



Godalming
Town Council
APPRAISAL SCHEME

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Part One - General

What is Appraisal?

It has been found that individuals perform best when they can discuss frankly and be clear with their Manager about:

- ◆ How they are performing
- ◆ How their contribution is recognised
- ◆ What they are aiming to achieve
- ◆ What will be done to help them develop

The appraisal interview must be an open two way communication and is designed to:

- ◆ Review how the individual has performed since the last review and why
- ◆ discuss the year ahead and the likely challenges and changes
- ◆ agree specific key tasks and targets for the next 12 months and record these on the appropriate form
- ◆ discuss longer term career aspirations
- ◆ agree a personal training and development plan which reflects the individual's development needs; the Council's needs; and what can be afforded

Six monthly informal reviews will monitor progress and deal with any related problems as they arise.

What is not appropriate for Appraisal Meetings?

Broadly speaking there should be "no surprises" at an appraisal meeting. The overall tone of the meeting should be positive. Any significant concerns that a manager might have about an individual's performance should be dealt with promptly in the normal course of the line management relationship and not saved up for the appraisal meeting. Similarly if an individual has concerns about their line manager then these should be aired promptly and not saved for an appraisal meeting.

What are the objectives of the scheme?

The objectives of the scheme are:

- ◆ To give an opportunity with each individual member of staff to review performance and enhance personal development in accordance with the Council's objectives.
- ◆ To assist with preparing for and responding to change within the organisation.

The emphasis is on better communication, improving job satisfaction and developing performance in accordance with Council initiatives, by providing a better quality of service and developing a learning organisation.

Who Benefits from Appraisal?

Staff

Staff are given the opportunity to review and agree with their line manager:

- ◆ their overall work performance
- ◆ what can be done to enhance their work performance for the future;
- ◆ their key tasks and targets for the year ahead;
- ◆ their development needs and how these can best be met;
- ◆ longer term career plans.

Managers

Managers conducting the appraisals gain the opportunity to:

- ◆ review in detail the performance of individual members of the team
- ◆ understand how individuals perceive their own performance, development needs and career goals
- ◆ uncover areas of confusion or overlap between members of the team
- ◆ understand how their own management style relates to the performance of their staff
- ◆ direct the work of members of the team by agreeing their tasks and targets and how these will be met
- ◆ agree realistic development opportunities with individuals.

The Council

The Council as a whole gains:

- ◆ a more motivated and directed workforce tackling work of genuine priority;

- ◆ a systematic method of identifying the training, development and potential of staff;
- ◆ a vehicle for helping staff to adapt in the event of organisational change.

When are the Appraisals conducted and by Whom?

A principle of the scheme is that individuals should be appraised by their own line manager as this is where the closest communication should exist.

The main appraisal should take place in July with a six month review taking place in January.

What Training will be provided?

A fundamental part of the scheme is to provide adequate training for appraisers and give information to assist appraisees in getting the most from the scheme.

How Confidential is the Appraisal Process?

The discussion which takes place between the appraiser and appraisee is confidential. The jointly agreed form will also be seen by the Chairman of the Staffing Sub-Committee (or by the Town Clerk if the Town Clerk is not the appraiser) to provide consistency and overall fairness.

How will a Failure to Agree be resolved?

The Appraisal Scheme is about the appraiser and appraisee reaching joint agreement.

Where agreement clearly cannot be reached by discussion the matter must be referred to the Chairman of the Staffing Sub-Committee (or the Town Clerk if the Town Clerk is the not the appraiser – where the Town Clerk is the appraisee then reference must be made to the full Staffing Sub-Committee).

Will development needs always be funded?

The demand for training and development opportunities may exceed funding. Because formal training courses may not always be the best way to meet the appraisee's development needs, or they may not always be affordable, it is critical that managers recognise the validity of other types of development opportunity e.g. on the job training.

If more than one formal training course is requested on an appraisee's personal Training and Development Plan, it is important that these are prioritised. There may not be the money available to fund all the requests for additional training. Managers must be realistic in agreements that they reach with appraisee interviews and aim to meet needs of genuine priority first.

Part Two – The appraisal itself

Preparing for an Appraisal

The various steps which both the appraiser and appraisee should take in preparing for the appraisal are as follows:

Appraiser

Read the appraisal guidelines and ensure you fully understand the scheme at least two full weeks before the appraisal.

- ◆ agree a mutually convenient time with the appraisee and allow a time slot of two hours for the appraisal
- ◆ find a venue where there will be no interruptions
- ◆ ask the appraisee to review the appraisal form before the meeting

During the week leading up to the appraisal:

- ◆ refer to any previously agreed tasks and targets
- ◆ refer to appraisee's training records and records of the previous appraisal meeting
- ◆ read current job description and any other relevant information
- ◆ consult other managers/councillors who have had direct contact with appraisee.

On the day of the appraisal:

- ◆ prepare the room and consider the appropriate degree of formality/informality;
- ◆ ensure you are in a relaxed, positive and constructive frame of mind;
- ◆ ensure that colleagues understand that you are not to be interrupted whilst the appraisal is in progress.

Appraisee

Two weeks before the appraisal:

- ◆ ensure that you have received a copy of an appraisal form that you study it and make notes
- ◆ think about the reasons why you will be requesting training or other development requirements.

On the day of the appraisal:

- ◆ ensure that you are in a relaxed, positive and constructive frame of mind.
- ◆ remind yourself of the format of the appraisal and the appropriate stage at which to raise any particular points you consider important.

Conducting the Appraisal

Appraisal is a two way process, both parties have a responsibility for the appraisal having a constructive tone and reaching a positive outcome.

Some useful tips on how to make the appraisal a constructive experience are as follows:

- ◆ the appraiser should invite the appraisee to 'lead off' the discussion based on the format of the form.
- ◆ achievements must be recognised and acknowledged;
- ◆ the appraisee should be invited to explore his/her own weak areas before the appraiser's view is expressed;
- ◆ at all times the discussion must be positive and constructive with the emphasis on issues about which something can be done;
- ◆ tasks and targets must be jointly agreed;
- ◆ realistic objective, training and development plans must be put forward.

At and Following the Appraisal

- ◆ At, or shortly after appraisal, complete the appraisal form (no later than 5 days after the appraisal) and issue it to the employee for comments.
- ◆ Within 10 days of the meeting the form should be signed by all parties and filed.
- ◆ Copy training and development needs to the Town Clerk

Part Three - Interim reviews (six month)

Purpose of Interim Reviews

The interim reviews are not intended to be full appraisal interviews. They are an opportunity for managers and staff to meet to discuss progress, identify achievements and difficulties, and to plan ahead for the rest of the review period. The majority of review meetings should take between 30-45 minutes.

Information

The key pieces of information for the review meeting will be the key tasks and targets agreed for this review period, and the monitoring information that both parties have been keeping to record performance.

Format

The meeting should be kept as simple as possible, with a brief reminder of the purpose of the appraisal process followed by discussion on progress/performance against each of the key tasks and targets. The individual member of staff may also wish to raise specific issues about their performance, these can be discussed at the end of the meeting along with relevant training needs.

Basic Questions

The following basic questions should help to frame discussions with each member of staff:

- ◆ How have you performed against this key task?
- ◆ How do you feel about your results/progress so far in this area?
- ◆ What would you like to do to improve/continue to improve your performance in this area?
- ◆ What help or support do you need from me (your manager) or from other team members to be able to achieve good results in this area?
- ◆ Does the target need to be adjusted in the light of six months experience of working towards it? (if so, what should the new target be?)

The questions are designed to encourage the individual to talk about their performance and progress, as well as listening to feedback on their work.

Performance Problems

If serious problems are being experienced on employees performance it must be recorded at this stage. This should be done both in the review meeting, and in a short memo afterwards, giving details of the problem and summarising discussions with the individual on how to improve.

NB serious performance problems need to be tackled promptly not left to the next appraisal meeting.