

STAFF APPRAISAL AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT POLICY

2026-2029

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1. Purpose

Frodsham Town Council is committed to supporting the development, wellbeing and performance of its employees through a fair, constructive and consistent appraisal process.

The appraisal process is intended to:

- Support the delivery of the Council's objectives and priorities.
- Provide employees with regular feedback on performance.
- Recognise achievements and good performance.
- Identify areas for development and improvement.
- Identify training and development needs.

- Support employee wellbeing and job satisfaction.
- Establish clear objectives and priorities for the forthcoming period.

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- Provide a framework for salary progression where this is linked to satisfactory performance.

Performance management is a continuous process and should not be limited to the annual appraisal meeting.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Frodsham Town Council.

The Council recognises that the management arrangements for the Town Clerk differ from those of other employees due to the Town Clerk's role as the Council's most senior officer.

3. Management Responsibilities

3.1 Town Clerk

The Town Clerk is responsible for the day-to-day management, supervision and performance management of all Council employees.

The Town Clerk shall undertake annual appraisals and regular one-to-one meetings with all employees for whom they have management responsibility.

Nothing within this policy authorises individual councillors to direct, supervise or manage employees, other than through formally delegated appraisal responsibilities under this policy.

3.2 Town Clerk Appraisal

Responsibility for the appraisal of the Town Clerk shall rest with the committee delegated by the Council to oversee staffing and employment matters.

That committee shall appoint two councillors to act as Appraisers on its behalf. Normally, these will be the Chair and Vice-Chair of the committee, although alternative appointments may be made where appropriate.

The appointed Appraisers shall conduct the appraisal meeting and prepare a written appraisal report for consideration by the committee.

The committee may make recommendations regarding salary progression, contractual matters, training and development, or other employment matters arising from the appraisal process.

Any recommendations affecting salary progression, remuneration, contractual terms and conditions, or other matters reserved to Full Council shall be reported to Full Council for consideration and determination.

Where such matters contain personal, confidential or employment-related information, they shall be considered by Full Council in confidential session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and any other relevant statutory provisions in force at the time.

3.3 Conflict of Interest and Impartiality

The Council recognises that appraisal processes must be undertaken fairly, objectively and without bias.

Any councillor appointed to undertake the Town Clerk's appraisal must be able to demonstrate impartiality and act in the best interests of the Council.

A councillor shall not participate in the appraisal of the Town Clerk where:

- They are party to an ongoing grievance, complaint, dispute or employment-related process involving the Town Clerk.
- There is a significant breakdown in the working relationship between the councillor and the Town Clerk.
- There is a personal conflict, prejudice or other circumstance that could reasonably be perceived as affecting the councillor's ability to act impartially.
- Their involvement could create a reasonable perception of bias or predetermination.

Where such circumstances arise, the councillor shall declare the matter and withdraw from participation in the appraisal process.

The committee responsible for staffing and employment matters shall appoint an alternative councillor to undertake the appraisal role.

The same principles shall apply to any employee undertaking appraisal responsibilities under this policy.

3.4 Appraisal Training

The Council considers appropriate training to be essential for anyone undertaking appraisal responsibilities.

No councillor or employee shall undertake a formal employee appraisal unless they have completed appropriate appraisal and performance management training.

This requirement applies to:

- The Town Clerk when undertaking appraisals of Council employees.
- Councillors appointed to undertake the Town Clerk's appraisal.
- Any employee who may be delegated responsibility for undertaking appraisals.

Appraisal training must cover, as a minimum:

- Performance management principles.
- Objective setting and SMART objectives.
- Conducting effective appraisal discussions.
- Providing constructive feedback.
- Identifying training and development needs.
- Equality, diversity and inclusion considerations.
- Confidentiality and data protection requirements.
- Managing sensitive or difficult conversations appropriately.

The Council shall ensure that appraisers receive refresher training where necessary to maintain competence and awareness of current employment practices and legal requirements.

Failure to complete the required training will render an individual ineligible to undertake appraisal responsibilities on behalf of the Council.

4. Performance Management

Performance management should be based upon regular communication between managers and employees throughout the year.

Managers and employees should discuss:

- Progress against objectives.
- Workload and priorities.
- Training and development requirements.
- Support needs.
- Wellbeing and welfare matters.
- Any barriers affecting performance.

Informal discussions should be used wherever possible to address issues at an early stage and should not be regarded as disciplinary action.

5. One-to-One Meetings

The Town Clerk shall hold regular one-to-one meetings with employees throughout the year.

As a minimum, one-to-one meetings shall be held quarterly, although more frequent meetings may be arranged where appropriate.

These meetings may include:

- Review of current workload.
- Progress against objectives.
- Identification of support requirements.
- Training and development discussions.
- Employee wellbeing.
- Future priorities.

Brief notes may be retained where appropriate.

6. Annual Appraisals

6.1 Frequency

Formal appraisals shall be undertaken annually, usually in April.

Additional performance review meetings may be arranged where:

- An employee is within a probationary period.
- Performance concerns have been identified.
- Significant changes have occurred within the employee's role.
- Additional support or monitoring is required.

6.2 Preparation

Prior to the appraisal meeting, employees should be given the opportunity to reflect upon:

- Achievements during the review period.
- Progress against objectives.
- Challenges experienced.
- Training and development undertaken.
- Future development needs.

- Objectives for the forthcoming year.

Managers should review previous appraisal documentation and agreed objectives before the meeting.

6.3 Conduct of the Appraisal

Appraisals shall be conducted in a private and confidential setting and should encourage open, honest and constructive two-way discussion.

The appraisal should include consideration of:

- Performance during the review period.
- Achievement of agreed objectives.
- Quality of work and service delivery.
- Working relationships and conduct.
- Attendance and wellbeing where appropriate.
- Training and development needs.
- Future objectives and priorities.

Objectives should, wherever possible, be **SMART**:

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Time-bound

6.4 Training and Development

Appraisals should identify any learning, development or training needs.

The Council recognises the importance of continuing professional development and will consider reasonable requests for training that support the employee's role and the Council's objectives.

7. Salary Progression

Where an employee's contract provides for salary progression subject to satisfactory performance, the annual appraisal process shall be used to inform decisions regarding incremental progression.

Appraisal outcomes shall be applied fairly and consistently across all employees.

Recommendations regarding salary increments shall be considered initially by the committee responsible for staffing and employment matters and, where required by the Council's scheme of delegation, shall be reported to Full Council for determination.

Any report to Full Council containing information relating to an identifiable employee's performance, remuneration, employment terms and conditions, or appraisal outcomes shall be considered in confidential session in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and any other relevant statutory provisions in force at the time.

8. Appraisal Records

A written record of each appraisal shall be completed and signed by both parties.

The employee shall receive a copy of the completed appraisal.

A copy shall be retained securely on the employee's personnel file.

Agreed objectives shall form the basis of future performance reviews and subsequent appraisals.

9. Confidentiality

All appraisal discussions, records and reports shall be treated as confidential employment information.

Documentation shall be retained and processed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy, Retention Policy and relevant legislation.

Access to appraisal records shall be restricted to those with a legitimate management or governance need to know.

Reports arising from appraisal processes that are presented to committees or Full Council shall be restricted to information necessary for decision-making and shall be considered in confidential session where they contain personal employment information relating to an identifiable employee.

10. Appeals

If an employee disagrees with the content or outcome of an appraisal, they may submit written comments for inclusion on their personnel file.

Any concerns regarding the conduct of the appraisal process should be raised initially with the employee's line manager or, in the case of the Town Clerk, with the Chair of the committee responsible for staffing and employment matters.

Nothing within this policy prevents an employee from using the Council's Grievance Procedure where appropriate.

11. Review of Policy

This policy shall be reviewed by the Council every three years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation, employment practice or organisational requirements.

12. Adoption

This Policy was adopted by Frodsham Town Council on:

Minute Reference:

Review Date:

APPENDIX A – LEGISLATIVE AND GOOD PRACTICE FRAMEWORK

This Policy has been developed having regard to current employment legislation, ACAS guidance, and local government good practice. The Council will apply and interpret this Policy in accordance with the following legislation and guidance, together with any subsequent amendments or replacement legislation.

Employment Legislation

- **Equality Act 2010** – requiring fair and non-discriminatory treatment of employees and the consideration of reasonable adjustments where appropriate.
- **Employment Rights Act 1996** – providing statutory employment protections and rights relevant to performance management and employment relationships.
- **Employment Relations Act 1999** – establishing employee rights relating to representation and workplace relations.
- **Data Protection Act 2018** and the **UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)** – governing the processing, storage, retention and confidentiality of appraisal records and personal data.
- **Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974** – requiring employers to consider employee welfare, wellbeing and workplace health and safety.
- **Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998** – protecting employees who make protected disclosures or raise concerns in the public interest.
- **Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023** – strengthening employees’ rights to request flexible working arrangements.
- **Carer’s Leave Act 2023** – providing eligible employees with a statutory right to unpaid carer’s leave.
- **Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023** – placing a duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace.
- **Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023** (when in force) – providing eligible employees with statutory neonatal care leave and pay entitlements.

Good Practice Guidance

In addition to statutory requirements, the Council has had regard to the following guidance and recognised good practice:

- **ACAS guidance** on performance management, employee development, workplace wellbeing and handling employment matters fairly and consistently.
- **National Association of Local Councils (NALC) – Good Employer’s Guide.**
- **Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)** guidance on employee management, appraisal and professional development.
- Relevant local government employment and governance best practice guidance issued from time to time.

The Council recognises that appraisal processes should support employee development, wellbeing, equality of opportunity, organisational effectiveness and the delivery of high quality public services. This Policy shall therefore be interpreted in accordance with both statutory requirements and recognised good employment practice.

Where there is any conflict between this Policy and employment legislation, the provisions of the legislation shall prevail.