

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 6 December 2016

New Performance Management Framework and Policy

Item number 7.6
Report number
Executive/routine
Wards

Executive Summary

The organisation is under pressure to transform itself and become fit for purpose to operate effectively in a much altered financial climate. It also has bold ambitions to deliver joined up public services that have the biggest impact in strengthening and empowering the communities we serve. The organisation's Wider Leadership Team have a clear and ambitious vision of the type of culture that needs to be established to ensure the organisation is at its most effective and productive in delivering for the city in new ways.

Our approach to managing performance and supporting our people to perform at their best plays a crucial role in enabling the organisation to be at its best in delivering for the city.

In response to insight from staff and managers that was sought out in 2015, a group of staff and managers from around the organisation have worked together to transform our approach to performance management.

Included with this report is the new approach that has been tested extensively across the organisation and negotiated with our trade unions. Agreement is sought on the new Performance Management Policy that accompanies this new Performance Framework, to enable us to create a culture of learning and performance across the Council.

Links

Coalition Pledges

Council Priorities

Single Outcome Agreement

New Performance Management Framework and Policy

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Note our ambitions to establish excellent performance management practices and create a positive culture of learning and performance, as represented in our new Performance Framework, which will come in to effect from 1 April 2017.
- 1.2 Agree the accompanying new Performance Management Policy as a replacement to the Managing Work Performance Policy with effect from 1 April 2017, in line with the introduction of the new Performance Framework.

2. Background

- 2.1 The organisation is under pressure to transform itself and become fit for purpose to operate effectively in a much altered financial climate. It also has bold ambitions to deliver joined up public services that have the biggest impact in strengthening and empowering the communities we serve. The organisation's Wider Leadership Team have a clear and aspirational vision of the type of culture that needs to be established to ensure the organisation is at its most effective and productive in delivering for the city in new ways.
- 2.2 Our approach to managing people performance is a significant cultural lever to pull in securing a culture of learning and performance that will help us support our people to deliver their best and help us transform how we work in the city to make the biggest difference.
- 2.3 The business case for organisations adopting high performance working practices is a compelling one and the cost of not doing so - to staff, customers and the organisation - can be considerable. Meta-research undertaken by The Mindgym in 2011, for example, suggests that when managers play their performance management and development role effectively, performance can increase by as much as 25%. As we are now operating in a climate of reduced resources, this productivity benefit is significant and the support for staff that comes with it is necessary for our people.
- 2.4 Work commenced in summer 2015 to determine how to change our approach to managing performance in a way that would have the biggest and most positive impact on our culture and our performance as a Council.
- 2.5 In August 2015 we embarked on an exercise to understand our staff experience of performance management and identify what would need to happen to create a positive performance culture. We talked with approximately 200 staff in focus

groups, interviewed around 20 managers who it was thought were 'pockets of excellence', sought the perspective of around a dozen senior leaders and heard from around 150 staff through an online system survey, in addition to desk research and benchmarking with around half a dozen other companies.

- 2.6 What we heard from staff suggested that, while some managers were excellent in supporting their teams to perform, this was not felt to be the norm and our approach as an organisation was neither fuelling performance nor driving engagement.
- 2.7 The key frustrations we heard were that our performance management approach felt like a 'box ticking' process, felt unconnected with why people were here and didn't support people to deliver their best. The over-focus on process and compliance was felt to be compounded by the fact that supporting systems and materials were overly cumbersome, complex and difficult to engage with.
- 2.8 Staff in focus groups also found it frustrating that performance issues appeared to be tolerated, with the impact on them being that they often had to take up slack of others, albeit a minority of the workforce. Managers we interviewed described the difficulties faced when trying to tackle performance issues due to feeling unsupported by the organisation with the pressures faced when tackling issues and as a result of the policy timelines being so long in practice.
- 2.9 Additionally, we found that the focus on pay was getting in the way of positive, stretching and developmental performance conversations, we found that colleagues getting feedback was not the norm and that, not only did poor performance appear to be tolerated, it was also felt that great performance was sometimes just 'tolerated'.

3. Main report

- 3.1 In response to insight gleaned from staff and managers about what would be needed to close the gap between our current reality and our ambitions to create a culture of learning and performance, a 'Business User Group' was established in September 2015 to work with HR to co-create a new Performance Framework.
- 3.2 The thinking behind the new Performance Framework (and accompanying Performance Management Policy) has been focused on how to establish a supportive climate for performance that engages people at a human level, establishes a consistently high bar, makes it easy for our people to deliver their best performance and ultimately maximises the potential of our workforce. The focus is on supportive, developmental and, where needed, courageous conversations.
- 3.3 In addition to engagement and negotiation with our trade unions, there has been wide engagement of colleagues in the creation of the new approach and iterative developments of the new approaches have been extensively tested in a variety of Council operating environments throughout summer 2016. (See section 9 for more details).

- 3.4 As a departure from current practice, the new approach is inclusive of all colleagues of all grades. While some staff, such as teaching staff, have nationally agreed professional procedures, the principles and spirit of the new approach will apply to all.
- 3.5 The key components and changes to practice outlined in the Performance Framework and Policy are:
- 3.5.1 To support great conversations about 'the how' of performance, a new values map has been created to replace the Council's complex competency framework. The map brings to life the behaviours demonstrated when colleagues are approaching their work in line with our organisational values.
 - 3.5.2 To move the focus from process and 'box ticking' to positive and stretching conversations about service delivery, a new approach to the annual conversation has been created to replace the 'Performance Review and Development' (PRD) conversation. The approach is more forward-looking, has been significantly simplified and moves away from a mathematical approach to evaluating performance to an agreement about the broad ballpark a colleague's performance is in, with a view to prompting a development-oriented conversation.
 - 3.5.3 To increase our focus on supporting our staff to be their best and deliver their best throughout the year, a focus on year-round conversations is central to the framework. To support managers in having the most positive impact in these year-round conversations, a picture of what good looks like has been created for one-to-one and team conversations.
 - 3.5.4 Drawing on the weight of external research showing the correlation between getting regular, balanced feedback from a variety of key stakeholders (peers, customers etc.) and performance improvement, a tool to support staff and managers in seeking feedback from the people they work with is included in the framework.
 - 3.5.5 To support managers to support the minority of staff whose performance needs improvement, timeframes in the policy have changed. While the existing Managing Work Performance Policy had timeframes for improvement that could have resulted in resolution within a six month period, in practice it has been taking at least a year and sometimes up to 18 months to resolve performance issues, with negative consequences for the manager, the team and indeed the affected staff member. Due to the new focus on having clear and supportive performance conversations throughout the year, the timeframes for resolving performance issues have reduced to within six months (12 weeks initially, a possible extension of four weeks and a further short extension in exceptional circumstances). The focus is very much on supporting people to improve, and training will be provided to ensure manager capability in applying the policy fairly so as to avoid overly punitive interpretations (see 3.7).

- 3.6 In response to the feedback heard from staff and managers last year, the overall approach has been simplified and more flexibility incorporated to enable it to be successfully used in the wide variety of operating environments we have. While the whole framework is designed to be used flexibly, two key aspects of flexibility are:
- 3.6.1 To ensure flexibility in relation to operating environments, the performance cycle will be flexible for all staff, with the exception of senior managers whose performance year will remain on an April to March basis to align with the management of the organisation's performance. This ensures that different operating environments can choose a point in the year that aligns well with their service priorities and enables managers of high volumes of staff to spread out the more time-intensive conversations throughout the year.
 - 3.6.2 To ensure flexibility of process, it is intended that managers of staff without easy access to the new online forms (that will be developed as part of the new Business World launch) can use simple paper forms and would only be required to add their performance evaluation 'score' for each member of staff each year.
- 3.7 To support managers and staff to use the new approach well, an extensive engagement and development plan has been developed.
- 3.7.1 This will see all levels of senior managers (approximately 350+ people managers from the CEO down) take part in a robust two-day workshop in the January- March 2017 period, to support them in modelling the best possible practices ready for the 1 April launch. Thereafter, all other managers will receive a comparable amount of development to support them in rethinking and practising new approaches to performance conversations.
 - 3.7.2 Additionally, to support and engage staff in proactively playing their role in this, e-user guides are being developed and a road show of short workshops will run from January 2017 onwards to engage them in their role in managing their performance and development.
- 3.8 The link between pay and performance will be reviewed in 2017.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 An evaluation and embedding change plan is currently being developed that will drive our focus in measuring and adjusting the change in the coming two years and beyond.
- 4.2 Indicators of success will be agreed at the level of practice and also at the level of impact (i.e. impact on colleagues, impact on service). At the level of practice, we will return to the ten indicators that were used in the summer 2015 research phase (including, for example, determining the extent to which our people have clear, aligned and stretching goals, are getting clear, honest and frequent feedback on their progress, etc).

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are costs associated with the development phase of this work that are incorporated within the organisation's transformation budget but an internal delivery model is being used to minimise costs.

6. Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 Due to the links between people performance and organisational performance and change capability, the risks to the organisation's ability to successfully transform itself to be fit for purpose in a new climate are significant if this new approach is not implemented.

7. Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities impacts arising from this report.

8. Sustainability impact

- 8.1 There are no adverse environmental outcomes arising from this report.

9. Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Since September 2015, HR have worked with a 'Business User Group' established to co-create the new Performance Framework and Policy. This group has been made up of a trade union representative, a senior manager representative, two manager representatives and two staff representatives.
- 9.2 In creating the new values map, furthermore, the indicators were created by interviewing a random sample of top performers in the organisation to seek to understand, 'codify' and share the great approaches they are taking. The new map was then confirmed with a sample of Wider Leadership Team members to ensure it was fit for purpose not just for today but also for the future.
- 9.3 Additionally, in spring 2016, six 'early adopter sites' were identified to test out and refine the new approaches in the draft framework to ensure that the new framework was fit for purpose and flexible enough to meet the needs of our large variety of operating environments. The feedback from early adopter sites has been used to improve the iterations of the new framework and the reception to the overall approach has been overwhelmingly positive.
- 9.4 The trade union negotiation for the new Performance Framework was successfully concluded on 14 November 2016.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 The report from the Mindgym meta-research from September 2011, referenced at 2.3, is available in hard copy from [Jo Guz](#).

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11. Links

Coalition Pledges

Council Priorities

Single Outcome Agreement

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Our Performance Framework: Being our best in everything we do for the people in our city

Appendix 2 – Performance Management Policy

OUR PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Being our best in everything we
do for the people in our city

ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK

WHAT IS IT? – Having great performance conversations is a craft you develop over time. This framework is NOT designed to teach you how to have these conversations – it aims to offer a blend of templates, tools and tips to be used flexibly to suit your needs and situation. If you would like support to practice performance conversations, you can book into a [development workshop](#).

WHAT DOES IT COVER? – The framework is made up of the following elements:

VALUES MAP – A set of the best behaviours, approaches, qualities and attitudes that show HOW we are expected to approach our work. These are aligned to our core values: Customer first / Working Together / Honest & Transparent / Forward-Thinking

ANNUAL CONVERSATION – A chance to step back and take stock. We reflect on the year that's been and what we've accomplished and we get prepared for the year ahead and what we want to achieve.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT CONVERSATION – As and when issues arise, we may need a conversation about improving our performance. This is a one to one discussion to dig deeper into the reasons for a performance issue, to get clear on what the issue is and to agree a way forward together.

ONE to ONE CHECK-IN – Regular one to one catch ups that take place throughout the year. We talk about progress against goals and measures, your life and wellbeing, challenges you are encountering and any support and development needs you have. You'll also be able to share and receive feedback.

FEEDBACK – Quick and simple tools to enable real-time and regular feedback on performance from our colleagues, managers, direct reports and customers.

TEAM CHECK-IN – Regular team catch ups that take place throughout the year. A chance to discuss and reflect on our team priorities, goals, challenges, ideas and opportunities. It's also a chance to share our learning, discuss the wider context and celebrate our achievements.

Click
here

for our Performance Management policy

Values Map

This VALUES MAP is a set of all the best qualities, behaviours, approaches and attitudes that show how we do things when we are at our best. Our four values make our organisation unique. They are at the heart of everything we do and the core of who we are and who we want to be. The values map will help us to celebrate what we do well, have meaningful conversations about how we can be at our best and how we might want to develop.



HONEST and TRANSPARENT

We hold ourselves accountable to our city and act with integrity in everything we do



FORWARD THINKING

We think ahead and approach our work creatively to continuously improve the services we offer



PUT CUSTOMERS FIRST

We treat our customers with respect and deliver caring and responsive services



WORK TOGETHER

We keep connected with our communities and partners and make relationships a priority, working flexibly together to achieve our goals

At my best

I do everything with commitment and total belief in what I care for

I am consistent and deliver what I said I would efficiently and to the highest standard possible

I care and use a genuine approach to engage with customers and the people I work and interact with

When making decisions, I focus on the outcome and have the person at the heart

I am flexible and adapt my style and communication to focus on what matters to people

I am committed and see things through to the very end

I involve customers to be active partners and acknowledge that I might not always be the expert

I take the time to listen and ask questions to seek understanding

I try to make people feel at ease and comfortable by building trust and being open

Put Customers first



We treat our customers with respect and deliver caring and responsive services

I let my mood affect how I treat others

I make little or no effort to understand things from others' point of view and ignore the voice of the customer

I make promises I cannot keep for an easier way out

I make assumptions and take a "one size fits all" approach when working with people

I focus solely on the task and process, not the people

I can be insensitive and unhelpful to customers and my style does not take into account their feelings and opinions

I behave in a way that is detrimental for my customers or has a negative impact on the Council's reputation

Not at my best

At my best

I engage people in a way that inspires them to be a part of it

I acknowledge the good work and achievements of the people around me

I extend trust and take time to understand people I am working with

I show people I care about them and have their backs when needed

I give importance to relationships and make time for growing them

I approach conversations with shared solutions in mind

I recognise the times when what's needed is to roll up our sleeves and pull together

I help the people I work with to stay connected to the good work we are doing together

I am genuine with people and respectful in my conversations

I give colleagues the same importance as external customers and take the time to get to know them so that we can work well together

Working Together



We keep connected with our communities and partners and make relationships a priority, working flexibly together to achieve our goals

I don't flex my style to meet others' needs

I sometimes play power games to drive forward my own agenda and undermine the people I work with

I behave in a way that is detrimental for my colleagues and team

I am not approachable and don't prioritise giving people time and space

I have little interest and take no responsibility in getting to know people and finding out the best about them

I don't make efforts to share information about my work that is not confidential with others

I feel that it is easier to get the job done myself

I assume and have a "one size fits all" approach to working together with people

I give greater importance to my own opinions and achievements over others

I don't make efforts to understand how my work or the team work fit into the bigger picture

I pay lip service to working together – I play at listening but don't really explore different perspective and let the important things remain unsaid

Not at my best

At my best

I feel excited, passionate and connected with the work I do

I am curious and open to new approaches and I think creatively to make things happen

I actively play my part in making the future vision for our service and city a reality

I embrace change with enthusiasm and see it as an opportunity to make things better

I regularly take stock of what I am here to do

I encourage others to share ideas and try new things

I make sure I know the facts and what is important when planning and making decisions

If I see that something is not working or it could be improved, I take responsibility to do something about it

I embrace the "rocky road" and always look for sustainable solutions and opportunities for improvement

I take small steps to achieve the big goals

I take ownership for my own learning to continuously develop and fulfil the requirements of my role

Forward thinking



We think ahead and approach our work creatively to continuously improve the services we offer

I dismiss fresh and new ideas and discourage people from suggesting new ways of doing things

I ignore problems, don't use my initiative and hide behind my job description

I stick to the status quo and remain focussed on problems, not solutions

I rely on established solutions, ignore feedback and don't ask or value other people's views and suggestions

I ignore the facts and evidence to justify my decisions

I take short cuts and turn a blind eye when things are getting tough

I work within my own rigid parameters

Not at my best

At my best

I stay true to our values and feel accountable to do the right thing even when it's really challenging to do so

I play my part in helping my team act with integrity in everything we do together

I am transparent about the work I do, how I go about it and the decision I make

I am open and honest about what I do and don't know and seek people's ideas and suggestions to find solutions

I take the time to reflect on my approach to help me stay true to the Council values and the values that are important to me

I have conversations that are clear and frank at the same time as being respectful and constructive

I have confidence in myself to make the right decisions and, if needed, say no in a constructive manner

I speak up to positively challenge others in a way that is constructive, direct and appropriate

Honest and transparent

I might be manipulative when influencing others and leave people with the impression I want to give

I come across as defensive when service improvements are suggested and think "we've always done it this way"

When making decisions, I hold back for fear of being judged or being wrong

I talk negatively about the Council and people working within it

I waver and don't remain involved until the resolution

I am blunt and insensitive when being honest

I pass the buck when things get tough

I don't tell the whole truth about my work, my approach or the decision I make

I put off the conversations and don't tackle the tough stuff

Not at my best

THE ANNUAL CONVERSATION

A conversation once a year between us and our line manager. A chance to step back and take stock. We reflect on the year that's been and what we've accomplished and we get prepared for the year ahead and what we want to achieve

LOOKING AHEAD: SETTING THE COURSE

WHY

What are we trying to make happen in our service area this year and why? What's the difference I want to make in this?

WHAT

What does this mean for my contribution in the year ahead? What will I need to do? And how will I know that I've been successful? What does good look like? What will the measure of good be?

HOW

How will I go about it? How do I want to approach my work this year in a way that I'll be most proud of? What will great look like in terms of my approach?

MY SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

What does this mean for my development and the support I need in the year ahead? Where do I want to go longer term and what support would help?

OUTPUTS

Agreement on:

Expectations for the year ahead

What I do	How do it
My goals and/or performance measures	Our values and relevant professional standards

My development priorities/knowledge, skills, behaviour

LOOKING BACK: REFLECTING ON MY ACHIEVEMENTS

OUTPUTS

Agreement on:

My performance zone

What I deliver	How I go about it
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Implications for my development

MY IMPACT

So, all in all, what's the impact I had this year on our outcomes, service, and colleagues? And how does this relate to what we're trying to make happen in our service?

MY LEARNING & STRETCH

What are my reflections on what I learnt this year? In what ways did I develop and stretch myself and the service this year? And how does that sit with the development priorities set?

HOW I WENT ABOUT IT

What are my reflections on the approach I took this year – on the good days and the more challenging days? How does that chime with our values? And did I feel supported to bring my best?

WHAT'S BEEN ACCOMPLISHED

What's the best of what I've achieved or accomplished this year? And how does that stack up against my goals and measures?

ANNUAL CONVERSATION QUESTIONS BANK

Some suggested questions from both an employee and manager perspective that we can choose from to prompt a good annual conversation

PICK MIX & PERSONALISE

LOOKING BACK

MANAGER

When you think about the last 12 months, what do you feel really proud of?

What strengths or approaches did you use that helped you achieve that?

What have you enjoyed working on most over the year?

What is something new you learned in the past year?

What has been challenging or had you feeling out of your comfort zone?

EMPLOYEE

What impact has my contribution made on our service area?

What you do feel my key achievements have been over the last 12 months?

In what ways do you think I could further improve?

LOOKING FORWARD

MANAGER

Where do you think you could focus your energies over the next 12 months that would make the biggest impact?

What goals are we looking at this year that interest you and present an opportunity to develop?

How can we be clear on what good looks like in all key areas of the role?

How do you want to stretch your skills or further grow your impact this year?

What support do you need – and from who?

EMPLOYEE

What are some of the big priorities coming up for our team that I might contribute to and how do these relate to the bigger picture?

What are the standards we're striving for in our service?

What support and development opportunities are available to help me achieve my priorities?

PERFORMANCE ZONES

Reflecting back on the whole year on balance, these zones give us an overall sense of how we are doing in our role in terms of what we do and how we do it



GEM (GOING THE EXTRA MILE)

At various points throughout the year, there will be many times when we're truly going the extra mile – going above and beyond to pull together in the face of team challenges, delivering a particularly impressive quality of service or being the one who works consistently behind the scenes to

keep the show on the road against the odds. Why wait until the end of the year to recognise this? It's hoped that space can be created throughout the year to appreciate, recognise and celebrate these moments at the time.

NEEDING SUPPORT

It might be because I'm brand new in post or, for whatever reason, I'm not yet hitting what's expected of me in my role yet and am showing the need for solid improvement in one or more key areas for my contribution to be where it needs to be in the year ahead.

This will likely include one or more of the following:

- Struggling to achieve performance goals, measures or standards expected in my role
- Being a way off approaching my work in a way that sits well with our values or professional standards
- Avoiding helping out my colleagues where needed or showing no real desire to ensure our service meets the standards our customers should be able to expect
- Requiring a level of support or direction that wouldn't ordinarily be expected for the level and scope of the role
- Struggling to have a positive impact on my customers or service users or having a negative impact on the team

ALMOST THERE

Whether I'm brand new to role or not, I'm a developing performer who is very close to consistently achieving what's expected of me and need just a bit more development in one or more areas to be really delivering my best in the year ahead and beyond.

This will likely include one or more of the following:

- Sharpening up my approach in relation to a key skill, one of our values or one of the professional standards we hold as important in my area
- Doing more to ensure I balance my priorities or deliver within the expected timeframes
- Stretching myself to be more proactive in overcoming the day-to-day challenges I face in my role
- Developing the experience needed for the role or focusing on the learning that would help with the changes and developments in my area
- Focusing in on improving the impact I have with my colleagues or customers / service users or focusing on improving the relationships that are key to this role

FULLY EFFECTIVE

I'm reliably broadly achieving what's expected of me on all fronts not just in terms of what I deliver but how I go about it, including taking responsibility for my ongoing development and supporting the team along the way.

This will likely include:

- Broadly hitting the performance goals and/or measures expected in my role (taking in to account reasonable obstacles)
- Consistently approaching my work in a way that fits really well with our values and professional standards (taking in to account the fact that we all may have the occasional bad day)
- Reliably helping out my colleagues and offering ideas, however small, for how we can continuously improve our service
- Embracing opportunities to learn within my role and, for the most part, actively keeping focused on my ongoing personal development
- Typically having a positive impact on my customers or service users and being somebody who is a consistently positive face for the Council

ANNUAL CONVERSATION RECORD

A form to record the key points and actions arising from the annual conversation

Name of employee	Name of manager
Employee number	Performance period

Performance goals and/or measures

This is the place to make sure you have a clear agreed picture of what good looks like for the employee in the year ahead. This may be a set of goals / objectives or it may be a set of key performance measures.

Personal development priorities

This is the place to make sure you have a clear agreed picture of what the priorities are for the employee's personal development in the year ahead to help the role holder to be at their best in the year ahead.

Review of the year

Employee reflections

Manager reflections

Performance zone

ONE-to-ONE CHECK-IN

A one-to-one catch up that take place regularly (frequency to be agreed between us and our manager) throughout the year. These might be pre-arranged meetings or just a quick touch-base. This tool suggests some topics that can be used to focus the conversations. Pick which ones feel the most important to talk about at the time

A chance to use feedback to reinforce good practice or behaviour, recognise where we have gone the extra mile or highlight where improvements are needed. Feedback and recognition should be two-way.



A conversation around what challenges, barriers & obstacles are being experienced and how these could be overcome and what support we might need to overcome them.

A conversation about us as a person. A chance to discuss how we are in general, how we are feeling, any time off we have had and anything in our personal life that might be impacting on our working life or vice versa

A conversation about our personal development needs and an opportunity to explore how we might want to expand our knowledge, skills and experience and reflect on career aspirations.

A conversation to ensure that goals are on track

A conversation around recent and up-coming task & activities

ONE-to-ONE CHECK-IN QUESTIONS BANK [Manager questions]

Some suggested questions for managers to choose from and personalise to help to start a good one-to-one check-in conversation

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- How are you progressing against your personal development priorities? Where do you feel you would like to further grow?
- What might be one area for development that would help you to perform even better or have more impact?
- When thinking of your long term career, what is important to you?

FEEDBACK & WHAT I DO WELL

- What is your sense of how well you are performing?
- What feedback have you sought recently and what have you learned from this?
- What makes you feel valued at work?
- Do you have any feedback for me?

CHALLENGES & SUPPORT

- What is your biggest challenge right now?
- What approaches are you taking to address it and what have you learned in the process?
- What other approaches could you consider?
- What support could help you?

TASK & ACTIVITIES

- What's taking up most of your time at the moment?
- How well prioritized do your various tasks feel?
- What has gone well for you recently? What is about the approach you're taking that's helped?
- What are you trying to make happen in the next month?
- Who do you need to involve in that?

GOALS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- How do you feel your goals are progressing?
- What approaches are you taking to achieve your goals / the standards?
- What is getting in the way of you achieving what's needed in your role?
- Are you getting the right support from me or others? What could I do more of to have you feel supported?

LIFE & WELLBEING

- How do you feel about your work/life balance right now? How can I help?
- What worries or concerns do you have?
- What changes could you make to improve your thinking time or "headspace"?
- What do you spend your time on that doesn't add value that you could stop doing?

ONE-to-ONE CHECK-IN QUESTIONS BANK [Employee questions]

Some suggested questions for employees to choose from and personalise to help to start a good one-to-one check-in conversation

CHALLENGES & SUPPORT

- What approaches could I take to address my biggest challenge?
- Who can help me with...?
- How can I get support with....?
- Who needs support from me in the team?

TASK & ACTIVITIES

- What do you see as being some of my recent highlights?
- What's one bit of feedback you could give me to help my development?

FEEDBACK & WHAT I DO WELL

- What is your sense of how I am performing?
- What's your sense of the best of my strengths?
- What nudge would you give me that would help me be more effective?
- Can you give me some feedback on what you saw from me during ... piece of work?

GOALS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- How do you see my goals are progressing?
- How close to hitting the measures of success do you think I am?
- Am I delivering to the standard you're looking for?

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

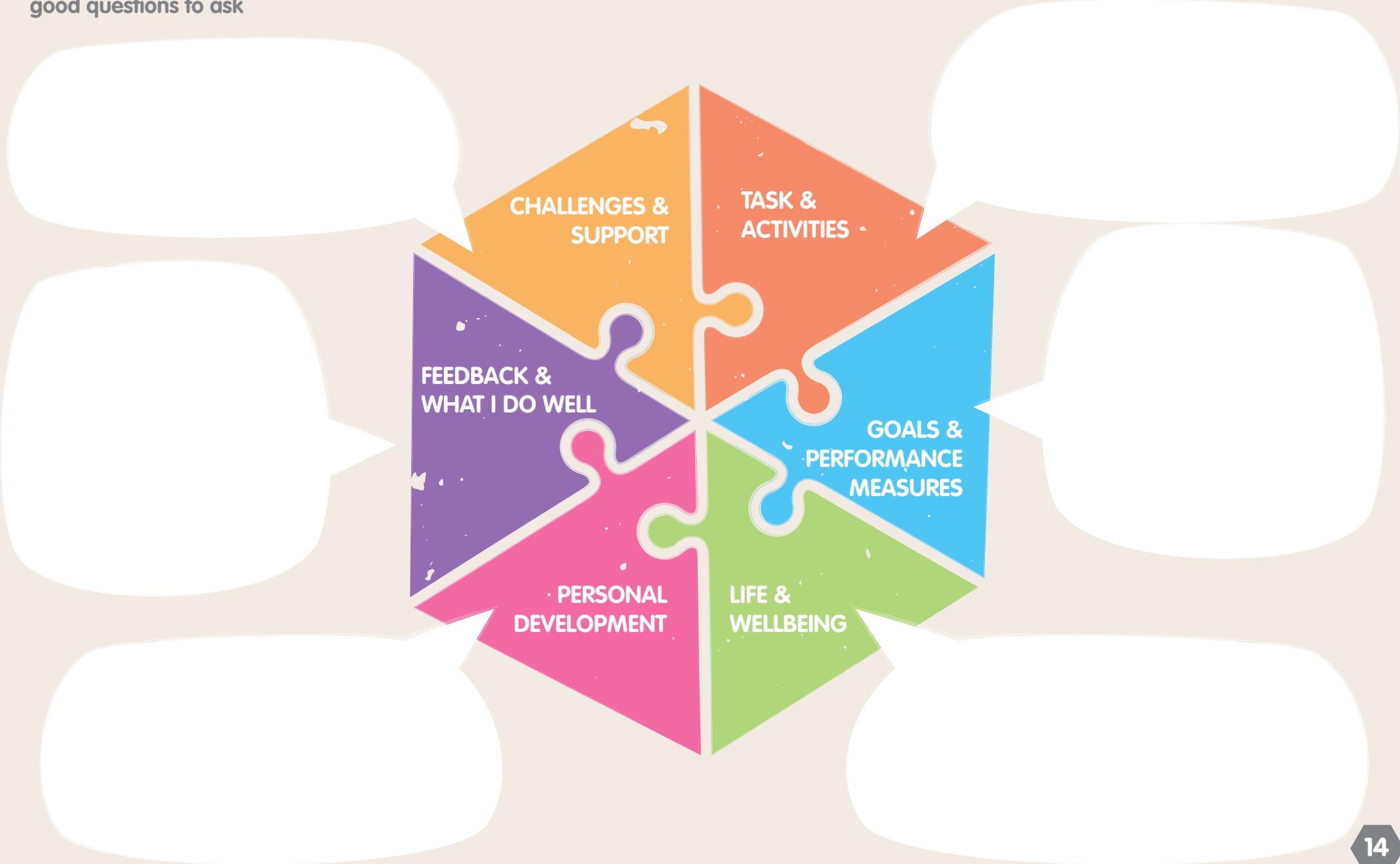
- What personal development opportunities are there that could help me with...?
- How could I learn more about....?
- Who might I be able to shadow to learn more about....?

LIFE & WELLBEING

- How might I get the right balance between work and life in my role?
- What changes could I make to get more headspace?

CHECK-IN PREPARATION TOOL

An optional tool for both a manager and an employee to use, if helpful, to prepare for a one-to-one check in. We could use it to jot down reminders of what we would like to talk about and/or make a note of some good questions to ask



ONE-to-ONE CHECK-IN RECORD

A form to record the key points and actions arising from a one-to-one check in meeting

Name of employee

Name of manager

DATE

MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED

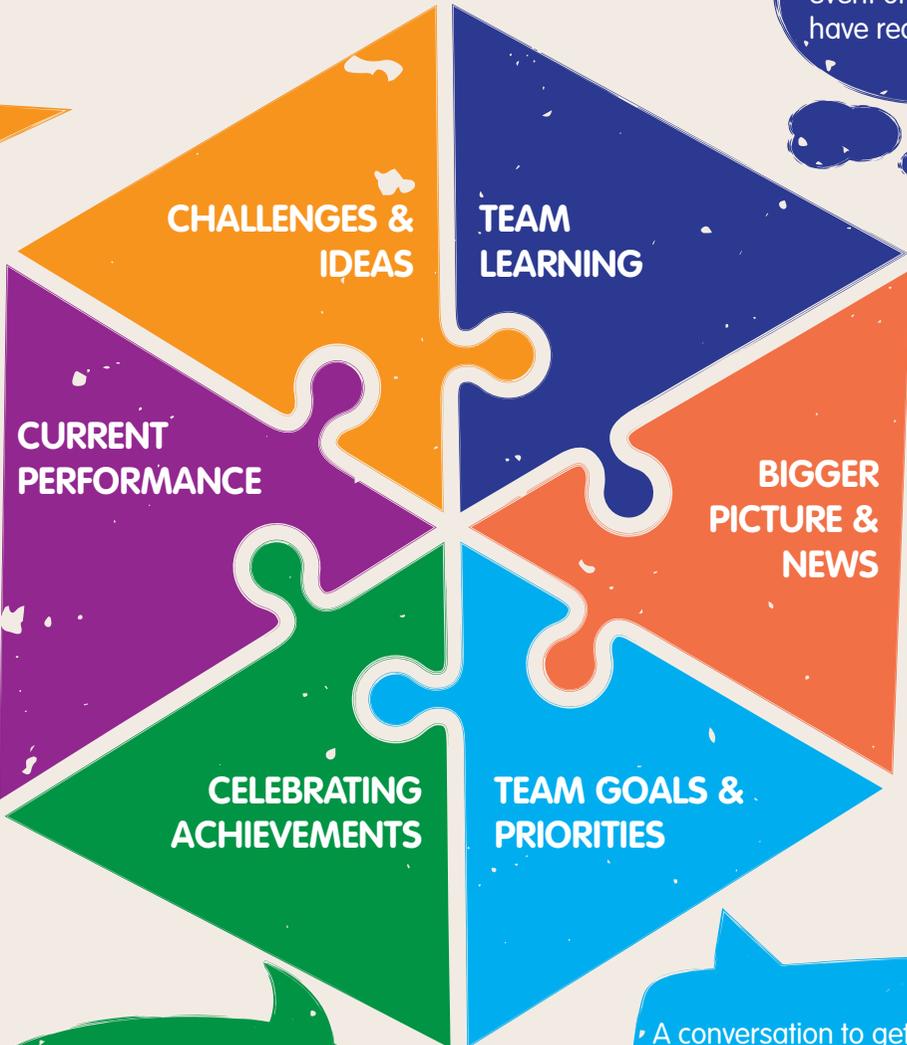
ACTIONS (Who will do what by when)

DATE	MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED	ACTIONS (Who will do what by when)

TEAM CHECK-IN

A regular team catch up (frequency will vary between service areas). This tool suggests some topics that can be used to focus team check-in conversations. Pick which ones feel the most important to talk about

A conversation about challenges we are facing, any team tensions and obstacles to us achieving our goals and priorities. A chance to explore solutions and ways forward together and ways of supporting each other.



A chance to share what we are learning with each other e.g. feeding back after attending an event or sharing something we have read or seen.

A conversation about our wider context – what is going on in our organisation, city or beyond that could impact our performance. What changes and news do we need to touch base on as a team?

A conversation to get a sense check about how we are currently performing.

A chance to celebrate what we are doing well as a team, where we have gone the extra mile and reflecting on our impact.

A conversation to get clear on our team goals and priorities. What does good look like?

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT CONVERSATION

As and when issues arise, we may need a conversation about resolving a performance issue. This tool suggests a way to structure a one-to-one performance improvement conversation to dig deeper into the reasons for a performance issue, to get clear on what the issue is and to agree a way forward together

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CONVERSATION?

State why we're here and the intent to resolve the issue.

SHARING FEEDBACK ABOUT THE ISSUE

- Give honest and constructive feedback about the issue, with specific examples
- Describe the impact of the issue on others
- Clarity what will happen if nothing changes
- Recognise what is working well that we can build on

EXPLORING THE REASONS BEHIND THE ISSUE

- Explore what they think about the issue
- Explore possible reasons for the issue
- Try to learn what is going on from their point of view

WHAT CAN & WILL WE DO ABOUT IT?

Work towards a resolution to find a way forward together, being clear about what happens next and who will do what.

TOP 3 TIPS

- Choose the time and place for the conversation carefully
- Ask open questions and listen carefully to the responses
- Keep focused on moving towards a resolution

Click here

for links to the Performance Improvement Policy and template for a Performance Improvement Plan



PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT QUESTIONS BANK

Some suggested questions for managers to choose from and personalise to help explore reasons behind a performance issue and what we can do about it

Exploring the issue

Can we talk through how you approached X piece of work?

What is the issue as you see it?

What impact can you imagine this having on others?

How engaged do you feel with your work generally?

How clear are you on the goals, standards and expectations of the role?

How supported do you feel?

How confident do you feel in your ability?

What else is happening that might be having an impact?

Exploring what we can do about it

How do we move forward from here to get things back on track?

What is the best first step in resolving this?

What support would help you? From who?

What could I do differently to help you be at your best?

What are the next steps we're agreeing then?

Where might you need to grow your skills?

What might get in the way and how will we get past that?

TIMELY AND REGULAR FEEDBACK AND APPRECIATION

A tool to encourage us to regularly seek feedback on our performance from our manager, colleagues, direct reports and/or customers and to remind us to show timely appreciation to others





**HONEST and
TRANSPARENT**

We hold ourselves accountable to our city and act with integrity in everything we do



**FORWARD
THINKING**

We think ahead and approach our work creatively to continuously improve the services we offer



**PUT CUSTOMERS
FIRST**

We treat our customers with respect and deliver caring and responsive services



WORK TOGETHER

We keep connected with our communities and partners and make relationships a priority, working flexibly together to achieve our goals

If you want to know more about our new performance framework or if you have any questions, please contact your manager.

We would love to hear your feedback on this framework, email us at performance2@edinburgh.gov.uk

Performance Management

Implementation date: 1 April 2017

Control schedule

Approved by

Approval date

Senior Responsible Officer Katy Miller

Author Stewart Cassie

Scheduled for review

Version control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1	15 November 2016	Stewart Cassie	Final draft for Corporate Policy & Strategy Committee

Committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute
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Performance Management

Policy statement

- 1.1 We believe that all our employees want to do the best possible job they can for the Council and the people in our city and that we are all responsible for the work we do and how we do it. As your employer, it is our job to provide you with the right support so we can help you be at your best
- 1.2 Being at your best applies to both **what you do** and **how you do it**. We expect our Council Values to be at the heart of the approach we all bring to our work.
- 1.3 A toolkit is available to support this policy to ensure that it is implemented as intended, with the focus on helping you to do your job to the best of your ability and supporting you to improve when you need help.

Scope

- 2.1 The principles of this policy apply to all our colleagues and we expect everyone to approach their work in line with our Values.
- 2.2 We recognise that there are groups of employees who have their own nationally agreed procedures for continuing professional development and managing performance. These remain in place.
- 2.3 However, nothing in those procedures exempts staff and managers from following the key principles outlined in this policy, and all staff are expected to have regular conversations with their managers, as a matter of good practice and to demonstrate the Council's Values as they go about their work.

Key Principles

3.1 Clear Expectations

We can all expect to have clarity on our role and what's expected of us. From your first weeks with the organisation onwards, you can expect to have an understanding of how your work fits in to the work we do in the city and to have clear goals, standards and measures for the part you play.

3.2 Support

We can all expect to be supported to perform at our best. This support includes advice, coaching, training and support for our development on the job. In return, we are all expected to do our very best and participate fully in conversations about our performance.

3.3 **Feedback**

We can all expect to get regular feedback on how we are doing. We will all get the chance to have regular, two-way conversations about our performance and development. Your manager will help you seek feedback from others and will regularly review your performance with you.

3.4 **Focus on Improvement**

The focus of this policy is on supporting you to do your job in the best way you can and identifying any additional support, tools or adjustments needed where there are any issues meeting the standards required.

3.5 **Focus on you**

This policy is designed to look beyond the narrow focus of how you do your job and looks at you as an individual, giving the flexibility to factor in your personal circumstances where they relate to your performance

Policy content

4.1 **Performance Management**

When you join us, your manager will set goals and/or measures for you and set out the wider standards of performance expected, in line with what is required in your area and with the Council's Values. Performance conversations will then happen throughout the year. There will also be a more formal annual conversation between you and your manager. The annual meeting will be your opportunity to review your progress in the year that has just passed and to get clear on the priorities and expectations for the year ahead. The date at which the annual conversation takes place will be determined by the needs of the area where you work. Senior managers will still have their annual conversation in the spring.

During the annual conversation, as well as being clear on what you are aiming to achieve and how you should go about achieving it, you will also discuss any development and support needs you might have. The aim is to ensure that you can give your best possible performance and we absolutely encourage you to ask for the help you need to achieve that. Your work goals and/or measures and your development priorities will be recorded along with the support you need.

Throughout the year, you and your manager will have the opportunity to have regular one-to-one catch-ups. The frequency will depend on what works well for you and your manager. During these conversations, you will be able to discuss progress against your goals and/or measures, your health and wellbeing, any challenges you are encountering, along with support and development needs you might have. You will also be able to share and receive feedback on your performance.

At the end of the performance management cycle, you should arrange the next annual conversation to look back and review your performance for the year and provide an opportunity for reflection, feedback and recognition before planning for the year ahead once again. The 'looking back' part of the annual conversation will build on all the catch-up conversations you have had throughout the year so there should be no surprises. You and your manager will agree a performance rating that reflects what you have accomplished during the year and how you have approached it.

Occasionally you might feel that you are not going to be able to meet the standard of performance for the job or some goals and/or measures that were agreed. If you feel that, you should speak to your manager and let them know why you think you will not achieve what's expected of you and discuss what help you need. Your manager will listen to what you say and will give you the help you need where they can. It is your responsibility to make sure that you ask for help and take responsibility for meeting the necessary standards.

In some cases, your manager might feel that you are not performing to the required standard, in which case they will bring this up as part of normal day-to-day management. Additional support should be discussed as part of everyday performance management. If you feel you need additional support, make sure that you ask for it. Your manager will be supportive in this. They will also be specific about expected improvements.

Managers will always want to understand why you might not be performing as well as expected and will try to understand your point of view, as well as giving you clear and honest feedback. Our aim is always to find out how we can help you achieve the required standards and expectations and to agree a way of resolving any issues and getting back on track. Your manager and yourself will agree how your performance can be improved and how often to meet in order to monitor your improvement until you are back performing at your best.

4.2 Performance Improvement

We understand that under-performance cannot always be improved by everyday performance management and further intervention is sometimes needed. If you have been given help but your manager feels that you are continuing to underperform, then they will set up a meeting with you to put a formal performance improvement plan in place. You can be represented at this meeting by a trade union representative or accompanied by a work colleague.

However, we must stress that being asked to attend a formal meeting about your performance should not come as a surprise to you. Your manager will have been discussing your performance with you throughout the year. Any areas where your performance could improve will have been brought to your attention

before any formal action is considered and your manager will have supported you to try to improve your performance on an informal basis, through normal day-to-day management at the time. We see formal performance improvement as the last stage of a concerted effort to help you achieve the desired level of performance, backed by evidence of the support you've received.

The meeting will be a structured conversation between you and your manager about putting in place a formal plan to resolve the performance issues. Your manager will set out where you have not met the expected standards, with the evidence they've got from the conversations you had through the year. It's important that both you and your manager share feedback on any issues that are affecting your performance and that you discuss the impact they are having on your ability to do your work. It is important that you speak up about any factors impacting on your ability to perform so that your manager can consider any reasonable adjustments or whether your performance would be better dealt with under another Council policy.

By the end of the meeting, your manager will set out the improvement in your performance that they expect to see. They will confirm that this represents a formal warning about your performance. This means that if there is no improvement in your performance, then this could result in your dismissal. Your manager will also tell your head of service that your performance is being managed using a performance improvement plan.

We must emphasise that your manager will want to help you improve your performance and will want you to succeed. Equally, it's important that you see this as an opportunity to show that you can perform well in your job.

4.3 Confirming the Improvement Needed

After the meeting to discuss the performance improvement plan, your manager will send you a completed performance improvement plan and a letter confirming that you are under performance improvement measures. In this letter, they will confirm that you have 12 working weeks to improve. They will also set out how often you will meet to monitor your improvement and the actions you are expected to take to show your improvement. The letter will also confirm your formal warning and note that if you do not improve your performance, then this could result in your dismissal.

4.4 Reviewing progress

While your performance is under review, you and your manager will meet regularly to review your progress and, where required, adjust any development support you need to help. We would expect this to be at least weekly, in order for both you and manager to see if your performance is improving and to give feedback on progress made.

4.5 Improvement Achieved

At the end of the review period, your manager will meet with you to discuss the outcome of the improvement period. You can be represented at this meeting by a trade union representative or accompanied by a work colleague. If you have achieved the improvement needed, then no further action will be taken and everyday performance management will continue. Your written warning will still be live for 9 months. If there is another drop in performance during this period, your manager will meet with you to discuss the situation. If the dip in performance means that further formal performance improvement support is put in place for you, then you will also be given a final written warning.

4.6 No Improvement

If you have not met the required standard of performance at the end of the improvement period, then your manager will meet with you to discuss the situation. You can be represented at this meeting by a trade union representative or accompanied by a work colleague.

The meeting will be a structured conversation between you and your manager about putting in place a formal plan to resolve the performance issues. Your manager will set out where you have not met the expected standards, with the evidence they've got from the conversations you had through the year. It's important that both you and your manager share feedback on any issues that are affecting your performance and that you discuss the impact they are having on your ability to do your work. It is important that you speak up about any factors impacting on your ability to perform so that your manager can consider any reasonable adjustments or whether your performance would be better dealt with under another Council policy.

By the end of the meeting, your manager will set out the improvement in your performance that they expect to see. You will then be given a final warning and a further 4 working weeks to try to improve your performance levels. This means that if there is no improvement in your performance, then this could result in your dismissal. The warning will be live for one year. Your manager will also tell your head of service that your performance is being managed using a performance improvement plan.

4.7 Final Performance Improvement Meeting

If you do not reach the standard of performance needed for your job in the final 4 working week period, then your manager will meet with you to confirm this and arrange for a final meeting to be chaired by your head of service (or a senior manager in your area with the authority to dismiss). You can be represented by

a trade union representative or accompanied by a work colleague to both the meeting with your manager and the meeting with your head of service.

At the final performance improvement meeting, the chairperson will review your performance improvement plan, consider the performance level you have been able to achieve, the support you received, your own feedback on what has prevented you achieving the standards required and feedback from your manager. You will be given the opportunity to share your thoughts on the situation.

At the end of the meeting, the chairperson will confirm what action is to be taken. This will be either dismissal, action short of dismissal, redeployment or, in exceptional circumstances, a further period of review of up to 4 working weeks. This will only be considered if you have been able to demonstrate that you can achieve the required standard within that time.

The chairperson will send you a letter confirming the decision.

4.8 Appeals

If you are dismissed or action short of dismissal is taken, you can appeal that decision by following the standard appeal process, which will be set out in your confirmation letter.

You cannot appeal any other outcome of the final meeting.

Implementation

- 5.1 To support an effective implementation in line with the principles of this policy, a comprehensive period of development for staff and managers will commence in January 2017, ahead of implementation in April 2017.

Roles and responsibilities

- 6.1 We will make sure that our approach to performance helps you be at your best at work. We will support your manager, so that they feel confident in providing you with the tools you need to do your job as well as the support and information you need. If you cannot meet the requirements of your job, your line manager will provide you with the support to help you reach the expected standards.
- 6.2 We are all individually responsible for managing our performance and engaging in conversations about it. You are responsible for the quality of your work and for putting in the effort needed to do the job to the standard required. You need to be clear on what it is you are being asked to do at work and what you need to do to achieve your goals and/or measures. You will need to work with your

manager to agree how you are going to achieve your goals and/or measures and when you need to achieve them by. If you need help, tell your manager and make it clear what support you think you need to be able to do your job.

- 6.3 Your manager will make sure that you understand what you are expected to do in your job and that you know how to do it well. They will agree a set of goals and/or measures for you to achieve each year, starting from when you first join the Council. They will give you the support you need to achieve these by having regular conversations with you about your work throughout the year and by providing you with the time and development you need to do the best you can.
- 6.4 Your manager will have received appropriate performance management training to ensure that the performance management framework is adopted and applied consistently and fairly across the organisation.
- 6.5 Your manager's performance will be evaluated each year on how effectively they support their people to perform and how they manage the performance of their area.

Related documents

- 7.1 This policy forms part of the overall performance framework, a copy of which is attached.

Equalities impact

- 8.1 For details of the completed Record of Equality and Rights Impact Assessment (ERIA) form, contact the named author of the policy.

Sustainability impact

- 9.1 It has been assessed that this policy will have no environmental impact.

Risk assessment

- 10.1 The revised policy is fully compliant with legislative requirements and good employment practice.

Review

- 11.1 This document is a local collective agreement between the Council and the recognised Trade Unions. We will make every effort to ensure that this policy is maintained as a local collective agreement, with changes made by agreement. If we cannot agree, either party can end the local collective agreement by giving four months notice in writing. In such circumstances, the terms of the local agreement will cease to apply to existing and future employees
- 11.2 We will review this policy regularly to ensure that it continues to support the performance of our colleagues.