

Performance Appraisal Procedure for the Chief Executive of Thurrock Council

Introduction

This procedure seeks to ensure that the Chief Executive's performance is formally reviewed on a regular basis. It complies with the principles set out in the Joint Negotiating Committee (NJC) for Local Authority Chief Executives (national salary framework & conditions of service) handbook.

The purposes of the appraisal process are to (i) help maximise the chief executive's job performance; and (ii) determine the performance-related element of the post holder's salary.

Responsibilities for Appraisal

Under Thurrock Council's constitution (Chapter 5, Part 5) the General Services Committee is responsible for the following:

3. To deal with any of the functions of the Council in relation to the employment of staff that are not dealt with by officers under delegated powers ... including powers to ...
 - 3.3 appoint any sub-committee or panel or other body to exercise the committee's powers in relation to staff grading, disciplinary, grievance or any other staffing matter;
 - 3.4 determine any other staffing matter that is within the remit of the Council.

The Chief Executive's terms and conditions of employment include the following:

16. PROBATION

The Chief Executive will be subject (as all employees are) to 6 months' probation where there is an external appointment.

17. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Chief Executive is required to actively participate in the prevailing Performance Management Scheme as approved by the Leader of the Council.

19. SELF DEVELOPMENT

The Chief Executive is required to participate in self-development or team development activities as required by the Leader of the Council.

Probation

An externally appointed Chief Executive's probation period will run for six months from their first day of employment with Thurrock Council.

The Chief Executive's objectives and developmental needs for the first five months of their employment will be agreed with the Leader of the Council at the earliest opportunity and recorded using the form at Appendix 1.

During this time, both parties should ensure that all reasonable support and development is sought, offered and accepted so that the probationary objectives will be achieved.

After five months' employment, the Leader should recommend to GSC whether to:

1. Confirm the Chief Executive's appointment
2. Extend their probationary period
3. Terminate their employment

Advice should be taken from the Director of HR, OD and Transformation and Head of Legal and Democratic Services if members wish to pursue options 2 or 3.

The Chief Executive shall then be given written notification of GSC's decision.

Appraisal Process

General Service Committee or a sub-committee appointed by the General Services Committee (GSC) will undertake formal appraisals of the Chief Executive. If a sub-committee is appointed they will report their recommendations to GSC for approval. The Director of HR, OD and Transformation will provide administrative support and advice, and the Head of Legal Services will also advise as appropriate. The sub-committee, GSC and Chief Executive should aim to reach mutual agreement to each appraisal. If this is not possible, the Chief Executive has the right of appeal.

The appraisal process contains the following three tasks:

i. Set objectives

As part of his/her role profile, the Chief Executive has agreed to exercise leadership in the successful execution of the following objectives:

1. Ensure the effective delivery of the corporate plan and other strategic objectives of the Council.
2. Ensure that the Council's overall planning and budgetary processes are delivered into management action.
3. Ensure service delivery standards and objectives are clearly defined and measured.

4. Ensure that effective financial and human resource strategies are maintained which support the Council's corporate strategy and allow legislative and other demands to be met.
5. Ensure effective internal and external communication to ensure all staff work towards the aims, objectives and values of the Council and to promote awareness within the community of Council services and achievements.
6. Maintain and build upon good relationships between political and managerial processes.
7. Ensure effective implementation of Council policies through the direct management of chief officers and other staff, as appropriate.
8. Ensure that the Council continuously improves services and exceeds the expectations of residents, customers and stakeholders.

Objectives set as part of this process should help to achieve one or more of the above. They should, as far as possible, be specific, measurable, time bound and challenging but achievable.

ii. Review performance

Targets which have been met and other positive achievements should be recognised. The factors contributing towards good performance should be identified so that due recognition can be given and they can be taken forward for future use.

Unmet targets and any other negative aspects of performance should be discussed so that the contributory factors can be addressed.

iii. Identify developmental requirements

Both parties should identify the professional development necessary to equip the Chief Executive with the requisite skills to meet his/her objectives both now and in the future.

The Appraisal Cycle

The Director of HR, OD and Transformation will oversee the administration of the appraisal cycle.

The sub-committee will undertake an appraisal interview with the Chief Executive every September and March. Before each interview the Chief Executive will be asked to complete a draft appraisal form (see Appendix 1) in which he/she:

- assesses his/her own performance over the previous six months
- proposes objectives for the next six months
- proposes any personal development needs
- provides any additional comments

The form will then be sent to members of the committee/sub-committee in advance of the meeting. Each member should consider the Chief Executive's views carefully and decide, in advance of the appraisal interview, whether they agree with them or whether they wish to add, delete change any of them.

To supplement this process, four members of the leadership group, including a direct report, will be asked to complete an assessment of the Chief Executive's performance (a different four officers should be chosen for each six month appraisal). The information they provide will be given to the Chief Executive and sub-committee members in advance of the interview. The identity of the four officers shall not be disclosed.

Before the appraisal interview, members should meet and aim to form collective views before meeting with the Chief Executive.

At the interview, the chair of the committee/sub-committee should lead a discussion based on the written submission and aim to reach agreement between the members and Chief Executive about how the final, written form should be worded, what rating should be attached to each performance category and what overall rating should be awarded. A date for the next bi-annual appraisal should be agreed before the meeting ends.

After the interview, the committee/sub-committee should, if still necessary, agree on the appraisal's wording and ratings.

A copy of the completed form should be issued to the Chief Executive as soon as possible after the appraisal interview.

A meeting of GSC, at which the Chief Executive will be invited to attend, should then be convened at the earliest opportunity. Where appropriate, the sub-committee's recommendations should be put forward for GSC's approval. GSC may seek further clarification before deciding whether to ratify the recommendations. GSC has the right to change part or all of the appraisal and ratings. The overall performance score in March's appraisal will determine the Chief Executive's pay point for the following financial year.

Appeal

If the Chief Executive disagrees with their appraisal they may appeal against it. They should submit detailed, written grounds for their appeal to the Head of Legal Services, who will arrange an appeal hearing. At the hearing, three elected members, who have had no previous involvement in the process, will consider the written appeal and any oral submission that the Chief Executive wishes to make. A member of GSC may attend and respond to the appeal.

The appeal panel's decision will be final.

