

REPORT 26.056(a) Staff Appraisal Policy

Author: Jon Sloan, Clerk

Date: 1st May 2026

1. BACKGROUND

The Council adopted its current Staff Appraisal Policy in April 2023 (PC23.049). Its review date was set as January 2026.

2. SUMMARY

The draft Staff Appraisal Policy was circulated for review to Personnel Committee members earlier this year. No specific changes were requested. No personnel Committee meeting has been held this year, so the draft policy is not formally proposed by the Personnel Committee though all are aware it being submitted for adoption at this May Full Council Meeting.

3. RECOMMENDATION

That Council resolves to adopt the Staff Appraisal Policy as presented in this report.

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ANNEX ONE – draft Staff Appraisal Policy

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL

STAFF APPRAISAL POLICY

Purpose/Principles	To ensure Council employees receive regular and high-quality performance reviews To ensure employees have the opportunity to comment and contribute to their performance <u>review</u> To set out the processes for the appraiser to follow. To inform the employee of what to expect during their <u>review</u>
Scope	Employees, Councillors
Date adopted:	
Minute Reference:	
Previous versions (Dates):	23.049 17 th April 2023
Next review:	January 2029 or sooner as legislation demands
Policy owner:	Personnel Committee
Supersedes:	23.049 17 th April 2023

Introduction

Appraisals support employees to achieve and fulfil their potential and enable the Council to meet its strategic objectives, improve service quality, and uphold our values. An appraisal meeting looks holistically at the role, achievements, challenges and priorities, agrees SMART objectives, and identifies development and support for the year ahead.

Purposes of the Appraisal System

- a) Performance and impact: provide clear feedback on performance and outcomes and agree support to build on strengths and address obstacles.
- b) b) Role clarity: confirm current and evolving responsibilities and alignment with job descriptions and Council priorities.
- c) Development: identify learning, coaching and experience that build capacity, wellbeing and career progression while maximising contribution to the Council.
- d) Dialogue: provide a constructive, two-way conversation where ideas and views are shared respectfully and recorded.
- e) Forward planning: agree realistic priorities and objectives for the next period, including support, milestones and measures of success.

Structure

The Clerk (as line manager) conducts appraisals for all staff at least annually. Where relevant, structured feedback may be gathered from colleagues, councillors (where appropriate), and significant partners. A summary report (excluding confidential items) is provided to the Personnel Committee for oversight.

A panel of at least three members of the Personnel Committee conducts the Clerk's annual appraisal. The whole Council does not participate. Structured stakeholder feedback may be used to inform the process. Any councillor with a conflict of interest or unresolved grievance will not sit on the panel.

Roles and Responsibilities

Council: ensure an appraisal framework exists, resources are available, and fairness is maintained.

Personnel Committee: provide oversight, ensure appraisals are completed, and conduct the Clerk's appraisal.

Appraiser: prepare, facilitate an objective conversation, document agreed outcomes, and follow up on actions.

Appraisee: prepare honestly, reflect on achievements and challenges, propose objectives, and engage with development actions.

Key Features

An appraisal should take into consideration the following factors:

- a) Openness: employees receive the appraisal form (Annex One) in advance and can complete Section 1. Employees can see all comments recorded about them as part of the appraisal process.
- b) Confidentiality and data protection: full appraisal records are normally seen only by the appraiser(s) and appraisee. A summary may be provided to the Personnel Committee. Records are handled in line with UK GDPR, the Council's privacy notices and retention schedule (see Data Retention Policy).
- c) Consistency: all staff are appraised using this scheme and the Staff Appraisal Form; appraisers should be trained in the process where possible.
- d) Objectives: objectives are jointly agreed, evidence-based and aligned with the job description and Council priorities. Usually 4–6 well-formed objectives are sufficient; include at least one personal development objective. Objectives follow the S.M.A.R.T. approach: Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Time-bound

S.M.A.R.T.:

1. Specific: the objective should refer to a particular task or piece of work or specific aspects of behaviour or performance.
 2. Measurable: There should be measures (quantitative or qualitative) which are clearly agreed and understood; these will enable progress and achievement to be monitored and recognised.
 3. Agreed: The objective should be agreed by appraisee and appraiser
 4. Realistic: The objective should be designed to be challenging for the appraisee but should not be so demanding that there is a high likelihood of failure.
 5. Timed: All objectives should have a date by which they are to be achieved.
- e) Forward-looking: the review focuses on learning and future performance. The GROW model (Goals, Reality, Options, Way Forward) may be used to explore aspirations and support:
 - a. G Goals what do you want?
 - b. R Reality what is happening now?
 - c. O Options what could you do?
 - d. W Way Forward what will you do?
 - f) Constructive: challenges are discussed early and solutions identified, including training, coaching or process improvements.
 - g) Two-way: appraisees and appraisers engage in open dialogue and jointly agree outcomes.
 - h) No surprises: concerns should be raised as they arise, not stored for the appraisal meeting.

- i) Contractual: staff contracts provide for an annual appraisal; the Council commits to delivering this fairly and consistently.

Fairness, Equality and Inclusion

Appraisals will be conducted without discrimination and in line with the Equality Act 2010.

Link to Pay

Appraisals are developmental. They do not determine pay. Pay matters are considered separately under the Council's pay policy and NJC/Green Book guidance (where applicable).

Procedure

- a) Agree a date: The Council and employee should agree between themselves a date for the appraisal to take place. It is advisable for at least 5 days preparation to be allowed.
- b) Documents: the appraisee and appraiser should have at least the following documentation to hand at the appraisal:
 - a. Job Description
 - b. Written objectives set previously (if any)
 - c. Record of previous appraisal (if any)
- c) Preparation: both the appraisee and appraiser should spend time planning what they want to discuss. The Staff Appraisal Form should form the basis of the appraisal. The appraiser should be familiar with the council's own strategic objectives for the coming year in order to ensure that the appraisal contributes to the council's own direction. Useful questions for the appraiser to consider are attached as Annex Two. These are suggestions only, and the appraiser may use none, some or all, or use their own during the appraisal interview. The appraiser may seek feedback on the appraisee from others within, or outside of, the organization, who have cause to interact with the appraisee in the course of their job. A template form to request such feedback is attached ANNEX THREE.
- d) The venue: Both parties should be agreeable to the venue of the appraisal, which should ideally be in a quiet place and away from other distractions.
- e) The interview: It should be conducted by the appraiser(s) in an informal atmosphere. The appraiser should begin by explaining the scope of the interview and then encourage the appraisee to comment on performance, training, development and future objectives and to suggest solutions to any problems. The appraiser should take notes.
- f) Writing up: The appraiser should write up a report of the interview and give a copy to the appraisee at the conclusion of the appraisal or as soon as possible thereafter.
- g) Signature: The completed form should be given to the appraisee to consider, adding any comment and to sign it and the appraisee should then return it to the appraiser

- h) Records: The appraiser will make two copies of the signed form and give one copy to the appraisee to keep and keep one copy for the central confidential personnel records
- i) Follow up: The appraiser is responsible for ensuring that any further action is taken as agreed at the appraisal.

Timing

The appraisal interview will be conducted annually and will usually coincide with the anniversary of the appraisee joining the Council OR be at some agreed time which suits the council. An interim review may be conducted between annual appraisals, often at the half year point or upon completion of a major project or where the council's strategy/overall objective change requiring review of all employees' objectives. There is no requirement to complete formal appraisal documentation at these reviews, although agreed action points should be noted by the appraiser and a copy given to the appraisee.

What the Appraisal is not

- A disciplinary meeting
- A forum for raising formal grievances
- An assessment of political views or personal characteristics unrelated to work
- A place to introduce new criticisms ("no surprises").

Final Comments

The appraisee and the appraiser will have the opportunity to consider the appraisal record and add any comments.

Deficiencies /Unsatisfactory Performance

Where concerns are identified, a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) will be agreed with clear objectives, support and review dates (in accordance with the Employee Handbook). If performance does not improve despite support, the Council may invoke its capability procedure. Disciplinary measures are not an automatic outcome of a poor appraisal.

ANNEX ONE

STAFF APPRAISAL FORM

NAME:

DATE OF APPRAISAL:

APPRAISING OFFICER:

Section 1: Employee to Complete this Section

(Use your job description and previously agreed objectives to complete this section of the

form. Please review your job description to ensure continued relevance)

Name:

Post:

Date Appointed to Current Job:

1. Performance Over the Review Year

1.1 How would you describe your overall performance in the past twelve months?

1.2 Which parts of your job have you performed most effectively?

1.3 Which parts of your job have not gone so well?

1.4 State any part of your job description that you are not doing.

1.5 State any areas of work which are not in your job description.

2. Your Skills and Expertise

2.1 What are your key strengths in your job?

2.2 What additional skills and expertise have you gained over the period?

2.3 Do you possess skills and strengths not fully used in your job?

3 Development Needs

3.1 What parts of your job do you find most difficult and why do you find them difficult?

3.2 Has a lack of a particular experience or skill affected your performance?

3.3 What additional training have you undertaken during the review period?

3.4 How effective has this training been?

3.5 What additional training or experience would now be of benefit to help you achieve future targets/objectives?

Objective/Target Setting

(Use your job description and any Council's aims and objectives to consider what you intend to achieve next year)

3.6 What potential individual objectives/targets do you want to discuss with your appraiser?

3.7 What potential objectives/targets have high priority?

3.8 Describe any particular help and/or support you feel you need to achieve your objectives/targets.

Section 2: Appraiser to Complete This Section

Consider what the employee has written in Section 1 and make comments in this section

(Section 2). Comment on identified main achievements (add anything else that was done

particularly well). Comment on any tasks that should no longer be in the job description and any that should be included.

Review of 1. Performance over the Review Year

Review of 2. Your Skills and Expertise

Review of 3. Development Needs

Give your overall assessment of the employee's performance during the last twelve months (include strengths, weaknesses and any constraints to their work and the outcome of specific agreed objectives).

Section 3: Agreed Objectives and Future Plans

This section provides an opportunity to record objectives for the coming year and agree training/development plans. Although there are no set number of objectives, those set should

cover key aspects of the employee's job and have direct relevance to any Council aims and objectives.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Training/Development actions:

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Section 4: Employee Comments

(This section provides space for the employee to comment on the completed form and the appraisal process)

Signature of Appraisee:

Signature(s) of Appraiser(s):

Date:

ANNEX TWO

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT APPRAISAL

Appraisers and appraisees could use a checklist in preparing for, conducting, and recording the appraisal interview.

a) Basic Information: name, department, job title, date joined council, date appointed to current post (may not need be so formal for small councils where parties know each other well but can still be useful if there has been a change in elected members or changes to the staffing committee)

b) Review of Self Appraisal Form, example questions which could be used are as follows:

Which aspects of the job have been accomplished well?

In which aspects of the job could the appraisee have performed better?

What influences have made the job difficult to perform?

What strengths does the appraisee bring to the job?

What are the goals for the next review period?

What training and development would help to achieve these goals?

What skills and knowledge relevant to the role/career aspirations would the appraisee like to gain in the future?

What improvements to the Council or the department can the appraisee suggest?

c) Review of Job Description

Does the current JD adequately reflect the job the employee is actually being asked to do? Are there changes required? If so this is the right point to be making these observations.

d) Training and Development

The appraisee and appraiser should jointly identify training needs. Concentrate first on the areas of skill and knowledge needing development, and only after that on training solutions. Recommendations should relate to needs identified in reviewing past performance and/or to new objectives or additional responsibilities.

ANNEX THREE

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL – STAFF APPRAISALS

REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK

****All replies will be treated in strictest confidence and anonymized****

As part of our appraisal process, we strive to understand how our performance, both as a council and as individuals, is perceived by others. Feedback from inside and outside of the organization helps us to do this. The individual below will receive their regular staff appraisal shortly, and we would welcome your feedback on their performance.

If you wish to contribute to the process, please return the completed form to the Appraiser **(not to the appraisee)**.

Staff Member:		Appraiser:	
Last date for return:			
Your comments: (please include examples of particular successes or failures where possible)			