

HR Committee - 11th September 2025

Growth & Goals Conversations (to replace performance reviews)

Purpose	For review and approval
Classification	Public
Executive Summary	An aim from the people strategy was to reconsider our Performance Review process. A thorough discovery phase has been undertaken, and a new simple modern process and form is proposed, replacing 1:1's and annual performance reviews which focusses on a two-way discussion which is dynamic and forward looking.
Recommendation(s)	To approve the new process and form.
Reasons for recommendation(s)	To ensure that we are having fit for purpose two-way conversations
Ward(s)	All
Portfolio Holder(s)	Councillor Jill Cleary - Leader Councillor Jeremy Heron – Finance and Corporate
Strategic Director(s)	Alan Bethune – Strategic Director for Corporate Resource and Transformation
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Introduction

1. This report is brought to propose a new way of carrying out performance reviews and 1:1 meetings.

Background

2. Historically our performance management process has been to carry out annual performance reviews with regular 1:1 meetings throughout the year.
3. As part of the People Strategy action plan, reviewing this process is a key priority to help embed our evolving culture. It is also very

important with LGR on the horizon and the need to be able to react the VUCA times we find ourselves in

Discovery

4. Thorough background research was carried out. This included focus groups with Leadership Team, Management Development Groups and Operational leaders to establish views on what we should stop, start, and change regarding performance management moving forwards. Best practice from other organisations, networks, and other local councils has been taken into consideration, and EMT have input their views in to this phase.
5. The main feedback is very similar from all parties:

Historical	Future
Backward looking	Can reflect but future focus
Once a year	Regular intervals
'Tick box'	Meaningful 2-way conversation
Judgement	Development/growth
6. A simple modern, forward-thinking conversation-based approach reflect a more developmental, collaborative, and human-centred way forward, aligned to dynamic changing goals.
7. The benefits of this approach are that it:
 - enables continuous improvement & engagement
 - Allows timely two-way discussions and pro-active course correction, recognition of achievements in the moment
 - Enables employees empowered to find their own solutions
 - Makes feedback a normal part of work, focussing on what's important right now
 - Reduces anxiety and wasted effort, increases impact/efficiency
 - Enables employees to feel engaged, valued and supported at the time it is needed focussing on what really matters for growth and success
 - Removes a clunky processes which detracts from the conversation
 - Ensures agreed alignment to dynamic changing goals/metrics
 - Means that managers and employees feel equipped and prepared for discussions with the right tools and support to have positive and motivating conversations
 - Ensures we have a format that should be easier to merge following LGR

Design Proposal

8. The proposal is to move away from an annual performance review supported by 1:1 conversations, to a simple **Growth & Goals conversation** (title voted on at Leadership team) which happen on a regular basis, at least three times a year, but commonly between monthly and two monthly as required to meet the needs of different team set ups.

The nature of our Waste Operational crews means that at least one Growth and Goals discussion will take place annually using a paper form with the same content - where further discussions take place with waste colleagues, further paper Growth & Goals forms will be completed.

9. The procedure for Growth & Goals conversations is given in the link in the Appendix. This includes: why have these conversations, frequency and detail of conversations, preparing for the conversation, recording the conversation, privacy and GDPR, questions and queries, and review of procedure.
10. The focus is very much on the meaningful two-way conversation, and the form just supports this with a way to simply document it. There are four main sections to the form, with free space to document whatever is discussed in a particular meeting. These are
 - Health Wellbeing and Personal Resilience
 - Performance and Results
 - Behaviour Commitments
 - Growth and Development

Additionally, there is an 'any other comments' box, and the ability to upload any specific document referenced in the discussion.

11. An essential aspect to this significant change is providing appropriate simple to follow tools, training and support. Tools similar to the employee and manager behaviours toolkits will be developed for each of the main sections. Mandatory training will then be provided for all those who manage employees during Autumn to ensure they understand the process, the benefits of this approach, and how to use the tools for different aspects of the meeting. The training will be recorded for new managers, and will form part of our wider 'Day to Day performance management' HR brief bite session.

Corporate plan priorities

12. This is part of the People Strategy action plan and ensures we are in the best place to achieve our corporate plan and that employees are in the best place for LGR.

Options appraisal

13. Options were explored on a best approach to these conversations, and this is detailed in the 'Discovery phase' of this report.

Consultation undertaken

14. As part of the 'Discover phase' detailed in the report, relevant stakeholders have been included in focus groups to establish the way forward.

15. The report has also been to ESLP who supported this approach.

Financial and resource implications

16. There will be a cost to the mandatory training requirements, which can be met from the People Strategy budget.

Legal implications

17. There are no legal implications of this proposal.

Risk assessment

18. A risk assessment is not required for this report.

Environmental / Climate and nature implications

19. There are no environmental / climate and nature implications arising from this report.

Equalities implications

20. This simple open two-way conversation approach ensures a more fair and equitable process for meaningful discussions, supported by mandatory training and supplemented with simple toolkits to ensure all managers have the appropriate skills to undertake these conversations effectively.

Crime and disorder implications

21. There are no implications from this report.

Data protection / Information governance / ICT implications

22. The data protection implications have been considered and checked by ICT. HR will have access to the List behind the forms, and completed forms will be saved to employee SharePoint files which already have appropriate governance. ICT implications have been considered and mitigated against.

Appendices:

Growth & Goals Conversations -
Procedure.docx