



APPRAISAL OF THE JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVE – POLICY AND PROCEDURE

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) for Chief Executives of Local Authorities is the national negotiating body for the pay and conditions of service of Chief Executives in England and Wales.
- 1.2 Guidance created by the JNC for Chief Executives of Local Authorities is incorporated into this document which is intended for use by elected members responsible for appraising the performance and identifying the development needs of the Joint Chief Executive of Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council.
- 1.3 The focus of this process will be on clarifying what the Joint Chief Executive is expected to achieve and on identifying any continuing developmental needs which, if met, would maintain a high level of performance. The process of setting objectives shall be to identify those which are relevant and challenging but achievable.
- 1.4 According to the JNC the appraisal process should not become complex. At all times it needs to focus clearly on a few basic principles: what the Chief Executive's job is; what has been done well; what could have been done better; the major issues over the next year; and what developmental needs are identified.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies only to the role of Joint Chief Executive of Cherwell District Council and South Northamptonshire Council. All other employees of the two councils are covered by different appraisal arrangements, and separate processes are in place.
- 2.2 It is part of the JNC Conditions of Service for Chief Executives (2008) that all Chief Executives of Local Authorities should have an annual appraisal and that responsibility for such lies with elected members. It is a contractual obligation on the part of the Joint Chief Executive and the Council to engage in a regular process for appraisal. However the process and policy followed for appraisal is deemed to be non contractual.

3. The Purpose of the Performance Appraisal

- 3.1 Performance appraisals usually look forward as well as backwards and provide the opportunity to reflect on the past 12 month's performance. They are equally important in establishing a basis for setting SMART targets and objectives for the future. SMART targets are those which are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time Related. Some achievements

may be less easy to measure and a more subjective means of assessing success may be required.

4. Key Elements of an Effective Appraisal Process

- Preparation for an appraisal interview by appraisers and appraisee.
- An appraisal discussion where recent and current performance, future objectives and development needs are agreed and where achievements are recognised.
- Agreement should be reached on action required by either party to ensure required performance is achievable.
- Documentary evidence of the appraisal and any other supporting evidence throughout the year should be recorded and maintained as agreed by all parties in a confidential way.

5. Responsibility for the Joint Appraisal

- 5.1 The responsibility for appraising the Joint Chief Executive lies with elected members appointed to the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee.
- 5.2 As described in section 2.2. the JNC for Chief Executives requires both the Joint Chief Executive and the employing councils to engage in a regular process of appraisal.
- 5.3 An annual appraisal meeting will be held to provide a structured review of the performance of the Joint Chief Executive and to set relevant and challenging objectives for the year ahead. This will be held as soon as possible after the setting of both Councils priorities for the coming year.
- 5.4 The annual appraisal will be supplemented by a six monthly review meeting, held around October.
- 5.5 In both cases the annual appraisal and the six monthly review meeting will be a two way process, and will be facilitated by an external third party to be agreed by the Joint Chief Executive and Chairman of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee.
- 5.6 The role of the external facilitator is detailed in section 7 of this procedure.
- 5.7 The Joint Personnel Committee will delegate responsibility to a panel of members (drawn from the Joint Personnel Committee) to carry out the Joint Chief Executive's appraisal on behalf of both Councils to be known as the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee.

6. Joint Appraisal Sub Committee

- 6.1 The appraisal will acknowledge that the Joint Chief Executive is responsible to all Members of both Councils; hence the composition of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee will reflect this. The Joint Appraisal Sub Committee will consist of the following Members:

- Four Members (including the Leader) from South Northamptonshire Council who are members of the Joint Personnel Committee
 - Four Members (including the Leader) from Cherwell District Council who are members of the Joint Personnel Committee
- 6.2 All members of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee are required to have been trained in conducting appraisals prior to any involvement in the formal Joint Appraisal Sub Committee meetings.
- 6.3 The members of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee will be supported by an External Facilitator (in an advisory role). S/he will attend the meetings.
- 6.4 A Chairman for the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee will be appointed by the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee at its first meeting. The Chairman should not be the Leader of either Council so that they can fully participate in the appraisal process.
- 6.5 Once agreed the Chairman will be required to ensure that the appraisal process is undertaken in accordance with the agreed policy and for agreeing and confirming the date of the annual appraisal and 6 monthly review with the Joint Chief Executive. Once dates have been agreed, the Chairman will notify the Head of Transformation and the Democratic and Elections Manager. The Chairman will be supported by the external facilitator in relation to all other preparatory work for the appraisal.
- 6.6 The Chairman of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee may require support and assistance from the Head of Transformation regarding the appraisal process of the Joint Chief Executive.
- 6.6 The Democratic and Elections Manager (or his/her nominated Committee Clerk) will attend the opening and closing of any Joint Appraisal Sub Committee meeting but will not participate or attend any further part of the meeting.

7. The Role of the External Facilitator

- 7.1 The external facilitator will be appointed in line with appropriate procurement rules and in agreement with the Joint Chief Executive and the Leaders of each Council (generally this will be on a four yearly basis to provide continuity consistency and confidence). The contract will include a review and break clause for the two Councils and Joint Chief Executive.
- 7.2 The external facilitator will support the appraisal process for the Joint Chief Executive in line with the requirements of this policy. The appointed facilitator will facilitate and attend any preparatory meetings with the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee prior to each formal appraisal meeting and where required will undertake training for the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee on the process to follow.
- 7.3 The external facilitator will also meet with the Joint Chief Executive prior to each appraisal meeting to identify her/his individual expectations of the

appraisal process and to agree how documentation will be provided to the facilitator and the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee.

7.4 Documentation will include:

- 360° degree feedback on the Joint Chief Executive's performance in written form
- A written report for each formal Joint Appraisal Sub Committee meeting along with any supporting evidence
- The appraisal form (Appendix 1).

7.5 The external facilitator will be required to ensure all documentation is prepared prior to the meeting of the Appraisal Sub Committee, and to ensure submission to the Chairman of the Sub Committee or Head of Transformation for inclusion at the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee meeting.

7.6 The external facilitator will attend all meetings held by the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee as well as any agreed pre meetings. This will ensure the process is adhered to and will take notes as a record of the discussion and actions.

7.7 The external facilitator will also write a final report following the two formal Appraisal Sub Committee meetings. These will be issued to each member of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee and the Joint Chief Executive to outline what has been agreed. This report will form an exempt annex to the minutes.

7.8. The external facilitator will support the process to ensure discussions are properly conducted and that they also reflect the priorities and business direction of both councils, and assist in setting SMART targets that are relevant and challenging for the Joint Chief Executive.

7.9 The external facilitator is responsible for ensuring that copies of any appraisal documentation are provided to the Head of Transformation for inclusion on the Joint Chief Executive's personal file. A further copy will be held confidentially by the Democratic and Elections Manager with the minutes of the meeting.

8. **Preparation for Year End Appraisal (February/March)**

8.1 **360° Degree Feedback**

8.1.1 The external facilitator will take responsibility for ensuring 360° degree performance appraisal feedback is obtained in relation to the Joint Chief Executive, to obtain a rounded perspective of her/his performance over the past year.

8.1.2 It is proposed that there should be no more than ten respondents. The actual makeup and number of respondents will be selected by the external facilitator in consultation with the Chief Executive and the two Leaders. 360° feedback must include the Leaders of the Opposition Groups of both Councils', a selection of Directors/Heads of Service, other nominated staff and external partners. Exact numbers may vary from year to year and will be agreed in consultation with the Joint Chief Executive, Leaders of the Councils and the external facilitator. The makeup of the respondents should vary from year to year where possible.

8.1.3 The external facilitator will feed back the outcome of the 360° degree process to the Joint Chief Executive in person using a brief summary of the main points from the total of the original feedback ahead of the appraisal meeting with the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee. The Joint Chief Executive will then be allowed to respond to the feedback in advance of the appraisal meeting.

8.1.4 The external facilitator will share the Joint Chief Executives' report about the 360° degree feedback with the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee ahead of the formal appraisal meeting. Both the summary report and the Joint Chief Executive's feedback will be used as input into the main end of year appraisal meeting.

8.2 **Joint Chief Executive's Input**

8.2.1 The Joint Chief Executive will prepare a written report in two parts for the end of year appraisal in February/March.

8.2.2 **Part 1**

8.2.3 Part one of the Joint Chief Executive's report will outline her/his achievements against targets as agreed with the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee. It will also identify any issues or learning that has been experienced by the Joint Chief Executive.

8.2.4 **Part 2**

8.2.5 Part two of the report will outline suggestions for her/his proposed targets, how these might be achieved, resource implications and how these might be measured for the coming year. It will also detail any self identified development needs.

8.2.6 The attached Appraisal Form (at Appendix 1) will be used as a record of what targets and outcomes have been agreed, what has to be achieved and how. All reports along with the appraisal form will be submitted to the Democratic and Elections Manager at least 10 working days in advance of the February/March Joint Appraisal Sub Committee meeting (or an agreed date suitable with both parties).

8.2.7 The contents of these outline reports, along with the 360° appraisal feedback summary report will be issued to the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee to assist the discussions between Committee members at a pre meeting to form a shared view of the major challenges facing the Councils and, subsequently, to translate these into personal objectives for the Joint Chief Executive.

8.2.8 The Joint Chief Executive will have the opportunity to discuss his/her submission with the external facilitator prior to the appraisal meeting.

8.2.9 The Joint Appraisal Sub Committee will similarly have the opportunity to discuss the process of performance management with the external facilitator ahead of the appraisal meeting, in order to make the meeting as meaningful as possible.

9. **The Joint Appraisal Meeting**

9.1 The following advice represents best practice for formal appraisal meetings:

- The process should be two-way.

The parties should concentrate as far as possible on established facts rather than unsubstantiated opinions.

- **SMART** targets should be agreed.

S Specific: clear and unambiguous, 'What needs to be achieved?'

M Measurable: state how success will be measured quantitative and qualitative.

A Achievable: is it actually achievable, identifying any potential constraints or problems

R Relevant: to the role and the service plan and organisational priorities

T Time-bound: realistic time when the objective should be complete or milestones.

- Any agreed development plans should be implemented within the agreed timescale.
- The Joint Chief Executive should be given a reasonable opportunity to correct any shortfalls in performance.
- A date for the next review should be agreed.

9.2 The annual appraisal meeting held in February or March shall have the following key items of business:

9.3 **360° Feedback on Joint Chief Executive Performance**

The external facilitator responsible for the 360° degree process will provide feedback to the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee on the outcomes of this, and in particular will consider and discuss issues revealed by the 360° degree feedback.

9.4. **Report of the Joint Chief Executive**

9.4.1 A report by the Joint Chief Executive of the achievements, or otherwise, of their major objectives for the period under review as well as their understanding of the objectives which need to be achieved in the next performance period.

9.4.2 The report should concentrate on outputs and outcomes against the agreed personal targets of the Joint Chief Executive and should include discussions on successes, and consideration of lessons learned for the previous year. For the future year this should include a short list, concentrating on the "big picture" of what needs to be achieved. The personal actions and targets for the Joint Chief Executive in this context should be listed, for consideration by the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee.

9.5 **Feedback to the Joint Chief Executive**

9.5.1 An opportunity for the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee to provide feedback to the Joint Chief Executive and on any related issues, as well as any successes identified requiring further action and attention.

9.5.2 Agreement/amendment/addition of objectives and personal targets for the Joint Chief Executive by the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee, and by the Chief Executive.

9.6 **Identification of Training/Development Needs**

9.6.1 An opportunity to discuss and agree any training/development needs the Joint Chief Executive may have.

10. **After the Appraisal Meeting**

10.1 Immediately following the annual appraisal meeting a confidential document stating the outcomes of the meeting will be produced by the external facilitator, and will be shared with the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee and the Joint Chief Executive. These papers will be held by the Head of Transformation on the Joint Chief Executive's personal file. A copy will also be held by the Democratic and Elections Manager and filed with the minutes.

10.2 The Joint Chief Executive will also prepare an action plan outlining how each objective will be achieved for the following year, including timescales, dependencies and key milestones. The Appraisal Form at Appendix 1 should be used for this task. This will be circulated to members of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee and amendments forwarded to the Chairman to coordinate a final agreed plan. Once agreed, this will be formally issued to the Joint Chief Executive. The document must then be agreed and signed by the Chairman and the Joint Chief Executive within 15 working days of the appraisal meeting.

10.3 The priorities set for the Joint Chief Executive will be used to cascade to other members of the JMT as appropriate during their appraisals, who in turn will set priorities for their line managers, allowing the process to cascade throughout the whole of both councils at appraisal time.

11. **Review Meeting – October**

11.1 Although formal appraisals are normally an annual event, it is usual to review progress against key targets during the year; a six month review being the most commonly used practice.

11.2 The Joint Appraisal Sub Committee will meet with the Joint Chief Executive to discuss progress against specific targets, which might cover any issues arising either politically or in terms of either council which were already, or might, have the potential to affect both the scope or achievement of the objectives as originally set. This review meeting will again be supported by the external facilitator.

11.3 There may also be a series of informal meetings between the Councils' Leaders and the Joint Chief Executive to review progress and provide direction on a quarterly basis, or more regularly if necessary.

12. **Confidentiality**

12.1 The content of appraisal meetings and any supporting documentary evidence will at all times be treated as confidential to the participants and those required to provide support to the appraisal process.

12.2 The two Council's will ensure that access to all paperwork associated with the Joint Chief Executive's appraisal will normally be restricted to the following:

- Members' of the Joint Appraisal Sub Committee
- The external facilitator
- The Head of Transformation
- The Democratic and Elections Manager (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Learning and Development Manager (in relation to training needs only)

13. **Appeal Process**

13.1 Should the Joint Chief Executive wish to appeal any elements of the appraisal process this should be done in writing to the Democratic and Elections Manager outlining the reasons for the appeal and any remedy requested. Appeals should be made within 28 days within the date of issue of the appraisal report. The appeal will be heard by the Joint Appeals Committee.