

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 12 June 2018

Embedding and Evaluating our new Performance Framework

Item number	7.9
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	All
Council Commitments	

Executive Summary

The Council is continuing to change and develop to ensure it is at its most effective and productive in delivering for the city. Our approach to managing performance and supporting our people to perform at their best plays a crucial role in enabling the Council to be at its best.

In response to insight from staff and managers that was sought in 2015, a group of colleagues and managers worked together to transform and reinvigorate our approach to performance management. As a result of this collaborative work, a new framework was implemented in April 2017 after extensive testing across the organisation, negotiations with our trade unions and agreement of the new Performance Management Policy at the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in December 2016.

This report updates Committee on the progress made to support colleagues and line managers to embed the new approach and to monitor and evaluate changes to practice so far. It also outlines further plans to conduct colleague focus groups and use insights from the Colleague Survey to continue to monitor and adapt to support the culture change required to fully embed the new framework.

Embedding and Evaluating our new Performance Framework

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Note and be assured by the progress made to date to embed and monitor our performance framework and policy; and
- 1.2 Note the plans to further evaluate the changes in practice and impact associated with the new performance framework, including focus groups, early adopter review meetings and insights from the Colleague Survey.

2. Background

- 2.1 On 6 December 2016, the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee agreed a new Performance Management Policy and the introduction of an accompanying Performance Framework to take effect from 1 April 2017.
- 2.2 The new Performance Management Policy and Framework were introduced as a direct result of colleague feedback sought in 2015, as well as to support the ambition for the type of culture that is required to ensure the organisation is at its most effective and productive in delivering for the city in new ways.
- 2.3 Colleagues felt the previous approach to performance management was a 'box ticking' exercise that was overly focused on process and compliance, lacking in connection to what employees were trying to achieve and didn't always support our people to deliver their best. These views were compounded by the fact that supporting systems and materials were cumbersome and difficult to engage with. Additionally, colleagues were frustrated that performance issues appeared to be tolerated and managers described difficulties faced when trying to tackle performance issues due to feeling unsupported coupled with a sense of the previous policy not being as enabling as it could be.
- 2.4 In response to insight from colleagues and managers, the new Framework was developed in co-production with a Business User Group and six Early Adopter Teams to ensure testing in a variety of Council operating environments.
- 2.5 The new Framework aims to establish a supportive climate for performance that engages people at a human level, establishes a consistently high bar, makes it easy for people to deliver their best performance and maximises the potential of our

workforce. The focus is on supportive, developmental and, where needed, courageous conversations.

- 2.6 The key components of the performance framework and policy include:
 - 2.6.1 A new values map to bring to life the behaviours demonstrated when colleagues are approaching their work in line with our organisational values.
 - 2.6.2 An annual conversation which is more forward-looking and enables clarity on a colleague's performance overall by means of three broad zones, with a view to prompting a development-oriented conversation.
 - 2.6.3 A model for regular, all year-round clear and supportive one-to-one conversations.
 - 2.6.4 A tool to support staff and managers in seeking and offering developmental and appreciative feedback to the people they work with.
 - 2.6.5 A restorative focus to performance issues with shorter timeframes for formal resolution (12 weeks initially, a possible extension of 4 weeks and a further short extension in exceptional circumstances).
- 2.7 The new framework and policy were implemented on 3 April 2017.

3. Main report

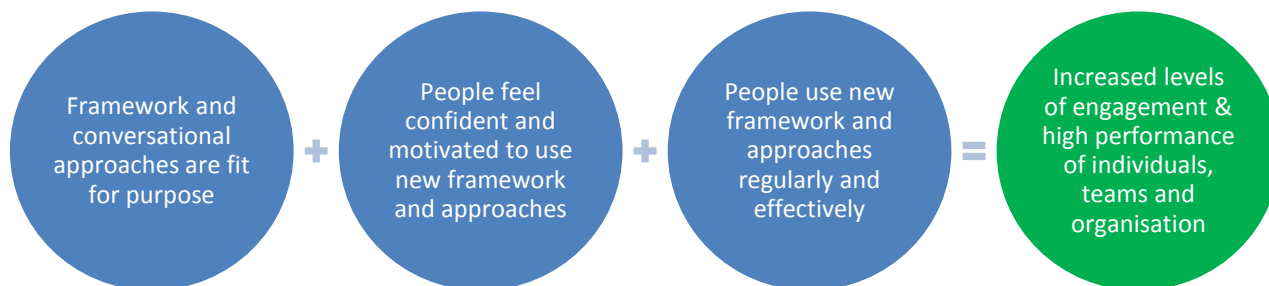
Engagement and Support

- 3.1 To support managers to lead for the culture change required to embed the new performance framework, model best practices, and engage and support their team members in the approach, a 2-day Conversation Spotlight workshop has been developed and offered to all people managers. These workshops are highly experiential and enable managers to rethink, practise and receive feedback on their approaches to performance conversations. Initially, these workshops were targeted at senior leaders between Dec 2016 and March 2017 and have since been opened up to all people managers. As at March 2018, 124 workshops have been held with nearly 1,000 leaders attending.
- 3.2 Additionally, to support and engage colleagues in the launch of the new approach, a road show of 22 bite-sized workshops was put in place at various locations across the city covering a diverse range of teams and roles. A total of 795 colleagues attended these sessions. At these workshops, colleagues were invited to keep in touch to feedback on their experiences on the ground during the embedding phase of the framework. A total of 53 colleagues offered to take on this role.
- 3.3 An interactive "How to Guide" was developed and promoted to all colleagues. This guide brings to life the new framework and helps colleagues understand how to use the tools within it and their role in the new approach to get the most from their performance conversations. As at March 2018, over 2,000 colleagues had accessed the "How to Guide".

- 3.4 Additionally, a Performance Improvement interactive guide was produced for line managers.

Embedding and Evaluating Change Approach

- 3.5 The ambition for the culture change associated with the new performance framework is a long-term journey, of at least 3 years. However, based on the logic model outlined below, we can identify indicators of the direction of travel to learn and adapt along the way:



- 3.6 The approach to evaluating how the framework is being embedding is based on cycles of learning, reflection and adjustment. During the 12 months following implementation, there have been focused themes relating to key components of the framework that have been used to generate insight and stimulate action. For each theme, supporting materials have been shared (e.g. short films involving a range of colleagues and team conversation templates) and qualitative insights gathered relating to that theme.
- 3.7 A group made up of a range of colleagues and managers review the insights from each cycle and these are then shared with senior leaders to identify actions required in their service areas. Good practice stories have also been shared to reinforce and encourage the types of behaviours associated with the organisation's values.
- 3.8 Qualitative insights have been gathered from those who volunteered to help monitor the embedding of the new framework (including those who signed up at roadshows and 2015 focus group participants) and randomly sampled colleagues. To date, a total of 134 colleagues have shared their feedback.
- 3.9 In addition, a survey was issued in December 2017 to managers who had attended a Spotlight Workshop to assess the difference made in terms of practice and impact on engagement and performance. 224 managers completed this survey.

Findings to Date

- 3.10 The survey of Spotlight Workshop participants found the following reported changes in practice:
- 75%** of managers showing appreciation more often
 - 72%** of managers more confident dealing with performance issues
 - 71%** of managers using more of a coaching approach

68% of managers more focused on their team members' development

68% of managers feeling more confident as a leader

68% of managers having more meaningful 1:1 conversations

55% of managers seeking feedback more often.

3.11 In terms of impact, the survey found:

56% of managers having better relationships in the team

53% of managers reporting higher levels of team engagement

51% of managers reporting increased team performance.

3.12 For managers not reporting a change in practice or impact, this was most commonly attributed to the fact that they felt they already used these types of approaches well prior to attending a workshop or that operational pressures and organisational reviews were mitigating some of the positive impacts achieved.

3.13 Most respondents indicated finding the workshops highly valuable in terms of both skills development and signalling their part in a positive culture change for the organisation.

3.14 In terms of qualitative insights received from colleagues to date, the most common positive themes reported so far include:

- finding the approach overall more 2-way and person-focused;
- finding the language, tone and tools of the framework helpful and more human than the previous PRD approach;
- finding the system simpler and easier to use;
- less focus on paperwork and more on the conversation;
- team meetings and 1:1's feeling more open, honest and engaging;
- annual 'looking ahead' conversations helping colleagues feel clearer, listened to and motivated; and
- a shift in a focus towards a more appreciative culture.

3.15 The most common themes for improvement included:

- the need for more colleagues to have a looking-ahead conversation – these were not always happening in all teams consistently;
- enabling a longer term, less reactive focus in conversations during times of change and uncertainty;
- not all colleagues having regular 1:1's with their managers;
- the need for more consistent and specific appreciative feedback from managers; and

- recognition of the impact of colleagues being in new roles with new teams and therefore the need to build better relationships and feel valued by new colleagues and managers.
- 3.16 Linking these themes back to the logic model (3.6), the findings suggest that whilst the tools and approaches contained in the new framework are largely being experienced as a welcomed improvement, there is further work to do to support colleagues and managers to put these into practice regularly and consistently.

Next Steps

- 3.17 We continue to roll out development to employees and leaders.
- 3.18 Further insight is currently being sought and analysed on annual 'looking back' conversations, which include agreement of an overall performance zone, which will offer insight into how this component of the framework is being experienced by colleagues.
- 3.19 A review meeting will be held with each of the 6 Early Adopter teams so that detailed insights can be obtained into the ways the performance framework is being embedded in very different operating environments. These will explore success stories, challenges, lessons learned and impact against initial aspirations. These review meetings will be completed by June 2018.
- 3.20 Focus groups will be held with colleagues who either volunteered to help monitor the embedding of the new framework or who were part of the initial 2015 focus groups. These will take place during July and August 2018, following analysis of the findings from the Colleague Survey.
- 3.21 Trade Unions will also be part of a focus group in the Summer.
- 3.22 Findings from the colleague survey will enable insight into progress made against the ten indicators that were used during the 2015 research phase of the programme (including, for example, the extent to which people have clear goals, are getting useful and frequent feedback on their performance, are having regular one-to-one conversations with their manager etc).
- 3.23 A co-ordinated approach with Strategy and Insight will be taken to ensure that service area briefings and action planning meetings to address the findings in the colleague survey will also draw out implications for the evaluation of the performance framework.
- 3.24 The findings from the colleague survey will also provide insight into particular teams or service areas that may be experiencing challenges in embedding the new framework so that future development and support can be more targeted.
- 3.25 Findings from all sources described in this report will also feed into the design of the organisation's new Leadership Development Programme to continue to support leaders more generally to fully embed the new performance framework.

4. Measures of success

- 4.1 Indicators of success, at a high level, are linked to an overall logic model shown in 3.5 of this report.
- 4.2 Indicators of success have been agreed at the level of practice and at the level of impact (i.e. impact on colleagues, impact on service). At the level of practice, ten indicators were used in the summer 2015 research phase (including, for example, the extent to which people have clear goals, are getting useful and frequent feedback on their performance, are having regular one-to-one conversations with their manager etc).

5. Financial impact

- 5.1 There are costs associated with the embedding and evaluation phase of this work but a predominantly 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 improve and develop itself to be fit for purpose in a new climate are significant if this new approach is not fully embedded.

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 Insight gathered in 2015 to inform the design of our new performance framework was gained from extensive consultation, including 200 staff during focus groups, interviews with 20 managers, and 150 staff through a survey, in addition to desk research and benchmarking with around half a dozen other companies.
- 9.2 The new framework was co-created with a Business User Group and 6 Early Adopter Sites, ensuring development and testing with a range of operational environments and a breadth of roles.

- 9.3 We have kept in close contact with 152 colleagues across a range of roles and service areas as part of the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the new framework and policy as well as contacting a random sample of colleagues to obtain views on the new approach.
- 9.4 Focus groups are planned with the above 152 colleagues and further insight relating to the indicators of success for the new framework will be obtained from the Colleague Survey which has been issued to all Council employees.

10. Background reading/external references

- 10.1 New performance management framework and policy, [Report](#) to Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee, 6 December 2016

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11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 – Our Performance Framework: Being our Best in Everything we do for the People in our City
- 11.2 Appendix 2 – Performance Management Policy

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.

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 designed to support you in having these conversations. It offers a blend of templates, tools and tips to be used flexibly to suit your needs and situation.

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.

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 to get the job done

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 help 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

Not at my best

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

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 support people I work with and challenge them appropriately when I need to

I give importance to growing relationships with others

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

Not at my best

I'm not flexible in my approach to meet the needs of other people

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

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

I take the easy option and do things myself even when I know it's better to work with others

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

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

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

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

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

I allow issues to build up rather than exploring different perspectives to find solutions

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 and I believe I can make a difference

I take the time for fresh thinking and 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 persevere on the tough days to find solutions and opportunities for continuous improvement

I take steps to achieve future 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

Not at my best

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

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

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

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

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

I have a 'yes but' for every solution suggested

At my best

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

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

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 have confidence in myself to make the best decisions and take into account the impact on other people

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

Honest and transparent

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

Not at my best

I might be manipulative when influencing others and leave people with the impression I agree even when I don't

I give the impression I agree with service improvements but I don't help to achieve them or I even quietly undermine them

I blame the "system" and/or others by not taking responsibility for my actions

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

I talk negatively about the Council and people working within it

I take a back seat when my opinions are needed and sometimes I criticise the outcome when it's too late

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

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

My development priorities/knowledge, skills, behaviour

OUTPUTS

Agreement on:

My performance zone

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

LOOKING BACK: REFLECTING ON MY ACHIEVEMENTS

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 fit 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 fit 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

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

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

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 do you 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?

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

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

What support do you need – and from who?

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

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

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

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 and tangible agreed picture of what good looks like for the employee in the year ahead, both in terms of what needs to be achieved and how and if relevant by when.

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, with clarity on the development need or ambition as well as how and when the development will happen.

Review of the year

Employee reflections

Manager reflections

Performance zone

ONE-to-ONE CHECK-IN

A one-to-one catch up that takes 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

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?

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?

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?

GOALS & PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- How do you think your goals are progressing and how do you feel about that?
- 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 support from me or others? What could I do more of to support you?

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?

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 it 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?

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?
- How can I get support with...?
- Who can help me with...?
- Who needs support from me in the team?

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?

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

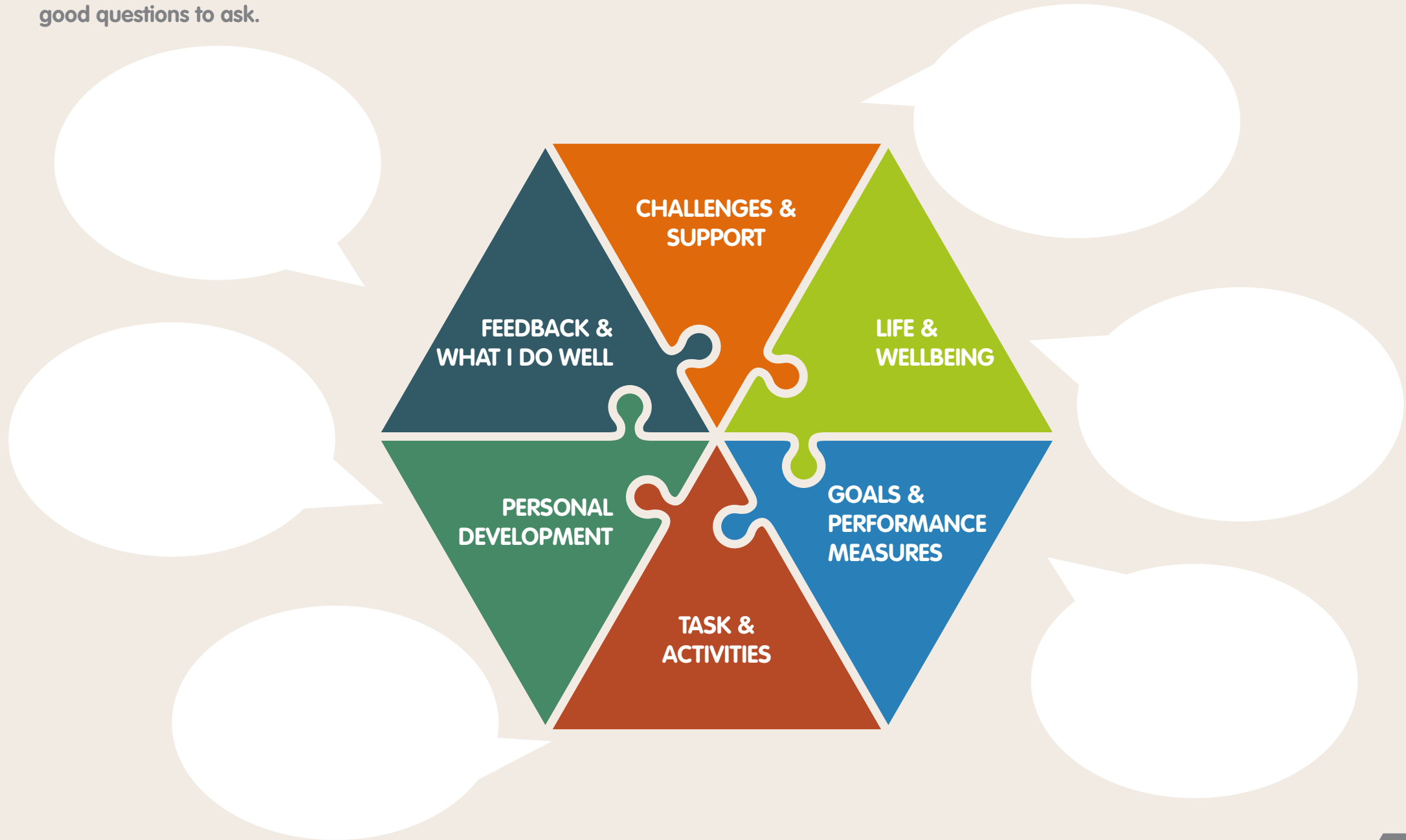
- What personal development opportunities are there that could help me with...?
- How could I learn more about...? Who might I be able to shadow to learn more about...?

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?

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

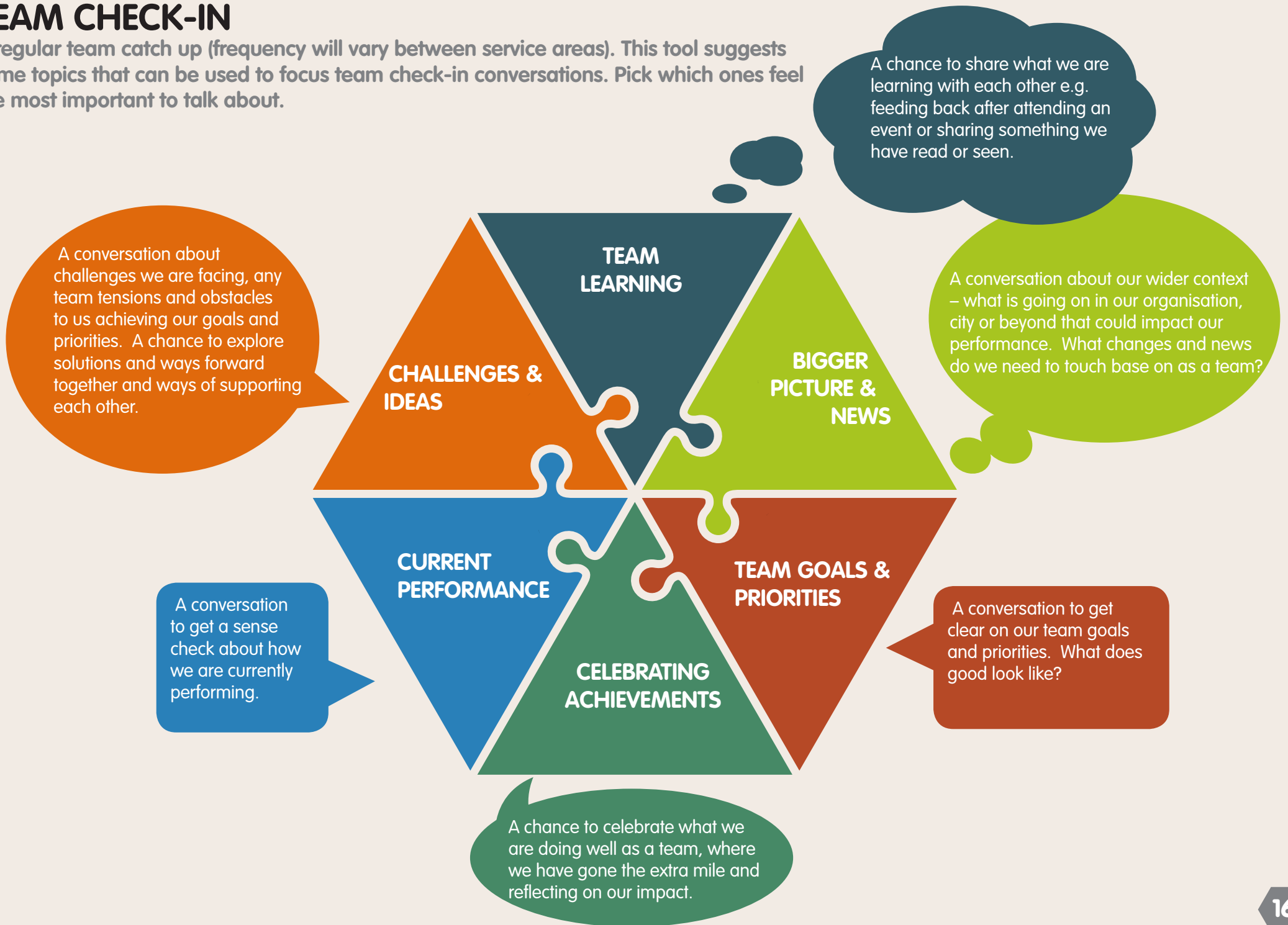
Name of employee	Name of manager
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DATE	MAIN TOPICS DISCUSSED	ACTIONS (Who will do what by when)
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TEAM CHECK-IN

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.



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
- Clarify 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



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.

My strengths

When I'm at my best, what do you see from me?

When I'm at my best, how does it effect others?

What are my unique strengths?

What do you value about my approach?



Ask Yourself Regularly...

Is there someone I owe a simple thank you to?

Is there something great I've seen someone do?

Why was it great and how will I let them know?

Is there someone I owe some appreciation to? (Including the reliable people who are sometimes in the background.)

How I can improve?

When I'm not at my best, what do you see?

When I'm not at my best, how does it effect others?

What could I improve on and how might I go about it?



Top Tips

- Be honest
- Be specific

- Be respectful
- Be constructive



**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 hrsc@edinburgh.gov.uk