

REPORT PERS23.005 Staff Appraisal Procedure

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL

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BACKGROUND

Although provision in staff contracts is made for an annual performance review, Laverstock and Ford Parish Council do not currently have an adopted process for the format of such reviews.

The Scheme of Delegation for the Personnel Committee allows for three members of the committee to conduct the performance review for the Clerk.

The Clerk conducts performance reviews for other staff and officers.

SUMMARY

The following documents pulls on best practice advice from Society of Local Council Clerks SLCC and the Clerks training for CILCA. The document sets out a process to follow for all appraisals to ensure appraisers and appraisee have the opportunity for open and frank discussions, without being too cumbersome.

The attached Staff Appraisal Form has been trialled by the Clerk with two members of staff and slight adjustments made, resulting in the document presented.

RECOMMENDATION

That the council adopts the Staff Appraisal Policy as attached.

LAVERSTOCK AND FORD PARISH COUNCIL

STAFF APPRAISAL POLICY

Purpose/Principles	To ensure Council employees receive regular and high quality performance reviews To ensure employees have the opportunity to comment and contribute to their performance appraisal To set out the this processes for the appraiser to follow. To inform the employee of what to expect during their appraisal
Scope	Employees, Councillors
Date adopted:	
Minute Reference:	
Previous versions (Dates):	None
Next review:	January 2026
Policy owner:	Personnel Committee
Supersedes:	None

Introduction

Appraisals are used to help employees achieve and full their potential and for the employer to continue to monitor performance in order to achieve its goals and improve the quality of the services which it provides. An appraisal interview is an opportunity to take an overall look at work content and volume, look back at what has been achieved, agree objectives for the future and consider what development needs the employee may have for the year ahead. The appraisal interview is a significant form of communication between an employee, their immediate boss and their employer, the Council.

The main purposes of the appraisal system are as follows:

- a) Performance: to provide a clear statement on how staff are performing and their achievements to see whether further progress can be made, and consider what help might be given to build on strengths.
- b) Responsibilities: to record present and future responsibilities.
- c) Personal development: to look at future work and identify opportunities for development and training, to benefit ones career and to maximize the contribution to the Council.
- d) Communication: to ensure that ideas and views are shared.
- e) Future work: to plan work priorities and objectives for the next year and consider solutions to problems.

Structure

The Clerk conducts appraisals for all staff as required, but as a minimum annually. Feedback from others in the organization, elected members or significant external contacts may be sought in advance of the appraisal interview. A summary of these appraisals will be reported to the Personnel Committee.

A minimum of three members of the Personnel Committee conduct appraisals for the Clerk as required, but as a minimum annually. It is not appropriate for the whole council to take part in the appraisal interview but views from stakeholders such as the staff, contractors, contacts, members of the public as well as the elected members can be sought to give a comprehensive summary of the Clerk's performance.

Key Features

An appraisal should take into consideration the following factors:

- (a) Openness – provide guidance to employees on the appraisal scheme. The employee will be issued the Staff Appraisal Form (Annex One) in advance of the appraisal date and given the opportunity to complete Section One. The employee will be privy to all comments made by an employer during or after an Appraisal process
- (b) Confidentiality - the appraiser(s) and appraisee only will normally see the full appraisal record, although a summary, excluding confidential items, will be reported to the Personnel Committee.

Appraisal records will not be shared outside of the Personnel Committee except in exceptional circumstances.

(c) Consistency – all staff will be appraised using this scheme and the Staff Appraisal Form.

(d) Objectives – Objectives which are set during the appraisal should be objective and understood by both appraisers and appraisee, and be based upon actual conduct and performance rather than personalities or subjective criteria. Objectives provide framework for the coming year's work. They should be agreed between appraiser and appraisee. The objectives need to reflect the employee's job description and the council's own objectives derived from its strategic and business plans. Often objectives will set a higher standard for performance than before, designate additional responsibility or assign new projects. It is usual to aim for around 6 to 8 main objectives, any more can be over-stretching.

It is good practice to have one personal development objective within the set agreed in order to encourage continuing professional development.

Effective objectives should be S.M.A.R.T.:

1. Specific: the objective should refer to a particular task or piece of work or specific aspects of behaviour or performance.
2. Measurable: There should be measures (quantitative or qualitative) which are clearly agreed and understood; these will enable progress and achievement to be monitored and recognised.
3. Agreed: The objective should be agreed by appraisee and appraiser
4. Realistic: The objective should be designed to be challenging for the appraisee but should not be so demanding that there is a high likelihood of failure.
5. Timed: All objectives should have a date by which they are to be achieved.

There are three steps in setting effective objectives:

1. Select the part of the job to which the objective will relate.
2. Agree what is the end result to be achieved within that area.
3. Settle how the end result will be achieved and the steps that the appraisee will need to take.

(e) Forward-looking - the main value of reviewing past performance is to identify matters which can be built upon, problems that can be tackled by the Council or by training, and new opportunities. The GROW model is a useful approach to exploring aspirations and direction when Training and Development is discussed:

G Goals what do you want?

R Reality what is happening now?

O Options what could you do?

W Way Forward what will you do?

(f) Positive - problems, difficulties and mistakes should be discussed openly so that solutions can be found, training offered or defective systems improved.

(g) Two way conversation - appraisees are encouraged to contribute frankly in assessing their performance and goals.

(h) No surprises – it is poor practice to introduce new information, particularly of a critical nature at an appraisal interview. If there are issues with conduct of performance then they should be raised with the employee at the time they occur, not held back to handle at an appraisal session.

(i) Contractual – staff contracts state that there will be an annual appraisal which the employer will be obliged to undertake.

Procedure

a) Agree a date: The Council and employee should agree between themselves a date for the appraisal to take place. It is advisable for at least 5 days preparation to be allowed.

b) Documents: the appraisee and appraiser should have at least the following documentation to hand at the appraisal:

Job Description

Written objectives set previously (if any)

Record of previous appraisal (if any)

c) Preparation: both the appraisee and appraiser should spend time planning what they want to discuss. The Staff Appraisal Form should form the basis of the appraisal. The appraiser should be familiar with the council's own strategic objectives for the coming year in order to ensure that the appraisal contributes to the council's own direction. Useful questions for the appraiser to consider are attached as Annex Two. These are suggestions only, and the appraiser may use none, some or all, or use their own during the appraisal interview.

d) The venue: Both parties should be agreeable to the venue of the appraisal, which should ideally be in a quiet place and away from other distractions.

e) The interview: It should be conducted by the appraiser(s) in an informal atmosphere. The appraiser should begin by explaining the scope of the interview and then encourage the appraisee to comment on performance, training, development and future objectives and to suggest solutions to any problems. The appraiser should take notes.

f) Writing up: The appraiser should write up a report of the interview and give a copy to the appraisee at the conclusion of the appraisal or as soon as possible thereafter.

h) Signature: The completed form should be given to the appraisee to consider, adding any comment and to sign it and the appraisee should then return it to the appraiser.

i) Records: The appraiser will make two copies of the signed form and give one copy to the appraisee to keep and keep one copy for the central confidential personnel records

j) Follow up: The appraiser is responsible for ensuring that any further action is taken as agreed at the appraisal.

Timing

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

Final Comments

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

Deficiencies /Unsatisfactory Performance

Any deficiencies or unsatisfactory performances noted will result in an action plan agreed between the appraiser and the appraisee. Continuing deficiencies or unsatisfactory performance will result in a review of that individual's competence to continue to carry out their particular type of work. It may be appropriate for such discussions to lead to a separate disciplinary process for poor performance but a disciplinary sanction is not an automatic outcome from a poor appraisal. The council's disciplinary procedure will be followed if measures have been taken to assist the employee achieve but the role is still considered beyond the employee's capability.

ANNEX ONE

STAFF APPRAISAL FORM

NAME:

DATE OF APPRAISAL:

APPRAISING OFFICER:

Section 1: Employee to Complete this Section

(Use your job description and previously agreed objectives to complete this section of the form. Please review your job description to ensure continued relevance)

Name:

Post:

Date Appointed to Current Job:

1. Performance Over the Review Year

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

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

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

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

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

2. Your Skills and Expertise

2.1 What are your key strengths in your job?

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

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

3 Development Needs

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

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

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

3.4 How effective has this training been?

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

Objective/Target Setting

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

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

3.7 What potential objectives/targets have high priority?

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

Section 2: Appraiser to Complete This Section

Consider what the employee has written in Section 1 and make comments in this section (Section 2). Comment on identified main achievements (add anything else that was done particularly well). Comment on any tasks that should no longer be in the job description and any that should be included.

Review of 1. Performance over the Review Year

Review of 2. Your Skills and Expertise

Review of 3. Development Needs

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

Section 3: Agreed Objectives and Future Plans

This section provides an opportunity to record objectives for the coming year and agree training/development plans. Although there are no set number of objectives, those set should cover key aspects of the employee's job and have direct relevance to any Council aims and objectives.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Training/Development actions:

Section 4: Employee Comments

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

Signature of Appraisee:

Signature(s) of Appraiser(s):

Date:

ANNEX TWO

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS AT APPRAISAL

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

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

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

Which aspects of the job have been accomplished well?

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

What influences have made the job difficult to perform?

What strengths does the appraisee bring to the job?

What are the goals for the next review period?

What training and development would help to achieve these goals?

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

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

c) Review of Job Description

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

d) Training and Development

The appraisee and appraiser should jointly identify training needs. Concentrate first on the areas of skill and knowledge needing development, and only after that on training solutions.

Recommendations should relate to needs identified in reviewing past performance and/or to new objectives or additional responsibilities.