



<b>Report to:</b>	Employment and Staffing Committee 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2022
<b>Lead Cabinet Member:</b>	Neil Gough
<b>Lead Officer:</b>	Jeff Mambery

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## **New Performance Development Policy**

### **Executive Summary**

1. The Council currently operates a Performance Management Policy, which was last reviewed in 2017. Following recent changes to our Council structure, working practices, including the increase in home-working and the introduction of a HR system (iTrent), and feedback from staff it is proposed we replace the current policy with a Performance Development Policy, which emphasises development opportunities and long-term career aspirations.
2. The aim of this policy is to increase individuality and flexibility in delivery, making it more accessible and supportive for all staff, and align with our new ways of working.

### **Key Decision**

3. No

### **Recommendations**

4. It is recommended that the committee approve the introduction of the new policy, pending union feedback.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

5. The new policy will better enable us to support the performance development of our staff, by focussing on the positives rather than the negatives. This should improve employee engagement, which in turn may improve talent retention and our ability to plan for long-term staffing by giving us a better understanding of our overall performance and skill-level.

## Details

6. The current policy has been in place since 2013 and includes the requirement for all staff to complete a Performance Development Review form. This consists of an annual initial meeting in April, a review meeting in October, and monthly 1-1 meetings in between. These are recorded on paper-based forms and emailed to HR. Feedback from staff has been that they find the forms and process confusing, and many staff do not complete their annual PDRs meaning HR has no record of some staff's performance. We have also received feedback that some staff struggle to complete all the PDRs in the specified months due to other work-related pressures, or number of staff they manage.
7. The format of the policy is no longer compliant with new accessibility requirements, and colleagues have also commented on the language of the policy being seen as negative, with the connotation that employee's performance needs to be 'managed'.
8. Our proposal is to therefore introduce a new policy, which is easier to read and understand, and incorporates the new flexibility that the Council are keen to offer to staff. This policy also contains an annual performance conversation, which should take place between April and June each year and be recorded on our new HR system (iTrent). This will lessen the pressure on staff to complete them in a short timeframe and make it easier to accommodate within service needs. This will also increase HRs reporting capacity on completed conversations and allow us to identify and chase anyone who has yet to complete.
9. The policy also emphasises the positives associated with performance and encourages managers and employees to discuss learning and development opportunities and how the Council can support these.
10. The policy has also been aligned with the proposed hybrid working policy, to allow staff to hold these conversations in a more flexible and informal way.
11. Due to time pressures the policy has not yet been reviewed by the unions, however as the main changes are to the wording, style and delivery of the policy rather than the process itself we are confident the unions will not object.

## Options

1. The options open to the committee are to:
  - a. Approve the proposed new policy pending union approval – if there are any major changes as a result we would recirculate the policy to the committee with track changes
  - b. Dismiss the new policy pending requested changes

## **Implications**

12. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk, equality and diversity, climate change, and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered:-

### **Legal**

13. The proposed policy has been written in accordance with all legal requirements and best practice. The policy aligns with our probation policy and capability policy, ensuring we can address any performance issues in a legal and ethical manner.

### **Staffing**

14. By increasing the flexibility and making the process slightly less formal, our aim is to better support our colleagues and reduce the pressure that PDRs put on them, both in terms of delivering one and receiving one. This should make the process less stressful, and more productive by improving our ability to develop our workforce.

### **Equality and Diversity**

15. The EqIA for the new policy is still pending, however by increasing the flexible approach to delivering performance development conversations we are better supporting colleagues who may have struggled with the formal aspects of the process and the requirement to complete written forms.

### **Climate Change**

16. We are removing the requirement for a written form to be completed – while most staff had been completing these electronically some were still completing by hand, so this will result in a small reduction of paper use.

### **Health & Wellbeing**

17. The new policy should reduce the stress associated with PDRs and so better support the health and wellbeing of our staff. We are also encouraging managers to incorporate conversations focussing on staff's successes and achievements and what individuals would like to get out of their roles, which we believe will also benefit staff's mental health.

## **Consultation responses**

18. Consultation with unions has not been completed yet, but will be required before the policy can be introduced to staff.

## **Alignment with Council Priority Areas**

### **A modern and caring Council**

19. By increasing our flexibility and focussing on the positives of our staff's performance, we are demonstrating a commitment to modern ways of working and providing our employees with a nurturing working environment, with scope for personal and career development opportunities.

## **Appendices**

Appendix A: FAQs

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