



GREAT DUNMOW TOWN COUNCIL STAFF APPRAISAL POLICY

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1 Introduction

Great Dunmow Town Council are committed to maximising individual performance and potential and will provide the necessary feedback, support and training to ensure that high standards of performance are maintained throughout the organisation. Appraisal meetings are an opportunity for people to seek and receive high quality, responsive and balanced feedback on their work performance from their manager. It is also an opportunity to identify and plan for future individual learning and development needs.

The key to staff appraisal meetings is that there should be no surprises. This is because staff appraisals must not exist in isolation, but should be part of an ongoing process in which both management and staff have a responsibility. An appraisal is a formal event happening each year, but there should be several regular, informal conversations between manager and employee in the interim.

2 Procedure

Schedule for Appraisals

Great Dunmow Town Council operates the following schedule for appraisals:

Staff on a probationary period will receive an appraisal at 1 months employment, 2 months employment and a final probationary sign off appraisal at 6 months employment.

If the staff member is not at a required standard at the 6 month sign off of probation, the decision may be taken to terminate employment at that point, or extend the probationary period.

If the probationary period is extended this will be noted in the employee's personnel file. Monthly appraisals will continue up to 12 months until the staff member is signed off from the probationary period. If after 12 months the employee is not at the correct standard then the Town Council would usually look to dismiss. **(The decision to terminate employment or extend a probationary period of the Town Clerk must be taken to a meeting of the Personnel Committee and ratified by the Full Council to be authorised before any action is taken. It will therefore be necessary to plan ahead and to ensure that this item is an agenda item before the end of the Town Clerk's probationary period for a decision to be made).** The decision to terminate employment or extend a probationary period of an employee remains the responsibility of the Town Clerk.

Once the probationary period has been completed, appraisals will be normalised and carried out annually.

Where it is known that an employee is due to commence a long period of absence, e.g. maternity leave, this will be factored into their appraisal and it will focus on reviewing the previous year and planning support and training that may be required when they return to work. An appraisal will be held before the absence starts. Where a member of staff misses a scheduled appraisal meeting due to sickness absence, these will be rearranged to take place following their return.

Interview Preparation

Appraisals shall be carried out in a formal interview between the staff member and their manager. In the case of the Town Clerk, the interview will be held with two Members. Each party needs to prepare for the meeting. The appraiser is responsible for scheduling the appraisal interview date.

Employees should be given adequate notice of appraisal interviews. Self-assessment forms completed by employees before their interviews can help them detail what they think have been their strong and weak points; what they see as barriers to effective performance; their plans for the coming year and their development and training needs. Self-assessment forms should be handed to the appraiser prior to the meeting and this document should form the starting point for both parties to use as an aide memoir.

Both the appraiser and the appraisee are permitted to invite a non-participating support person to the appraisal meeting. For appraisees another member of staff is permitted to attend and for appraisers their support would be another member of the Personnel Committee.

For the manager, preparation should be ensuring they are clear on what is included in the staff member's job description and any previous appraisals completed. They should also be aware of any training the staff member has completed since the last appraisal. The manager should consider the overall results attained by the employee and, where the results have been significantly greater or lower than expected, possible reasons for variations in performance.

It is a good idea to also draft a list of objectives for the following year. Managers may find the self-appraisal form a useful checklist when making their own preparations.

The Interview

At least one hour should be set aside for the appraisal interview. The seating should be comfortable and arranged to create an informal atmosphere. The interview should be free from interruptions. The manager should explain the purpose and scope of the interview, this being to

- 1 **Review:** previous objectives and discuss individual's actual performance
- 2 **Explore:** what factors affected individual performance examining both internal and external constraints and issues.
- 3 **Agree:** future performance objectives and identify any support and development plans. Targets set should be achievable and realistic and considering available resources including time, and should be capable of being monitored.
- 4 **Plan:** identify training and development needs and plan for implementation including costs and timescales.

The appraiser should initially ask the staff member to go through the self-appraisal form to:

- encourage the employee to discuss his or her strengths and weaknesses
- discuss how far agreed objectives have been met

From this the appraiser and staff member should:

- agree future objectives
- discuss any development needs appropriate to the existing job or the individual's future in the organisation, for example: training, education, work experience
- summarise for plans which are agreed

If there are disagreements the manager should explain how the employee can appeal against his or her appraisal.

After the interview

After the interview, the appraisers should write up a summary of the main points from the meeting and any objectives agreed using the Appraisal Review. This should then be forwarded to the employee for checking and comments and be signed by both the employee and appraiser with a copy to be retained by the employee and a second signed copy stored in the employee's personnel file. All objectives set should be SMART: Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant and Timely,

If the appraisal scheme is to have credibility, it is essential that managers follow up any points arising from the interview and carry out an agreed action. For example, it may be necessary to organise training or help to overcome any obstacles to the employee's effectiveness which were mentioned at the interview.

Guidance for Appraisers

Prior to the formal appraisal, preparation should be done by both parties. The appraiser should look at objectives set at any previous appraisals, while the employee should give due considerations to any points they want to bring up. It is important for the success of the process that appraisals are conducted with an eye on the bigger picture.

Appraisers that carry out the appraisal of the Town Clerk should receive training to ensure that they achieve an objective rather than a subjective appraisal.

Be prepared

Prepare by referring to a list of agreed objectives and notes on performance throughout the year.

Create the right atmosphere

A successful meeting depends on creating an informal environment in which a full, frank but friendly exchange of views can take place. It is best to start with a general discussion before getting into any detail.

Work to a clear structure

The meeting should be planned to cover all the points identified during preparation with time allowed for individuals to fully express their views.

Use positive feedback

Where possible, reviewers should begin with praise for some specific achievement, but this should be sincere and deserved. Praise helps people to relax - everyone needs encouragement and appreciation.

Let the employee do the talking

This enables them to get things off their chest and helps them to feel that they are getting a fair hearing. Use open questions to encourage people to be expansive.

Invite self-appraisal

This is to see how things look from the employee's point of view and to provide a basis for discussion many people underestimate themselves.

Performance, not personality

Always refer to actual events, behaviour and results.

Encourage analysis of performance

Performance should be analysed jointly and objectively why things went well or badly and what can be done to maintain a high standard in the future.

Don't deliver unexpected criticisms

Feedback on performance should be immediate and should not wait until the end of the year. The purpose of the formal review is to reflect briefly on experiences during the review period and to look ahead.

Any specific complaints/criticisms from employer/employee should be dealt with separately during the year by using the agreed grievance/complaints procedure within the organisation. These are not matters to be dealt with within the context of the staff appraisal.

Agree measurable objectives and a plan of action

The aim should be to end the review meeting on a positive note. There should be an outcome from an appraisal; either a continuation of previous behaviours and conduct, or a change to the employee's role that improves the situation both for them and the organisation.

Once the appraiser and appraisee have agreed and signed the appraisal and objectives, these will then be made available to the Personnel Sub-Committee as confidential documents.

The appraiser will then monitor the objectives regularly with a formal review and evidence being recorded quarterly

APPENDIX 1 - SELF ASSESSMENT FORM

Name _____

Job Title _____

Date Of Appraisal _____

Purpose of the Appraisal Meeting

To enable you to discuss, with your manager, your job performance and your future. The discussion should aim at a clearer understanding of:

- (a) The main scope and purpose of your job
- (b) Agreements on your objectives and tasks
- (c) Standards or targets for measuring your performance
- (d) Your training and future prospects

You can prepare for the meeting and discussion by completing this form.

You may show this form to your manager. This will give him or her time to consider your problems and suggestions. If you do so, it will not be copied or filed without your permission.

If you prefer, you can use this form for your own guidance only, and not show it to anyone.

You will be given the opportunity to read the appraisal form prepared by your manager; you will be able to add your comments, and sign the appraisal form.

Self- Appraisal

- 1 Tick appropriate answers, and make any comments below
 - (a) Do you have an up-to-date job description? YES/NO
 - (b) Do you understand all the requirements of your job? YES/NO
 - (c) Do you have regular opportunities to discuss your work? YES/NO
 - (d) Have you carried out the improvements agreed with your manager which were made at the last appropriate meeting? YES/NO
- 2 What have you accomplished, over and above the minimum requirements of your job description, in the period under review (consider the early part of the period as well as more recent events)?
Have you made any innovations?
- 3 List any difficulties you have in carrying out your work. Were there any obstacles outside your own control which prevented you from performing effectively?

- 4 What parts of your job, do you:
- (a) Do best?
 - (b) Do less well?
 - (c) have difficulty with?
 - (d) fail to enjoy?
- 5 Have you any skills, aptitudes, or knowledge not fully utilised in your job? If so, what are they and how could they be used?
- 6 Can you suggest training which would help to improve your performance or development?
- 7 Do you feel supported by the Town Council in regard to your health and well-being? If not, what could improve it?
- 8 Additional remarks, notes, questions or suggestions.

APPENDIX 2 - APPRAISAL FORM

Appraisal Form

Use this form to record the discussion at an employee's performance appraisal meeting. Employee's name:

Job Title:

Appraiser:

Date of meeting:

Objective/competence:

This section should be used to record discussion on the key areas of the job, and include a summary of achievement against the objectives that have been previously agreed.

APPENDIX 3 - APPRAISAL REVIEW

APPRAISAL YEAR _____

START DATE _____

OBJECTIVE	SPECIFIC ACTIONS	EVIDENCE REQUIRED/AGREED	OUTCOME

SIGNED / DATE

STAFF

APPRAISER

SIGN OFF OF OBJECTIVES
