



Northumberland County Council

Staff and Appointments Committee

30 August 2023

Executive Director Performance Appraisal

Report of the Director of Workforce and OD

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to agree an appraisal process for Executive Directors of the Council in line with the guidance laid out within the JNC Chief Officer Handbook (Appendix 2).
- 1.2 The report offers a defined process for appraisal (Appendix 1) for the Committee to consider and agree.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Agree the appraisal process defined in the attached appendix 1.
- 2.2 Agree that Executive Directors' appraisals be conducted by their line manager, the Chief Executive.

3. Links to the Corporate Plan

- 3.1 This report is relevant to all areas of the Corporate Plan as it relates to ensuring that the Council has a robust mechanism for measuring the performance of the council's most senior officers and ensuring corporate objectives are met.
- 3.2 This report ensures that the Council is managed and governed in line with legislation and the structure of accountability is clearly stated and is set out in a transparent way.

4. Background

4.1 A report was shared with this committee on 20 September 2022 outlining suggestions of how to approach an appraisal process for the Chief Executive and Executive Directors. The approach for appraisal of the Chief Executive was subsequently agreed at a meeting of this committee on 20 February 2023.

4.2 At the meeting on 20 September 2022, this committee agreed to a set of underpinning principles of approach and this report seeks to conclusively define a process for appraisal for Executive Directors that is fit for purpose and takes account of JNC Chief Officer guidance.

4.3 Below is the relevant section of the JNC Handbook for Chief Officers. Section 8 states:

8.1 Chief officers' responsibilities and accountabilities should be set out in writing at the appointment stage. Where this has not been done at the appointment stage it should be agreed with the individual officer concerned prior to the implementation of the performance appraisal scheme. Subsequently, there should be an annual process of performance appraisal linked to those responsibilities and accountabilities.

8.2 The performance appraisal process is separate from any scheme relating to either pay or performance related pay.

8.3 The performance appraisal process should involve the setting of both general and specific objectives for the year ahead and the review of performance in achieving previously set objectives. The focus of the process should be on clarifying what the chief officer will be expected to achieve and on identifying any continuing personal development needs to maintain a high level of performance.

8.4 The authority will provide training for all parties involved in the process, including elected members if involved.

8.5 The setting of objectives should be by consensus between the chief officer and his/her line manager, and/or the chief executive, and if desired an appropriate elected member. The result of the performance appraisal process will be to identify agreed objectives that are relevant and challenging but achievable and realistic in the light of available resources and time. (Joint Secretaries guidance on appraisal of chief officers is set out in full at Annex 1)"

4.4 In early 2023 the Council made offers of employment to the following Executive Director roles:

- Executive Director of Place and Regeneration
- Executive Director Children, Young People and Education
- Executive Director of Adults, Ageing and Wellbeing
- Executive Director of Transformation and Resources (s151)
- Executive Director of Public Health, Inequalities, and Stronger Communities

4.5 In accordance with JNC Chief Officer Guidance section 2.1 (see below), and to ensure an appraisal cycle has been promptly established, the Chief Executive has commenced objective setting for Executive Directors, and, where applicable, undertaken probationary review meetings.

4.6 Below is the relevant section of the JNC Handbook for Chief Officers. Section 2.1 states:

2.1 The responsibility for appraising a chief officer lies primarily with their line manager and/or chief executive. It is a contractual obligation on the part of both the chief officer and the employing local authority to engage in a regular process of appraisal.

5. Issues for Consideration

5.1 The proposed appraisal process appears at Appendix 1. In summary, the process includes the following elements and principles:

- 5.1.1 The Chief Executive will be responsible for conducting the Executive Director's appraisal.
- 5.1.2 The appraisal will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality and promote mutual trust and confidence.
- 5.1.3 Performance objectives will be drafted and agreed between the Chief Executive and the Executive Director and, as is the case for all employees, will be derived from the corporate plan.
- 5.1.4 Assessment of the achievement of objectives will be thorough and evidenced.
- 5.1.5 Regular performance conversations will take place between the Chief Executive and the Executive Director and outcomes agreed between all parties.
- 5.1.6 A formal review meeting will take place at 6 months and a full annual appraisal at 1 year.

Implications

Policy	Oversight of HR Policies and Procedure
Finance and value for money	
Legal	The legal implications are as set out in the body of the report
Procurement	N/A
Human Resources	Implications have been considered and the proposed recommendations are consistent with best practice and employment law.
Property	N/A
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The recommendations are fair and do not present barriers to participation or disadvantage any protected groups from participation
Risk Assessment	Consistent with Independent Corporate Governance Review (Caller Report)
Crime & Disorder	N/A
Customer Consideration	N/A
Carbon reduction	N/A

Health and Wellbeing	The recommendations will support the personal development of Executive Directors and their wellbeing.
Wards	The recommendations are not related to any particular ward but cover the whole of Northumberland.

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and Members have agreed the content of the report:

Role	Full Name of Officer
Director of Law and Corporate Governance (Monitoring Officer)	Stephen Gerrard
Executive Director of Finance (S151 Officer)	Jan Willis
Chief Executive	Helen Paterson

Appendices

Appendix 1 – JNC Guidance

Appendix 2 – Proposed appraisal process

Background information

N/A

Linked reports

20 September 2022 - Staff and Appointments Committee report 'Appraisal Process for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers'

20 February 2023 - Staff and Appointments Committee report 'Chief Executive Performance Appraisal'

Authors and Contact Details

This report has been prepared by the Director of Workforce & OD

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