individual training plan (with objectives and resources). The plans will be referred to as working documents throughout the year and will be updated accordingly.

The Appraisal System has been designed to meet the following specific objectives:

- To ensure all job descriptions are current and accurate and that they align with the Council's objectives.
- To ensure staff have clear targets aligned to the objectives, which are time-bound, and such targets are able to be revised/updated as required.
- To ensure that staff have the opportunity to know what performance is expected of them at an individual level and to receive feedback.
- To ensure that staff are able to discuss training, development and support within their role, in order to fulfil their maximum potential.
- To assist staff in understanding the contribution their role makes in meeting the Council's overall objectives.
- To assist staff in their involvement and participation in the Council's commitment to continuous improvement.

PROCEDURE

Appraisals follow a standard format, and a report is produced to reflect an accurate summary of the discussion.

New members of staff will be briefed on the Appraisal System as part of their Induction. Your line manager will agree the timings with you for Appraisal meetings and ensure that an interim action plan and a training plan are completed during your probationary period.

At Appraisal meetings, a standard reporting format is followed as the basis for discussion. The duties within your job description will be thoroughly assessed, and potential areas for development may be identified and addressed through training and/or supervision. Your training needs will be identified, agreed upon, and included in your individual 'Training Plan'. Training undertaken in the 12 months prior to each review meeting, as detailed in your 'Training Record' will be evaluated to ascertain effectiveness and value.

The Appraisal will highlight the Council's objectives along with your team objectives and therefore provides the opportunity to agree your individual objectives on a short-term and long-term basis. Immediately after the meeting, your line manager will produce the summary report, and you will receive a copy of the document to agree and sign. A copy will also be kept in your personnel file for reference and future review meetings.

Appraisers must ensure that all appraisal processes are fair and equitable for all appraisees and that they are applied in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. Formal disciplinary and grievance issues are not to be part of any performance and development appraisal procedure and will be dealt with separately under the relevant policies. It is important that any issue concerning poor performance is recorded in the appraisal meeting documentation, so that any separate, formal monitoring of performance is not undermined by contradictory messages being given to the employee.

The Appraisal Scheme seeks to ensure that all employees:

- Have an annual face-to-face performance and development appraisal meeting, which is reviewed a minimum of every 12 months
- Receive regular meetings with their line manager to discuss their performance during the year and discuss work activity, learning and development
- Know what is expected of them in terms of the standard of their performance from the beginning of their employment

- Set appropriate and SMART objectives with their appraiser to achieve over the following year
- Are made aware of any areas in their work which are not to the required standard
- Receive recognition for their achievements
- Receive feedback on a regular basis, which aims to improve and develop their performance
- Identify their learning and development needs and aspirations

LONG-TERM ABSENCES INCLUDING MATERNITY/ADOPTION LEAVE

If employees are absent during an appraisal year, objectives and timescales should be reviewed to accommodate the absence where possible. Absences due to a disability, long-term illness, or maternity/adoption should not affect the overall outcome of the appraisal. Long-term planned absences will be factored into the objective-setting timescales and, where appropriate, a performance and development appraisal will be held before the absence starts.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES

There may be occasions where an employee is unable to achieve objectives due to unexpected issues or circumstances outside of their control. Where this is the case, the employee should highlight this with the appraiser as soon as possible. Managers should take this into account and make appropriate allowances, which may involve modifying objectives, extending timescales, or disregarding objectives.

ARRANGEMENTS

The form in Appendix 1 will be used as the basis for all appraisals. Appraisals will take place annually in December or January at the latest, and will review the achievements of the past year and set objectives for the following year.

Appraisal meetings are a two-way communication process, the details of which will remain confidential between line management and the appraisee.

The Town Clerk's Appraisal will be carried out by a nominated member of the Personnel Sub Committee, who will usually be the Chairman of the Personnel Sub Committee. The outcome of the Town Clerk's appraisal will

be shared with the Personnel Sub Committee once completed, but not the final appraisal form or any details of the appraisal content. For other members of staff, the appraisal will be carried out by the line manager. At least 14 days in advance of the appraisal meeting, the member of staff will be given the appraisal form. They will be asked to complete their sections in advance of the appraisal meeting and to share this with the appraiser at least 7 days before the appraisal.

PREPARATION FOR THE APPRAISAL (for the member of staff)

When completing the form, you should consider the following factors:

- Knowledge of duties
- Quality of work
- Relationships with others
- Communication skills
- Manual/numeric/operational skills
- Supervision/oversight of staff (if applicable)
- IT skills
- Managing resources

Make a note of any difficulties you have experienced or concerns you have, so that a constructive way to overcome them can be considered. Consider any comments, questions or suggestions you may wish to make and be prepared to discuss these with your manager at the appraisal meeting.

THE APPRAISAL INTERVIEW

The appraisal interview is a review of the past year, including an overall assessment of whether the previous year's objectives and the requirements of the job description have been met. It is an opportunity to review the challenges of the year, to reflect on what has gone particularly well and to celebrate success. There may be discussions around the way in which tasks carried out can be improved, and training needs may be identified. Key objectives will be set for the forthcoming year.

OBJECTIVE SETTING

Members of staff should normally be set between 3 and 5 annual objectives.

Individual performance objectives should:

- relate to the overall objectives of the service area

- be in line with the responsibility level and scope of work outlined in the appraisee's current, up-to-date job description
- be assessed by objective evidence.

All appraisers will ensure consistency of objectives set across their team. Significant changes to objectives should be discussed with the individual employee and confirmed as and when they arise.

Objectives need to be SMART:

- **Specific**
- **Measurable**
- **Achievable**
- **Relevant/Realistic**
- **Time-related**

RECORDING

A record of all performance and development appraisal meetings will be kept. They can be typed into the appraisal form or written on a printed copy. The member of staff will be given one week to review, sign and return the completed appraisal form, or to raise any issues within this time.

A copy of all appraisals will be kept in personnel files and will remain confidential.

REVIEW

Both the appraiser and appraisee share the responsibility for monitoring progress on the agreed objectives.

In addition to regular routine meetings with your line manager, there should be a review of the appraisal after six months. Any concerns or issues should be highlighted by either party at this meeting and not saved up to the end-of-year appraisal.

APPEALS

If an agreement cannot be reached between the appraiser and the appraisee, the matter will be referred to the Town Clerk, who will agree on the outcome of the appraisal.

Where an appraisal disagreement relates to the Town Clerk's, or a direct report of the Town Clerk, two members of the Personnel Sub Committee will be nominated to consider the dispute and will agree the outcome of the appraisal. One of these members will be nominated by the Personnel

Sub Committee and one by the appraisee. They shall take representations from the original appraiser and appraisee in reaching their decision.

Due to the confidential nature of appraisals, only the items of disagreement will be considered in detail by the Personnel Sub-Committee.

Checklist for conducting a performance appraisal.

A constructive performance appraisal is an important part of the internal management of employee performance. When conducting the appraisal meeting, the following points should be considered:

- Ensure the appraisal can proceed without disruption or distractions.
- Ensure the line manager is comfortable with assessing job-related performance and understands the process to be followed.
- Have a copy of the performance appraisal form to guide the structure of the meeting. The form can be worked through, asking the employee for their comments.
- Ensure that notes of discussions are accurately recorded, whether on the performance appraisal form or in a separate document.
- Approach the performance appraisal in a positive, constructive and sensitive manner.
- Be an engaged listener and ensure body language is welcoming and positive.
- Focus on asking open-ended questions to encourage the employee to be open and honest in their answers.
- Avoid making promises that cannot be kept. For any matters which cannot be confirmed during the appraisal, ensure you take further action and feedback to the employee at a later date.
- Begin the appraisal by putting the employee at ease and state the purpose of the process. This is a two-way conversation about past, and future, performance within the organisation.
- Discuss the job situation and aspirations of the employee within the business.
- Give praise for effective work and positive feedback on achievements and results.
- Where no major performance issues are noted, limit criticism to constructive feedback on two or three points.

- Invite and encourage the employee to engage in the appraisal, including by providing self-criticism, comments and questions.
- Invite the employee to provide feedback on any obstacles to improvement and make suggestions on such obstacles.
Discuss how these obstacles can be positively tackled, including whether additional organisational support can achieve this.
- Discuss objectives for the previous performance period. Discuss and confirm whether objectives have been met. If not, discuss any next steps, such as the commencement of a formal management process or the extension of deadlines.
- Discuss and agree on future performance objectives and the performance period. Agree on periodic review dates to ensure these objectives are on track.

- Complete the performance appraisal form and action plan, outlining the confirmed future objectives. Ensure this is signed and dated by the manager conducting the appraisal.
- Provide the completed appraisal documents to the employee, allowing them to note any comments and sign the documents to confirm their agreement.
Ensure periodic performance reviews are scheduled in advance. This supports the performance management process and underlines the importance of satisfactory performance to the employee.