Management Report on Performance Appraisal/Management in First Tier councils.

This report is made up of the original introduction (Chapter One) and then Chapter Five to Seven from the recent dissertation carried out by a clerk/councillor. Chapter Five covers the data analysis and discussion, which will be of more practical use to the sector than several academic chapters on reaching what is shown in Chapter Five. Chapter Five is the key chapter then followed by Chapter Six and Seven with some supporting documents.

The work is being shared with organisations who supported the research being undertaken earlier in the year. It will identify how widespread or limited the use of performance appraisal (PA) is in community, parish, and towns councils; the first tier of local government (sector) in in England and Wales. It will establish the type of PA preferred in the sector and the views held by staff and councillors on PA.

A parish, community, town or even city council is a corporate body with perpetual succession. These councils are the nearest tier of government to serving people and providing everyday services. Councils are comprised of councillors (voluntary), who annually select a chairman to run meetings and be a figure head for the council. There are more than 75,000 councillors operating in England and Wales. The daily management and operational activity are left to a clerk, a paid member of staff.

There is evidence to suggest that the relationship between the unpaid and regularly changing councillors and the professional established paid staff member can sometimes lead to conflict and a host of employment issues. This dissertation seeks to establish to what extent PA is used in the sector; the impact it has in regard to build organisation success.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This dissertation will examine performance appraisal (PA) within the first-tier councils in England and Wales. The tier is made up of mainly small councils. The council have councillors who are often elected to office.

Councillors are not required to hold any professional qualifications or even know how their council business is carried out; but still have the management responsibility of getting the best performance from their staff; even a staff of one. The clerk's position is filled by the only employee role; often part-time with some clerks working for several small councils. Thatcher (2021) believes clerks should be "advised to hold at least the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) a level two qualification or work towards it; within 12 months of starting employment". However, this is not currently the case: no qualification is mandatory.

Elected councillors hold authority/power over paid staff. One employee (clerk) may have a corporate body made up of 12 councillors. Several high-profile cases such as Ledbury Case 2018 showed employment/communications issues. According to Moore (2018) the Ledbury case show councils themselves cannot impose sanctions against its own councillors' behaviour. Also, that the behaviour of councillors in the sector can impact on levels of trust and effect performance levels of staff.

1.2 Research Problem

The dissertation will explore the attitude of staff (mainly clerks) and councillors who have responsibility for performance management, issues which can lead to poor performance.
The clerk's role in a council is key: the role comes under the greatest pressure from the public and councillors. In performance terms the clerk can act as an appraisee, and appraiser and their view of PA will offer an insight into PA in councils. The loss of the postholder at short notice can cause councils major operational issues in the short and long term, with the vacuum left. Often in smaller councils the clerk is the sole employee, reflected in 40% of all councils according to Society of Local Council (SLCC) Clerks Membership Survey 2021. One clerk can be appraised by five

different councillors, the SLCC noted in one SLCC forum comment posted in 2021. Councillors are elected every four years or when a vacated position arises. Many elections can be uncontested when few people stand to be councillors. Therefore, finding suitable candidates to be an unpaid councillor is challenging.

Councils generally operate successfully; however, a SLCC Membership Survey in 2018 and another in 2021 found almost identical results regarding organisational culture and behaviours failures. Hoey (2021, p.46) highlighted "clerks experience behavioural issues within 15% of councils and 5% were for all intents and purposes unable to operate because of disruptive behaviour of councillors which in turn lead to poor organisation performance.

1.3 Aim and Objectives.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the use of performance appraisal (PA) within the lowest tier of local government (LG) in order to explore the employment issues that arise within the employee/employer relations structure. The objectives are:

- To analyse the secondary literature on Performance Management (PM) and PA with a focus on first tier councils and public sector.
- To establish the type of PA preferred by councils using a questionnaire.
- To identify what motivates staff to achieve a good performance.
- To establish what examples of good practice, exist and provide informed recommendations to councils.

1.4 Value of Research.

Previous research on PA on first tier LG is very limited and means this dissertation research could contribute new material on a neglected area of study. The research could improve the understanding of both employees and councillors of how PM and PA are managed and communicated. The research could lead to improvements, by identifying what could work better and how to obtain better engagement. The research could give councils ways to achieve better value for money on staffing often one of its most significant budget headings and show how PA and PM can link to and improve the development and delivery of councils' strategic plans.

Limitation of the research

A possible limitation of this dissertation was the research was restricted to councils who were members of NALC/OVW, or their clerks were members of SLCC. However, on balance the respondents' replies should be typical of those in the sector, and thus the actual research findings may be typical of the whole sector attitude towards PA.

Until the actual research findings are in, it is hard to judge the take up of the questionnaire given elections have only happen in May 2021, which mean new councillors are in post, it is hope that the clerks will still be able to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire would establish a baseline of attitude on PA issues in the sector.

A problem with a questionnaire is it leaves limited scope to pursue an interesting response or to interact with an individual (clerks) but it could open up an issue for further research.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the use of PA and explore the attitude of staff and councillors who are currently experiencing performance issues which lead to poor performance the elements of PA. The objectives are:

- To analyse the secondary literature on Performance Management (PM) and PA with a focus on first tier councils and public sector.
- To establish the type of PA is preferred by councils using a questionnaire.
- To identify what motivates staff to achieve a good performance.
- To establish what examples of good practice, exist and provide informed recommendations to councils.

What has emerged from the PA literature, is identifying just one system of PA for the varied size councils would be unrealistic: given the mix of councils and their scales and purpose. The debate on whether PA is in decline or out of step with current work practices is unclear from the literature and the responses to the questionnaire may indicate the LG response to this concept. The range of theories which attempt to explain what motivates performance seem reductionism in stressing employee's motivation being based on financial reward in some theories. The employees who

work in this tier of LG may be motivated by a public service ethos which provides services, and this was examined in the literature review and will be tested with the questionnaire. Van Damme (2021) posed the question "are AP dead, but where is the replacement" This dissertation may later be able to answer these questions in a council setting.

According to Brown et al (2019, p.1). "PM In all its guises, occurs across all organizations whether formally through an official organizational process or informally daily dialogue". Councils like Industry generally may have PA system for various reasons such as to influence staff behaviour or reward high achievers. PA may be used to enhance internal motivation, identify training needs. The PA/M system could provide the mechanisms to merely collect employee information. The PA/M system could advance the strategic goals of the council and improve employment relations. The literature review has help shape questions in the questionnaire such as: can councils motivate the individual with the use of financial or other inducements (job design/flexibility) to improve performance; how they can improve the organisations performance. Which theories and concept are used and suited to this tier of LG?

The research proposed is a single method strategy. It will collect and use quantitative data from a questionnaire its logical use is further explained at Appendix D. A positivism methodology was chosen to investigate PA in councils. It was more realistic to focus on one way to gather primary data rather than many. The questionnaire offers a low-cost method of acquiring a large amount of data. The use of precise measurements to analyse raw data will avoid any chance of subjectivity bias that could arise if interviewing to gain information was used. The Literature Review and Research Findings will show what PA/M the councils are using and why. The research will prove/disapprove many perceptions such as staff fear PA, or public sector staff hold intrinsic values above others. The questionnaire is asking what PA systems councils are using such as the traditional trait system, 360-degree approach, or some other system.

CHAPTER FIVE DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes data analysis and discussion with the theories/findings of the respondent's data and a review of the relevant literature, integrating this data and then presenting the analysis in one chapter.

This chapter achieves the research aim to analyse the use of performance appraisal (PA) within the lowest tier of local government (LG) in order to explore the employment issues that arise within the employee/employer relations structure. This chapter then achieves the first three objectives:

- To analyse the secondary literature on Performance Management (PM) and PA with a focus on first tier councils and public sector.
- To establish the type of PA which is preferred by councils using a questionnaire.
- To identify what motivates staff to achieve a good performance.

This chapter also seeks to establish what examples of good practice exist and provide informed recommendations to councils, this will be achieved fully over this and the last two chapters.

5.2 Questionnaire Results

The data is analysed as per the key themes identified in the Literature Review, relationship between PA and PM, value of PA, types, and fairness of appraisals. The questionnaire was completed by 245 councillors and council staff who submitted data through the online questionnaire. The demographic variables will be explored. The quantitative data will then be analysed with assistance of set descriptions in numerical terms with frequencies and percentages using Microsoft Excel to aid the coding and presentation of the data from Microsoft Forms.

The first five questionnaire responses numbered 1-5 were discounted having been completed by the Pilot Testing Group and the data batch of respondents are therefore numbered 6 -251. A process of data cleansing took place, but this was minor and limited to; individuals asking for their comments not to be used; individuals

not approving anonymised comments; individuals including their name or identifying details in answer to question 24; individuals over stating the number of councils they belong to; individuals answering 'England' or 'retired' as county location.

To simplify the analysis of the questionnaire responses were placed in topic area by the question number which could help identify themes which are shown at Appendix K. The specific questions that detail gender or experience have simple data sets that appear more straightforward to analyse than those questions on broader collective topics, such as those on learning and development, which may be spread across many different responses. The large amount of data collected from this research project has been crossed checked where possible with other known data to confirm it is an accurate reflection of the sector respondents and found to be accurate.

5.2.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics were obtained to show the demographic make-up of the respondents and to judge for any possible influence on the emerging data.
The demographic makeup of respondents was collected in areas of gender, age, role, council experience in years. The size of a council was established by means of referencing its budget and precept demand (defined as the council demand for its share of council tax raised by the larger 2nd Tier council). Another method to differentiate between small and large councils was referring to the data identifying number of employees.

5.2.2 Gender

Of the 245 questionnaire respondents, 74% were female (n=181) 25% were male (n=62) and 1% (n=2) preferred not to disclose. These disproportionate figures were expected due to the nature of the sector. These figures are likely representative of this tier of government and are therefore an accurate reflection of the sector as a whole. A cross check with the SLCC Biennial Membership Survey 2021 showed that in a survey return of 463 members, (78%) were female which was also the same % in the 2019 survey. This shows an expected high rate of female to male ratio in both SLCC returns and this is reflected in this research.

● Male	62
● Female	181
● Other	0
● Prefer not to say	2
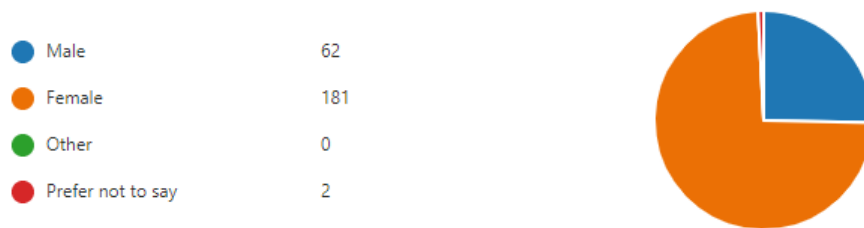
Figure 1 Question 2 Gender

5.2.3 Age

Figure 3 shows the age distribution of respondents. It is observed that the most common age range is 51-60. The data indicates more responses over the age of 50 than below, indeed, there were no respondents below 30 at all to this questionnaire. The next age range 31-40 had only eleven responses. The comparison with SLCC Biennial Membership Survey 2021 shows the most common age range to be 51-60 and just one respondent who was 30 or below. The SLCC survey further showed more respondents were aged between 61-80 than in 41-50 age band. These disproportionate figures were expected due to the nature of the sector and are likely representative of this tier of government and are therefore accurate reflection of the sector and comparable to this research.

● Under 30	0
● 31 - 40	11
● 41 - 50	56
● 51 - 60	96
● 61 - 70	48
● Over 70	31
● Prefer not to say	3
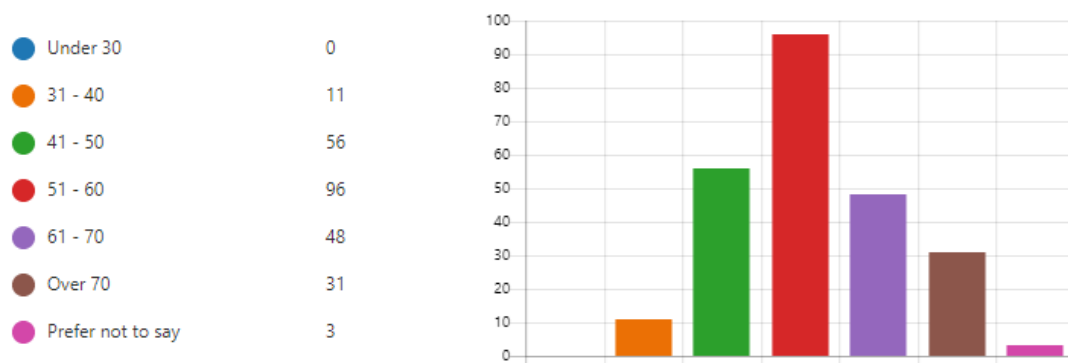
Figure 2 Question 3 Age

5.2.4 Country

The reason for asking geographical location by country is due to the knowledge that councils do have slightly different procedures/titles and the rules for councils in England differ from those in Wales. Councils' membership bodies are also divided. NALC are the lead body in England, while in Wales it's "One Voice Wales". To increase the chances of having comparative data from both England and Wales, it was necessary for the researcher to work with both sector organisations' representatives to promote the questionnaire. The CEO of OVW and the Head of Policy of NALC were both approached and asked to promote the questionnaire to their bodies membership. Both membership bodies have expressed great interest in having the generic findings of this research along with the SLCC, the clerk's professional body. Being able to separate the data by country is very useful to analyse the data for the membership organisations and make recommendations to take forward.

Figure 3 Question 4 Country

5.2.5 County

The opportunity to build in a quality check was taken with question five, to make sure that not all the respondents came from one county, area or region and thus give a distorted data set. The actual spread of counties taking part is very wide and the data comes from across England and Wales, the graph below illustrates this.
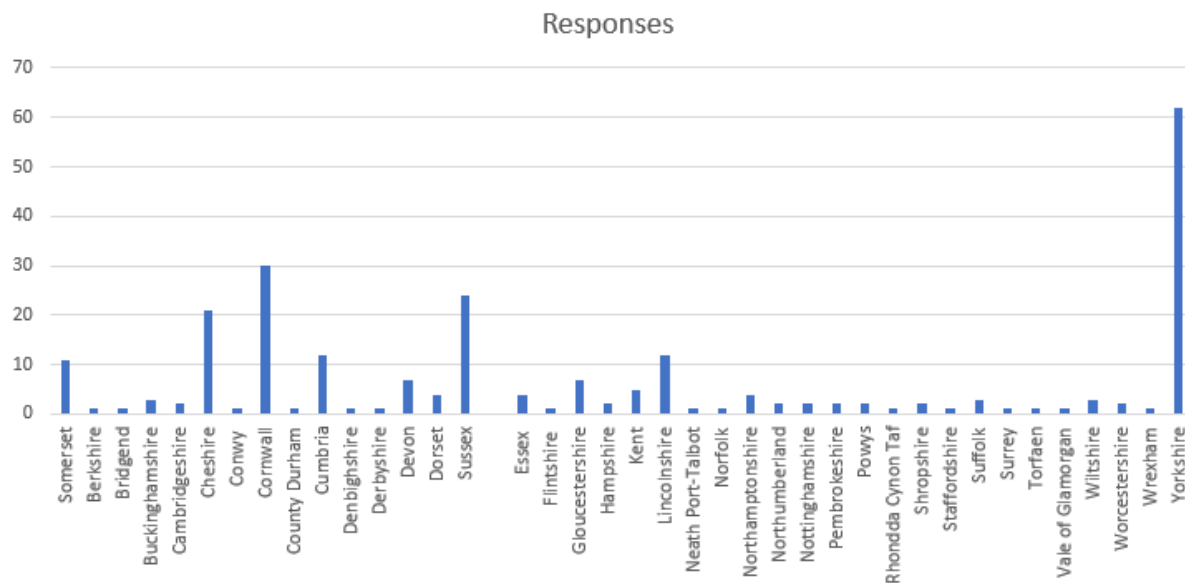
Figure 4 Question 5 County

5.2.6 Role

The spread of roles of respondents within councils is show at figure 7 below. The data indicates that the questionnaire was undertaken by 51 councillors, 182 clerks and 12 other employees of councils. The following data shows that the vast majority of people taking part in the research were part-time dual role (Clerk/RFO) (n=97) which demonstrates that this is the most common paid role found in councils (most likely because a majority of councils are small entities; requiring just one part-time employee to do all paid functions). The term 'job role' was disliked by some councillors in the questionnaire element, so this expression has been avoided and the term 'role' has been adopted in the study.

● Clerk (Full Time)	39
● Clerk (Part Time)	18
● Clerk / RFO (Full Time)	28
● Clerk / RFO (Part Time)	97
● Other (Full Time)	8
● Other (Part Time)	4
● Councillor	51
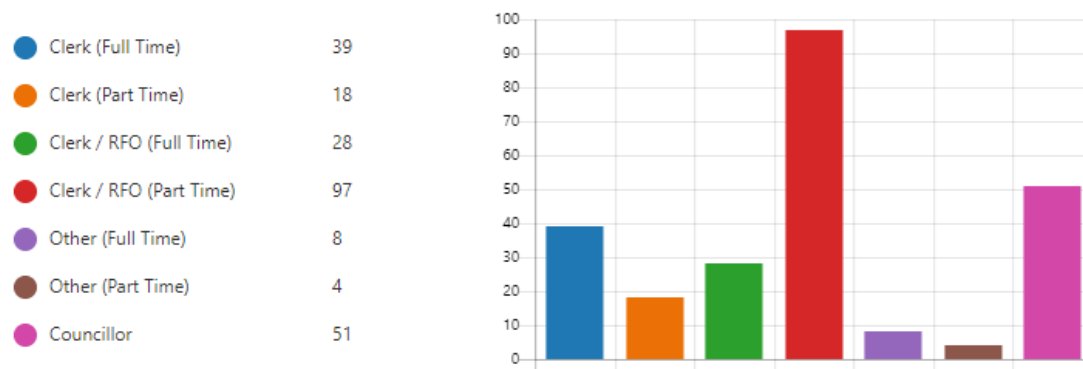
Figure 5 Question 9 Role

5.2.7 Financial size of the Council

To help judge the council size one question referenced the annual budget. The bigger the budget of a council; the greater the likelihood that council would need a larger work force to provide services. This would also indicate more need for a well-developed PM system for successful PA. The responses to the questionnaire were compared in data sets of financial limits shown in Figure 7 below. The councils with budgets less than £50K are likely to have 1 part-time staff member and were the most common. The results showed 42% (n=101) had budgets under £50K, while 9% (n=21) were between £500k-£1m. The data shows that 31% of the councils (n=74) fall into the mid-range size, with a budget of £100-500K. Other data showed that very large councils, 6% (n=14) of respondents, indicated their councils' budget was over £1m.

● Under £50,000	101
● £50,000 - £100,000	29
● £100,000 - £500,000	74
● £500,000 - £1m	21
● Over £1m	14
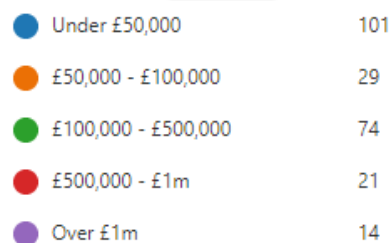
Figure 6 Question 16 Financial size of the Council

The precept question was a further gauge to determine the size of funding needed to run the council, as well as giving an indication of its possible size. The complexity of setting a precept is further determined by councils having other income streams, which may allow it to set lower precepts demands. This was possibly the case with some very large councils setting smaller precepts since they must have had other large income streams, such as venue income or car parking receipts. Having other large income streams would again appear to need more complex levels of employee's involvement, to generate this form of income. Of the 14 councils with £1m budgets only 5 were asking for over £1m in their demand for the precept (share of council tax). However, it was still found that most councils were operating mainly on precept funding. Smaller councils were more likely to request smaller precepts, under £50k, which would suggest they were employing few employees to run the council and limited services. From the data collected, 221 respondents replied with their precepts. The table amounts in ranges is shown at Figure 8**.** The councils in this study applied for £44M precept total. The true variation of council budgets is reflected at Figure 7 and suggests having one standard PA template for all councils to use is not possible given the complex and differing nature of councils. The table below shows the number of councils who made precepts demands in the £ ranges.
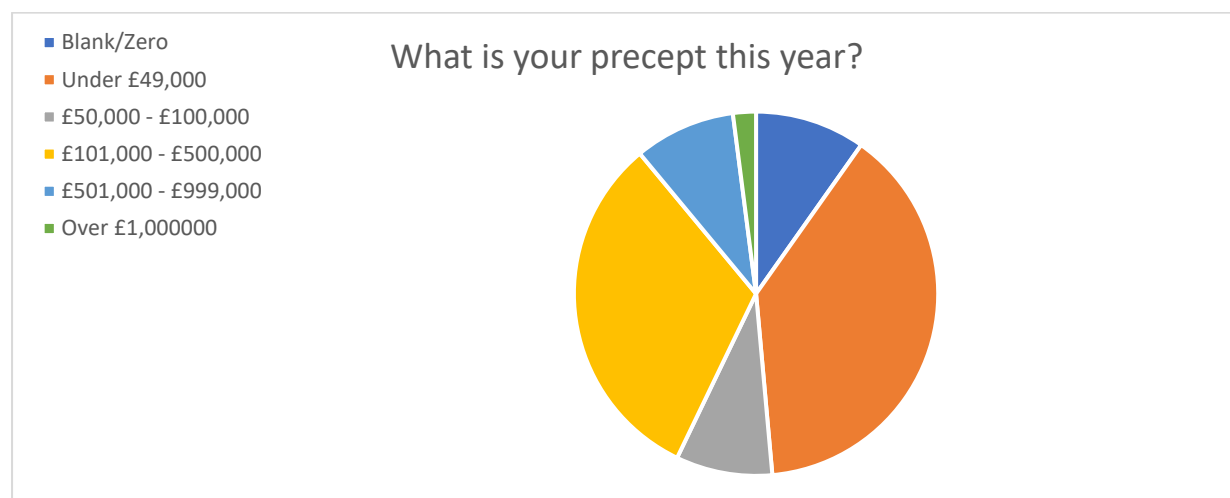
Blank/Zero	24
Under £50,000	95
£50,000 - £100,000	21
£100,000 - £500,000	78
£500,001 - £999,000	22
Over £1,0000.00	5
	245

Figure 7 Question 15 Precept Ranges

5.2.8 Sector specific qualifications held

Thatcher (2021) believes clerks should be "advised to hold at least the Introduction to Local Council Administration (ILCA) a level two (L2) qualification or work towards it; within 12 months of starting employment". However, this is not currently the case: no qualification is mandatory. The responses to Question 6 show that 21% (n=31) held this L2 qualification, the number then increases to 56% (n=83) of those who hold the next Level 3 qualification - which is the level to be recognised as fully qualified status for a clerk. 23% (n=34) have gone on beyond the required level. These percentages are improved when the 51 councillors are disregarded from the data, who are not required to hold any sector qualification. The data does not show when the qualifications were achieved, or the average time taken to gain the awards. In reviewing the data, it shows less than 50% of clerks are at a fully qualified status.

🔵 ILCA Level 2	31
🟠 CILCA Level 3	83
🟢 Above Level 3	34

Figure 8 Question 6 Sector Level Qualifications

5.2.9 The responses to the highest qualification question

The professional which is made up of a high number of career changers, shows that councils have a high number of degree level respondents (n=75) within them, and that 50 respondents held master's degrees. The sector calls to make the profession a graduate level occupation may be surprised to find that the sector may already be heading in this direction, with graduate/post graduate individuals joining councils with these levels of qualifications, as shown below in Figure 10.

● HNC Level 4	26
● HND Level 5	18
● Degree Level 6	75
● Masters Level 7	50
● Doctorate Level 8	6
● Other	34
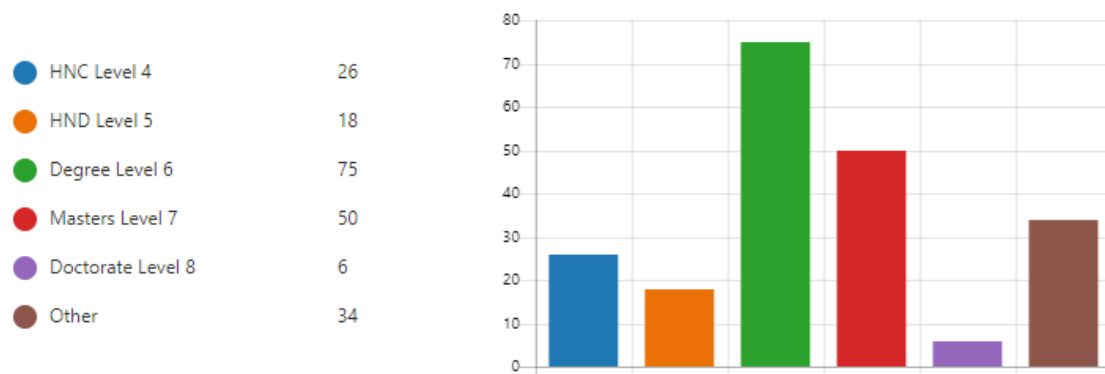
Figure 9 Question 7 Highest Qualification

5.2.10 Experience

The figure below shows the number of years' experience individuals have in councils. The overall data shows the median range is 1-5 years with 41% (n=97) of responses falling into this category. The next common response was 6-10 years' experience, 24% (n=57). The findings seem to suggest that many that enter the sector do so for a short period of less than 5 years, with a limited career before leaving their councils. This response may be explained by the fact people are often older when joining the profession so it may be a natural pathway to retirement. The median age group is 51-60. A high leaver rate happens in the 6-10 years career span, from starting its down to 24% which matches up with the start of a current state age pension age of 66 for both men and women. Those with careers of over 20 years was 11% (n=25) which may see many of these individuals in their 70's.

● Less than 1 years	11
● 1-5 years	97
● 6 - 10 years	57
● 11 to 20 years	47
● Over 20 years	25
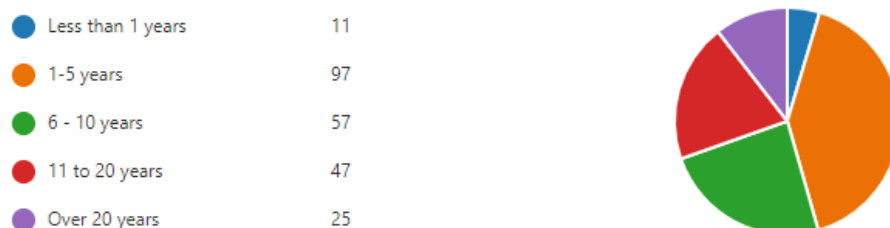
Figure 10 Question 8 Experience

18

5.2.11 Working for many councils

The graph in figure 12 shows the data on how many councils individuals are connected to. The median employer model is to be employed by just one council (n=189). This is followed by working for 2 councils (n=38) but this is some way off the top answer. The image of employees, for example clerks, working for a hand full of councils is uncommon in the responses received; two respondents said they worked for 6 councils. On data checking/cleansing one of these two respondents was confirmed as a councillor and could not be in paid employment for six councils. Thus, leaving just one Clerk/RFO who worked for six small councils and this situation is unusual. The data returns shows that the majority of individuals work for one council.
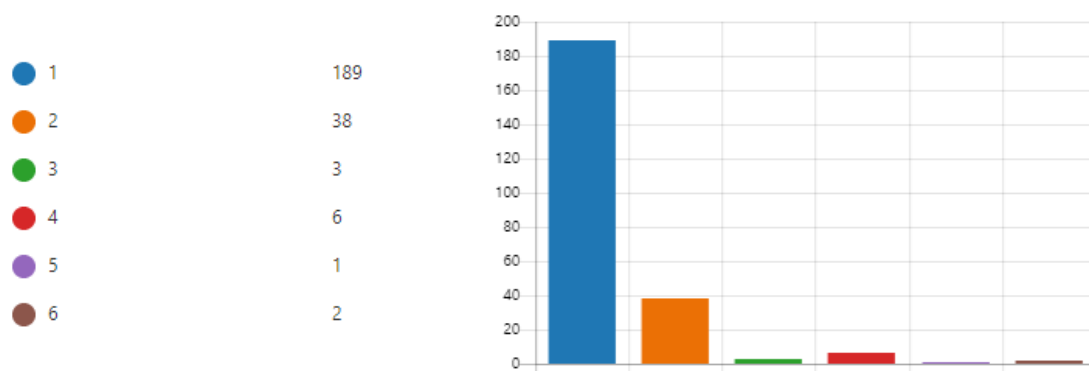
Figure 11 Question 10 The number of councils worked for

5.2.12 Responsibility for staff

The responses show that most employees work alone 44% (n=106) and a further 17% (n=41) manage one other. The number of employees managing between 2-7 colleagues is 21% (n=52). The respondents saying that they managed 8 or more colleagues was 18% or (n=43). This analysis of the data shows the majority of respondents are working either alone or in some staff teams, with the exception of the large councils, figure 13 gives the full picture.

● None	106	
● 1	41	
● 2-7	52	
● 8 or more	43	

Figure 12 Question 11 Staff Responsibility

5.2.13 Frequency

Question 12 was deliberately worded to ask what frequency the respondents felt that appraisal should happen; it did not ask how often you are appraised in the hope to elicit what the individual thought was the right time frame rather than what happens currently. The possible choices were wide ranging, but the most popular response was clearly for annual appraisal at 88% (n=202) shown in Figure 14, none of the other choices came close to this response.

● No fixed time scale	6
● Within 6 months	23
● Annually	202
● within 24 months	6
● Never	6
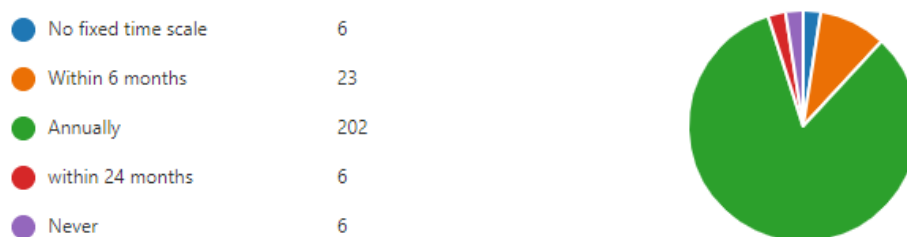
Figure 13 Question 12 Frequency PA should happen

5.2.14 Number having had an PA in the last 12 months.

The questionnaire question 13, following immediately on from the frequency question, was limited to just two choices illustrated at Figure 16; have you been appraised in the last 12 months (yes/no). Firstly, there was an expectation that the

51 councillors in the sample would say no since it is very unusual for councillors to have PA; although 4 did claim to have them, which may show them to indeed have a system in place for councillors to have appraisals. Focusing on those who responded with yes 45% (n=108), this number may be due to no PA system existing at all or that they were late. From Q24 Open Comments, some respondents suggested they had not experienced PA in several years. The coronavirus pandemic may have had the effect of delaying PA or that councils had simply not organised PA or perhaps that in small councils there are no plans to operate PA systems.

● Yes	108
● No	132
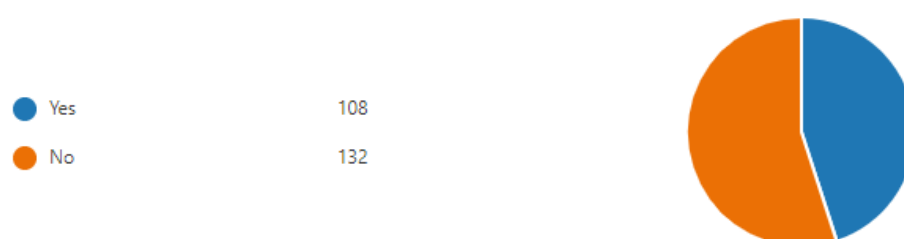
Figure 14 Question 13 Number having had a PA in the last 12 months

The details behind the responses are shown when using Contingency Table Analysis (CTA) to examine quantitative data, giving a two-dimensional table that records the frequency of respondents that have specific characteristics described in the table. Table 1 shows the yes or no answers from number of employees having had appraisals within the last 12 months, in relation to annual budget (size of council) excluding data from councillors (n= 245 minus 51 councillors) and blank answers (1) . The data in table 2 clearly shows that working for a small council with a budget below £50k means employees are less likely to receive a PA, than those working for a bigger council with a budget over £50k.

Table 1 Appraisals based on budget size of councils by numbers
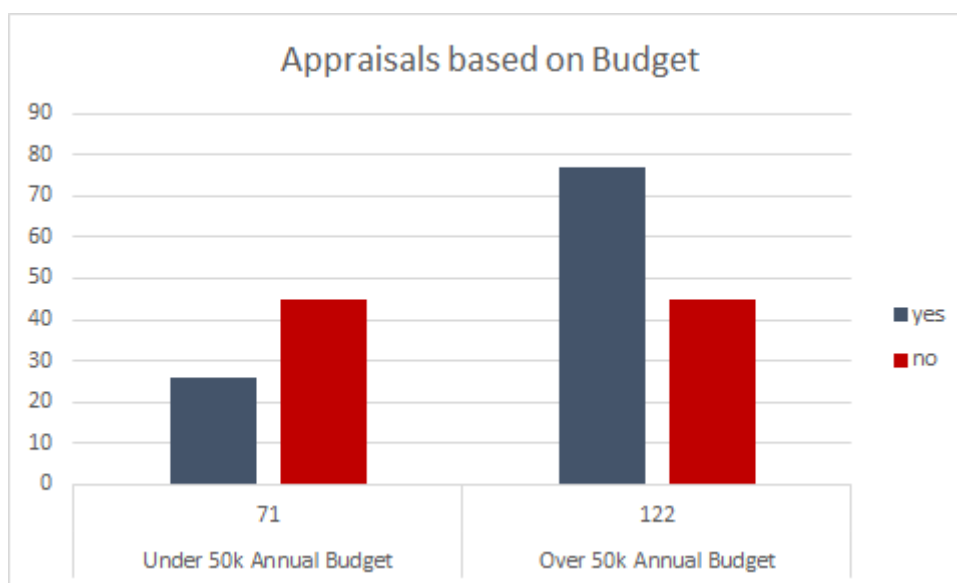
Table 2 Appraisals based on budget size of councils with %

	Total	#yes	#no		%Yes	%No
Under 50k Annual Budget	70	26	44		37%	63%
Over 50k Annual Budget	122	77	45		63%	37%

5.2.15 Award Schemes to improve services and working practices

Question 14 attempted to identify those councils that have used 'Investors in People' or other Award Schemes to improve services and working practices. The use of a set standards systems to improve services or people skills is often used in other sectors. The responses shown in Figure 16 indicated that the number of councils having such schemes was only 11% (n=27), while 79% (n=193) answered that no such awards were in place. On the strength of these responses, councils don't seem to be taking up the opportunity of such schemes to improve services or invest in staff development. Investors in People is a simple assessment framework that reflects the best practices in high performance working. It is a benchmark for well-run organisations and demonstrates to employees the commitment to good business and people management in the workforce.

A more sector specific award scheme is the Local Council Award Scheme (LCAS) designed to celebrate the successes of the very best local councils, and to provide a framework to support all local councils to improve and develop to meet their full potential. The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector, assessed by their peers, and put in place the conditions for continued improvement. The reasons why councils are not embracing such schemes should be reviewed by the 3 national organisations SLCC/NALC/OVW.

● Yes	27
● No	193
● Don't Know	23

Figure 15 Question 14 Good Practice Awards

5.2.16 Question 17 Themes

Question 17 contained 16 questions (A-P), the full table for the responses can be found at Appendix H. The first question in this section was focused on the importance of monetary awards and PA.

Pay

Pearce (1987) contends that under certain conditions merit pay may be counterproductive, as it is likely to work against the fostering of collaboration and co-operation amongst employees. Hope and Pickles (1995, p.7) state "The tension between reward and development is also one of the main arguments against performance related pay". PA being linked to monetary rewards; draws a mixed response to the question with about 30% agreeing, while 30% neither agree or disagreed and 28% strongly disagreeing. The respondents collectively have suggested no clear desire to have PA linked to pay in councils, just an openness to consider it by some. Meyer (1985) would argue that pay should not form part of any performance appraisal because it should happen outside appraisal, to allow more

time for performance improving discussion to take place. The response to question 17c reflects this, with 67% agreeing PA does identify training needs.

Promotion

The data on attitudes toward linking PA to promotion were clear, with 60% selecting the agree choice with the remaining respondents spreading their responses to the remaining choices. PA has been historically used, according to Latham & Wexley (1994) simply to support admin decisions related to pay and promotion. It seems that the respondents do want promotion or progression to result from PA. A majority of respondents expressed that a more traditional style of PA, done annually and involving elements of self-appraisal would be preferred.

Staff Strengths

On the question PA does not consider individual staff strength, nearly 48% disagreed with the statement. Judging whether staff dislike being appraised by others drew out a neutral response with the middle response and evenly spread over the other 2/3 responses, making the overall response divided and hard to judge.

Staff Relationships

The question at Q17h on individuals benefiting from PA saw the response rate agree with the biggest selection at 39%. While on Q17i the most selected response was 44% agreeing that PA improves communications between staff and councillors.

The study establishes that 47% of respondents disagreed with the statement that PA undermines staff relationships, with the neutral response the most popular. While 62% neither agree nor disagreed with the statement that PA improves opportunities for women. The majority of respondents suggest PA is not favouring one gender group over another. 41 of 62 males answered on the same basis as women, almost the same overall ratio at 66%.

Identifying the Appraiser

The questions that focused on who should carry out PA had a mixture of responses at Q17L to Q17P. A form of PA noted by Morgan, Cannon & Cullinane (2005) is upward appraisal that incorporates feedback from staff about the line manager. The

feedback allows the manager (appraisee) to review how others view their performance. The question on whether staff should appraise their immediate superiors (Q17L) identified that 34% agreed while 4% strongly agreed. 31% of responses to this question were neutral, with 25% disagreeing and only 5% strongly disagreeing, indicating no clear preference for upward appraisal.

In answer to question 17M, should staff be appraised by their immediate supervisors, the most popular answer was agreed at 59%, 12% strongly agreed while 20% disagreed. Therefore, a traditional appraisal reporting system of an immediate supervisor was favoured.

While at Q17N 53% believe the appraisee should not choose the appraiser, while 18% each agreed and disagreed on this point. Again, a traditional appraisal reporting system was favoured.

On the point that clerks are the best people to appraise, noting clerks were the role that returned the most completed questionnaires, 54% went for the neutral option neither agreed nor disagreed 19% disagreed and 12% agreed. The data is pointing to traditional PA being the dominate style perhaps due older workers/career changers being more familiar with older systems. However, some respondents are open to a 360-degree style of PA, which involves colleagues and service users' peers to generate better balanced performance appraisal material. Given the response Q17I, this seems to suggest that taking account of others' views as part of the PA process is acceptable, but not expecting them to do the whole assessment. The importance of upward appraisal in certain circumstances, but not handing the whole assessment on to staff or others to do, is clear from this batch of responses identifying who should do the PA. There was no evidence to suggest that overall, the 360 PA is being called for.

Bacal (1999) stresses the strength of the 360-degree feedback process is that it involves more information sources than the traditional systems. Bacal lists the 360-degree feedback process as having a major advantage since 'its findings are much harder to discount and may avoid bias or a personal agenda'.

Question 17P on the involvement of other colleagues and service users in the PA process identified that 53% agreed and a further 8% strongly agreed. However, the 360-degree feedback approach can bring its own problems. Often the appraisal

information is difficult to interpret when it is not consistent. However, respondents seem to clearly have an appetite for involving others.

5.2.17 Question 18 Themes

Question 18 contained 17 questions (A-Q), the full table for the responses can be found at Appendix I**.**

Self- Appraisal

Question 18a on self-appraisal wanted to question the view on the demand for an element of self-appraisal in part of the appraisal process. The findings showed the majority of respondents 97% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Statement 18b People who are not involved directly in the operation, should appraise staff. 46% disagree while 30% went for the neutral response. Although the majority disagree the involvement of non-staff. Councillors need to be involved in the process especially if the council is a small council with only one employee. The option to engage an outside agent is not welcome since the response is not to use those not directly involved in the operation.

Quality of Service

Q18D queried whether PA improves the quality of the service provided to the public 67% either agreed or strongly agreed. The understanding of the responses to 18d may be helped by looking at the responses to other statements 18f-k and 17i which involve communication between staff and managers (clerks) being valued. (18f) PA provides feedback on personal performance draw the largest response at 73% agreed. 18g drew the largest response rate of 69% who agreed to PA sets performance targets for the next period. 18h PA allows the individual a chance to voice their concerns in a recorded document obtained 67% agree and 25% strongly agreed.

This is a very high rate to the belief that the PA document will capture the appraisal and particularly appraisee account. The clerk's profession has traditional attached great importance to keeping accurate records from recording council meetings minutes so perhaps the importance of recording the appraisal can be understood with the high response to agree with this. The flip side to this is management view that PA allows management the same chance to voice concerns on the individual's performance which draw at 18i not surprising very similar response with 65% agree and 18% strongly agree.

Question (18J) PA allows management the chance to inform individuals of key decisions on a 1-2-1 basis. The response rate was down to 46% agree and 11% strongly agree. The decline from previous questions seems to identify that telling staff at the PA could be used to inform them but acknowledging other methods are available such as staff meetings/letters which may be better especially if the PA is some time away. 18K was building on the theme that PA should not be set in one part of year such as year-end but be an on-going process. The response rate showed that 50% agreed while 20% strongly agreed with 23% selecting the neutral response. This response needs to be reflected upon since the response for annual PA was found to exist what this is implying is that process needs be on-going so perhaps a six-month mid-year review or even quarterly review is needed.

To have a successful PA system it must be seen as fair and free from bias, or it will simply be seen as a management tool to oppress people. Park, Song, & Lim (2016) suggested that employee's perception of fairness and trust build a positive sense of self-worth and self-identity that works as a strong motivator for their engagement at work.

Purpose of PA

Question 18l was placed in the questionnaire because the literature review had several writers indicated individuals felt the PA does more harm than good. Certainty in the respondents' narratives submitted in Question 24 there was some evidence of this; full comments in Appendix J that PA had indeed had this effect. However, the overall responses show something quite different. 18% strongly disagreed while 52%

disagreed with 22% taking the neutral response while only 7% agreed or strongly agreed. Therefore, the overwhelming findings from the responses in the sector is to dispute the question's claim.

Question 18m tried to gauge if PA links individual goals with the councils' strategic goals. 68% either agree or strongly agreed that it did.

18n PA enable staff to raise concerns that they would not otherwise raise obtained the following responses 6% strongly disagree, 30% disagreed 17% were neutral 39% agreed and 8% strongly agreed. The respondents were really spilt across the 5-point range and perhaps leaning towards agreeing more. The reason for the mixed response perhaps due that if PA were the only place staff were raising concerns perhaps it should be a worry for management who should have other tools to manage the well-being of its staff. PA many have multi purposes but being the only communication channel for staff issues is perhaps not one of them.

Question 18o was trying to gauge what was cited by Van Damme (2021) in the literature review that PA are done at very end of the year in March. The run up to PA are often with short notice to the individual to prepare properly for them. In the responses to having suitable notice 23% either strongly disagreed/disagreed while 32% were neutral while, 44% either agreed or strongly agreed thus splitting the responses showing that some councils are better prepared than others to organising PA so that respondents did not feel rushed.

Question 18p was put in to follow up a report that circulated by the CIPD in 2021 that PA was dead. The term dead was replaced with old fashion. Now with reference to the age range of respondents Figure 5 the median age range of respondents was 51-60. 76% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The sector certainly does not see PA as old fashion. The CIPD (2020, p.1) citing PA "One criticism is excessively bureaucratic, time consuming and demotivating". Respondent numerical data did not support this view.

The literature review also had writers who suggested that PA was used as a tool of oppression. Certainly, the sector had come into the national spotlight with several high profiles cases of disputed behaviour between clerks and councillors such as Ledbury case previously commented upon in the literature review. The questionnaire findings did not support this situation of the PA being used in this manner. The

findings show 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed while 31% adopted the neutral response and just 10% agreeing or strongly agreeing.

However, 10% who feel this shows that the PA is being misused is still concerning, again some respondents who felt so strongly they have used question 24 response to comment still further. Hoey (2021, p.46) in the literature review highlighted "clerks experience behavioural issues within 15% of councils and 5% were for all intents and purposes unable to operate because of disruptive behaviour of councillors which in turn lead to poor organisation performance. If councillor's responses were discounted from this question responses the 10% would rise closer to the 15% figure which means the previous research and this research are roughly at the same level.

5.2.18 Feedback

Question 19 required yes/no to do you have regular feedback with other staff or councillors 59% said yes while 41% replied no. The findings suggest some serious failings. Feedback is a key part of PA because it directs attention to needs and then supports by giving constructive comments to the employees' progress and reaching agreed goals. Strength-based approach focus on the individuals' strengths rather than their weaknesses to reproduce successful traits in other weaker areas of performance.

The CIPD Report Strength-based Performance Conservations 21 November 2017 suggested many organisations are moving to towards more continuous feedback rather than relying on annual or six-monthly reviews. It would appear the majority of respondents experience this but large % don't see Figure 17.

| Yes | 144 |
| No | 100 |
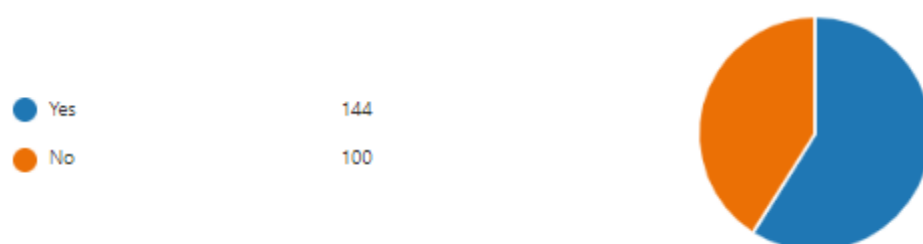
Figure 16- Question 19 Feedback

5.2.19 Alternatives to PA

Question 20 looks at the use of staff/teams giving respondents the chance to feedback views, share important news enable respondents to do their jobs well. Holding meetings to drive performance, 59% thought this gave them appropriate information on team performance, 63% used them to discuss people issues while 84% used them to discuss organisational issues and feedback views.85% share important news and 83% felt it help them do their jobs better.50% believed PA improved teams performance. 32% have meetings which make PA unnecessary because of the more regular feedback while 42% said they did not think this. The data collection on question 21 failed to collect any data due a technical problem on the site.
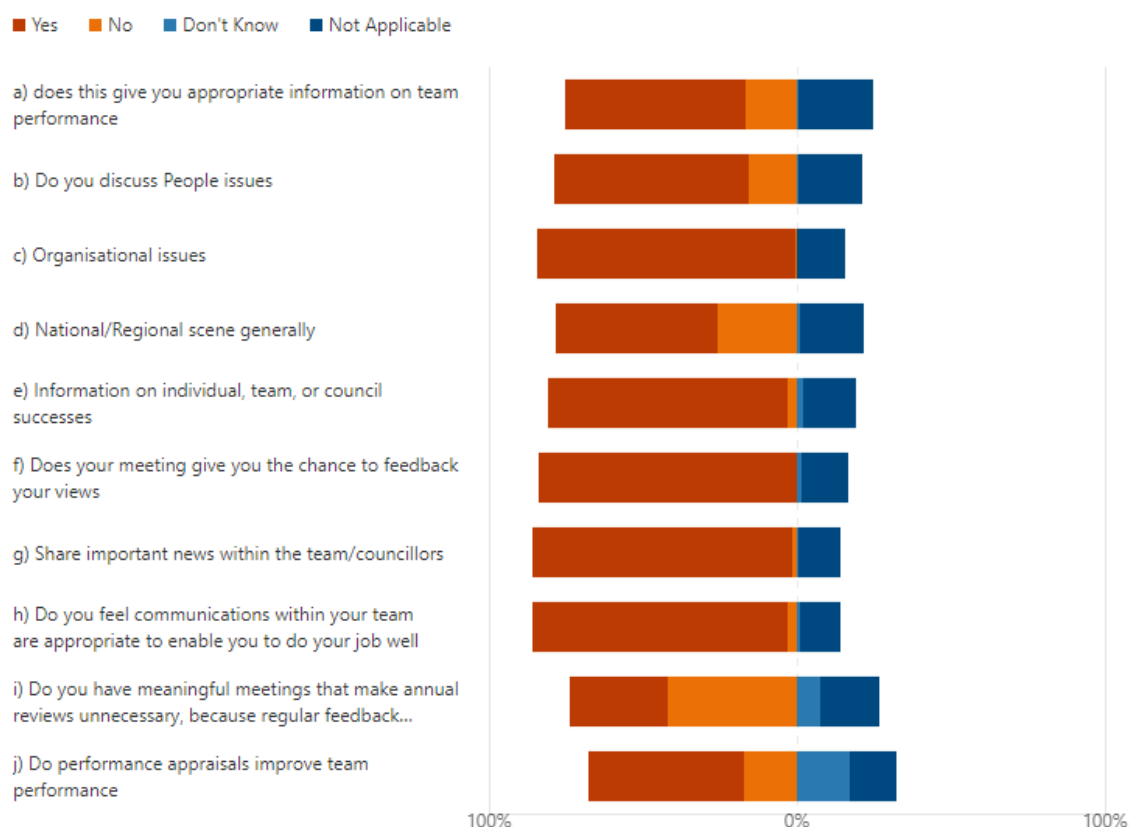
Figure 17 Question 20 Staff/team meetings to promote performance

5.2.20 Best Practice

Question 22, 69% (n=98) respondents share best practice within teams. 24% (n=34) replied it was not applicable to their situation perhaps due to being lone workers, the full breakdown is below.
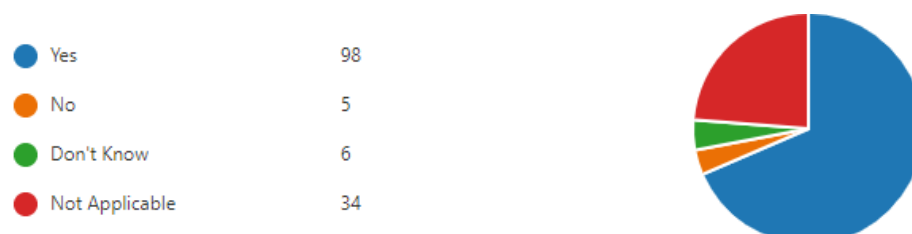
Figure 18 Question 22 Best Practice

Question 23 asked could sharing best practice between their team and others, this draw 50% (n=120) to yes while 31% said it was not applicable and 15% did not know.

Figure 19 Question 23 Best practice with teams and others

5.2.21 Qualitative Data Collected

Q24 asked for further comments and attracted 84 comments which are shown at Appendix J. This qualitative data has been used throughout the analysis at various points, in support of findings. A selection of several different comments have been included below, to illustrate the wide-ranging narratives collected and some of the interesting insights that have come up from councillors and clerks. The comments cover a wide range of issues; from linking payments for performance; the need for

PA training in the sector; late PA due to the pandemic; PA not taking place for many years; or the feeling that PA is just a tick box process. Example 52 is highlighted in green since it sums up good practice, some comments will be used in the recommendations.

Figure 20 Question 24 Selection of comments

4	anonymous	My Council's Performance Management Policy is not linked to incremental incentives for staff, as a result most staff feel the appraisal process is a 'paper' exercise
9	anonymous	To note - we ended up not having an appraisal last year due to Covid and just getting on with things. Usually we have an annual appraisal, which needs to be reinstated.
11	anonymous	Appraisals need to be transparent and based on honest reasons and are just one part of open management. Too often there are hidden agendas or incompetent appraisers.
14	anonymous	I would advocate staff development reviews to all organisations employing staff
16	anonymous	This is really interesting research. I hold the view that appraisals done properly are a positive tool for both employee and employer, however a poor appraisal system can damage the relationship. I use appraisals as part of an ongoing open dialogue with my staff team, they do not replace staff/councillor meetings but neither do they provide the only space for those discussions. In my experience, many councils do not have the necessary expertise in-house to carry out their own appraisals, so either training should be given or an external company bought-in to run the appraisal process. There is often too much focus on poor performance or time management rather than positive feedback when all is good. It would be lovely to think that monetary incentives could be offered for good performance, but this rarely happens in the public sector, hence why many of the good officers leave for private sector jobs.
18	anonymous	Small parish councils are normally very poor at giving annual appraisals and as Clerk I have nearly always had to remind the Chairman and it is often a rushed process. However, my second Council I work for is a refreshing change and this I felt was due to the Chairman being much younger and with a different attitude to the whole process of appraisal and what it means. Unfortunately, many Councillors are of retired age and are not up to date with how to carry out an appraisal in a modern and forward-thinking way.

48	anonymous	I have never been appraised in my capacity as clerk in over twenty years

52	anonymous	My appraisal is an annual requirement of my contract. After a successful appraisal, I am due an annual pay increment. I always have to remind councillors that my appraisal is due and different councillors form an appraisal panel each year. I have to complete a self-appraisal and I know that councillors submit their comments & feedback to the Chair. Whilst I don't mind having the appraisal, it feels like a very formal process for a 6-hour p/w job which is, in general, pretty informal in many other respects.

The above statement, comment number 52, has touched on some best practice comments and echoes what is represented by some of the data. Based on the questionnaire findings (83%) the annual timeframe is thought to be the best timeframe for a PA. This respondent goes on to suggest that it is contained in a contract of employment. The comment also suggests the PA has led to pay increments which the councillors have formed an appraisal panel to carry out. A further recommendation based on the findings is to include an element of self-appraisal which 97% either agreed or strongly agreed with. The involvement of other comments going to the Chair of the Panel is an element of 360-degree appraisal shown in the literature review. The process above is used for a small council, which is typical of the council model in the sector. If this council can do all this for a part-time employee other councils could follow this example.

62	anonymous	Very pleased to find that you are looking at this. As a councillor in a very dysfunctional Parish Council, I was not able to answer all of your questions. As an elected representative for two years now, I have observed that much is kept secret. I have research around power and governance and so if you carry on in this area of research, perhaps we could talk research. Good luck with the dissertation.

Although this respondent talks about a dysfunctional council, this is only likely to be true in about 15% of councils. There are 85% of councils who are functional and could embrace PA to gain organisational improvements in their councils, through better engagement with staff.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

The conclusions have been integrated with the findings in the previous chapter. This chapter purpose is therefore summarising the conclusion in regard to the research aim. The chapter concludes by presenting suggestions for further research. In Chapter Two on the Research Context of Councils, there were political, economic, and social changes occurring in 1st Tier local government councils from the devolution of services mainly from 2nd Tier councils. 2nd Tier Councils can no longer afford to offer optional services at the expense of mandatory services, such as care they are legally bound to provide. This has led to the growth and expansion of first tier councils, both in budgets and number of staff to run services such as public libraries, parks, and toilets - which often require high set precepts to fund the services.

The dissertation explores the attitude of staff (primarily clerks) and councillors who have responsibility for performance management in their councils, an issue which can lead to poor performance. The clerk/RFO role in a council was thought key and the questionnaire had to balance towards this role based on who was likely to complete the questionnaire. The clerk/RFO role was the pivotal role that comes under the greatest pressure from the public and councillors. In performance terms, the clerk can act as an appraisee and appraiser, their view of PA will offer an insight into PA in councils. The loss of the postholder at short notice can cause councils major operational issues in the short and long term, with the vacuum left. Often in smaller councils the clerk is the sole employee, reflected in 40% of all councils according to Society of Local Council (SLCC) Clerks Membership Survey 2021. The questionnaire found at question 11 44% of respondents (n=106) had no responsibility for colleagues.

The aim of this dissertation is to analyse the use of performance appraisal (PA) within the lowest tier of local government (LG) in order to explore the employment issues that arise within the employee/employer relations structure. The objectives were:
- To analyse the secondary literature on Performance Management (PM) and PA with a focus on first tier councils and public sector.

- To establish the type of PA was preferred by councils using a questionnaire.
- To identify what motivates staff to achieve a good performance.
- To establish what examples of good practice, exist and provide informed recommendations to councils

The dissertation has achieved its aim and objectives, the final part of the last objective will be made in the next chapter. Given the stance in the Literature Review in Chapter Three that states PA does play a role in HRM strategy and is widely used in organisations. The evidence that it is used in first tier councils; is questionable since it is not widely used in councils, certainly not in the last 12 months. A lot of smaller council councils are now growing in staff numbers and budgets to fill the gap left by 2nd tier councils. Smaller councils were shown to carry out less PA than larger councils.

Q12 established that where the most popular response to "how often do you think appraisal should happen" was annually (n=202). The low rate at Q13 given to "have you have you been appraised in the last 12 months" saw half the respondents say no, even allowing for the fact that 4 responses were from councillors – who are unlikely to receive PA given that they are not paid members of staff. The respondents being given annual PA are low, out of the total respondents to this question. It would appear that for many, PA don't happen annually, if at all. Response comment 48 in Q24 has missed having PA for over twenty years. The usage rate for annual PA seems lower in the sector than for other sectors, based on previous research such as Long (1986) which it showed 82% of employers had PA systems in place.

Mumford (1997) alluded to the fact that not only did small companies not use such tools as PA, but public and local government are also less likely to have PA than commercial companies of comparable sizes. it is perhaps not surprising to find PA is not widely used, given the size and situation of small rural councils. Many councils have small precepts/budgets, and the clerk is the only employee. Several responses to question 24 indicated that PA was not suitable for small parish councils, while another response showed good practice was taking place in a very small parish

council with anonymous response 52. The figure for smaller councils seems even lower when the data is looked at in more detail by council size. If these councils with a budget of currently less £50K grow further, they will need to plan ahead and use specially designed PA templates and guidance and set in motion the training of clerks and councillors to assist PA to take place for all staff. If it becomes a contractual right to have an annual PA, it will become an accepted part of human resource management for councils.

There were many different forms of PA in outlined in Chapter Three, some are long-established such as Annual, Biannual, Rolling, Ranking, Essay, and Critical Incident. While others, according to Nankervis & Compton (2006), have been introduced to suit modern working practices, such as 360-degree, Feedback, Peer. Brutus (2010) singles out the Narrative, while other newer styles are Self, Team, Competence. Some PA systems focus on coaching and reinforcement of successes. The increased practice of more frequent conversations on performance, outside of PA, and the use of positive feedback have been identified in the research. The research tool tried to collect data on what aspects of PA respondents thought right for councils, knowing their sector.

The sector has an older workforce, perhaps due to the many part-time roles available in smaller councils. Older workers or those workers with childcare commitments may prefer a more flexible part-time pattern of work. It is possible the roles may appeal to other categories of workers, post pandemic. The sector may appeal to those wanting to work part-time and appeal to career changers, those wanting to semi retire or balance work/life balance due to other commitments or constraints. Therefore, the experience pattern from the questionnaire responses is explained by the sector being a 2nd or 3rd career choice for older workers. The sector appeals to those wanting to reduce down from full time employment for a number of reasons.

Pay, it seems, is not a point of conflict in this research since clerks (89% based on the SLCC Membership Survey 2021) are on employment contracts based on NALC/SLCC national terms and conditions agreement following national pay grades. However, there is some interest (30%) in linking good performance to incentive pay

by using PA to identify good performance and examples of it working well even in very small councils (Q24 anonymous response 52).

The median role performed in the sector was that of a part time Clerk/RFO which had 97 respondents. The next common group were councillors which are unpaid part- time roles. The clerk's role can be combined with the RFO role or be free standing; done on a full-time or part time basis. The role is quite flexible in its function but depends on the size and complexity of the council. It could be a job role that appeals to those changing careers or wanting to switch from full time work to part-time. 12 other respondents completed the questionnaire in other roles, this could be ranging from a standalone RFO to Communications Officer to Caretaker. The data findings clearly show that clerk/RFO model role make up is the only paid role in many small councils. It would appear that clerks in the large councils did not share this questionnaire widely with other staff, or that staff in larger councils were given access to the questionnaire but choose not to complete it given 12 (non-clerk) employees responded, which is a low number nationally.

The trait appraisal done by a supervisor which looks at trust initiative seems popular in the sector from the responses, with the PA being done by a line manager but with elements of 360 degree. Upward appraisal may work in some large councils in some certain circumstances but would be a problem and impossible to carry out in small councils with only one employee. While 360-degree appraisal does have its uses there is still a subjective element how people make their appraisal ratings; Kluger and DeNisi (1996) implies that 360-degree should be treated with caution when it used for assessment rather than development purposes.

The CIPD report on strength-based performance conversations (21 November 2017) suggested that many organisations are moving to towards more continuous feedback rather than relying on annual or six-monthly reviews. The Q20I response suggests 32% replied that feedback made annual PA unnecessary because of regular feedback 42% said no the remainder said N/A or did not know. Therefore, some in the sector are using review for continuous feedback.

Q18G tried to gauge the sector response to Goal Setting. The respondents who made the connection between PA and setting goals for the next period was high at

69%. Locke & Latham (2002) emphasises the importance on agreement of goals. Taylor & Pierce (1999) indicate that an effective PMS, with a specific focus on goal setting and measurement, would have a major outcome on employee performance. The signs were positive that the sector recognises this. The relevance of combining goal setting with feedback and support which is coined the Consistency Approach does provide clarity to employees on what the employer expects it seems in councils. There is a clear link between goal setting and workplace performance according to Locke & Latham (1990) whose theory of goal setting and task performance; stressed the need to set specific challenging goals for employees.

Peer rating, in which an individual is judge and counselled, not by his/her leader or superior, but by fellow workers doing a similar job is of course impossible in the standard council given there is usually just one employee some of the collected comments to Question 24 shows many views how difficult PA is in small councils. The comments also suggest councils (employers) need to work on being seen as fair and positive which shows the response to Q18Q, giving the general view is that they are but with a minority still no convinced.

CHAPTER SEVEN RECOMMENDATIONS

It is hoped that the research undertaken in this dissertation will improve the understanding of both employees and councillors of how PM and PA are managed and communicated in councils. It is hoped that the research will lead to improvements, by identifying what needs to be done by who, why, when, and what could work better. It sets out how to obtain better engagement in bringing in the recommendations being put forward.

Based on the research findings and the conclusions; the following recommendations are put forward they are package of recommendations and all need to be adopted to ensure a holistic approach is taken to gain improvements. The overall research has led to seven key recommendations based on the material within this dissertation. To achieve these seven recommendations, all in the sector need to agree them and collaborate to introduce them. The seven recommendations are based on the overall findings that shows the majority of staff have not had a PA for over 12 months. A recommendation costed and timed table can be found at Appendix G. The following is a narrative that has led to those recommendations being made.

The recommendations need to be understood in the context of the sector environment which was explained in Chapter Two and the Literature Review which looked in depth at PA/PM.

The research could give councils the overall recommendations to achieve better value for money on staffing; often one of its most significant budget headings. 1st Tier Councils 2021/22 budgets show £618m of council tax fund has been requested by them through the precept demand, which has increased year on year according to BBC NEWS (2021) website (23 April 2021). The precept demand for the respondents in this research totalled at just below £44M. The dissertation will recommend how PA and PM when linked to improve the development and delivery of councils' strategic plans if PA are linked into these plans.

It is noted that councils are run differently to businesses, they are not created to make profits. They still need to find operational advantages and improvements to

services just like commercial businesses. Noting the role of 1st Tier Councils in the public sector environment, its structures, the role of councillors and clerks, the operating system of councils will show how the recommendations can be implemented by the sector organisations like NALC/OVW/SLCC, councils and clerks who all operate in this tier of government.

It is also worth remembering there is no single meaning, which can be universally understood, to define totally what performance management and specifically what appraisal is; according to Myland, (1992, p.9) "A simple definition of performance appraisal is that it is a systematic means of ensuring that managers and their staff meet regularly to discuss past and present performance issues, and to agree what future action is appropriate on both sides".

It is extremely likely that some staff have never had a PA for many years. Therefore, the problems are both immediate and long term and the recommendations at Annex G (1) and Annex G (2) will in part address these issues.

Recommendation One

The pandemic may have delayed PA but now workers are returning to the workplace this should be easier to complete outstanding PA for this last financial year. The PA can then feed into the PM system and lead into those actions/ possible needs such as learning and development or progressing resulting from the PA. Not completing PA will only send the wrong message that PA are not valued. The decisions from PA can then feed into budgeting setting timeframes for 22/23. Councils and clerks have a role to play ensure this year's outstanding PA are completed within the next few months. It will take a few months to complete PA documents and arrange interviews.

Recommendation Two

The only way to ensure an annual PA takes place in the long term is to enshrine the right to annual PA into a contract of employment. If a contract exists with this right

agreed between the (council) employer and the employee with a mid-year or quarterly review at least it should happen in the future. The NALC/OVW/SLCC, councils and clerks all have a role to promote this. They must ensure it is adopted as good practice and is shown in models' terms and conditions and contract templates. If the NALC/OVW/SLCC agrees to this after taking legal guidance, then at least it will give employees the right to expect a PA and be able to demand one. The cost for councils is mainly time but this could actually gain time and lead to improve services through adopting PA. If the council still refuses, then it's in breach of the contract. Individual councils and clerks who don't see the value of PA and claim it does more harm will mostly likely not to sign the existing contract amendment and the friction is best avoided.

The fact that PA is due annually is not actually ensure that it is done well or that those carrying it out know how to carry one out. The demand for training places would increase once the right to annual PA is introduced into all contracts of employment with a mid-year or quarterly review. However, all new starters contracts can be set up for them and it should contain this new clause to have an annual PA with all the benefits it will bring.

The NALC/OVW/SLCC will need to promote this benefit both to clerks and councils and ensure it in its good practice literature. The promotion costs of contract changes are likely be no direct costs to councils and not much costs to NALC/OVW/SLCC since they could promote it through the existing communications channels. Recommendation one is recommended that councils clear the back log of outstanding PA's that over 12 months. That the Chair of Staffing or equivalent or council chair ensures time is allocated to process PA and hold PA interviews within the next 2 months and this has no additional cost to do it. If councillors can clear the back log, they would be prepared for the new financial year to judge the spend on staff development whether to include any funding for incentive pay based on performance and allow the sector organisations to the longer-term recommendations mentioned below. It is important that the right to a PA becomes an enshrined right to have annual PA into a contract of employment with a mid-year or quarterly review.

Recommendation Three

The council need to ensure they have at least two councillors trained on PA and one of these should be the Chair of staffing when one of these leaves the council another councillor needs to go on the training to take up the appraiser role. The clerk should also attend appraisal training to ensure if they are carrying PA they too have been trained and can also manage the system for the council for other staff. The NALC/OVW/SLCC must also ensure this in any good practice guidance that councillors and clerks are trained in PA. The NALC/OVW/SLCC need to ensure training courses are available through them. The cost of training places is likely to be a total cost initially of £150 and about £100 replacement training is needed if two councillors take up the role on the staffing committee or need refresher training. The set-up of additional training capacity to deliver courses and their promotion may take six months to build up the capacity. Councils will need to put this training into their annual training programmes and could be planned for FY 22/23.

Recommendation Four

A National Task Team from NALC/OVW/SLCC should be created in the next 3 months to made up of sector organisations to review examples of current PA forms used in the sector or beyond to help create new agreed templates use by councils and clerks. The Task Team could provide agreed national templates to assist councillors (especially for smaller councils below £50K with a single employee). They could design a suite of most likely four PA templates with guidance to suit the size of councils/employees. DeNisi and Smith (2014) noted the role of contextual factors can have to influence PA used in different entities e.g., this could be large councils needing different PA systems to smaller councils. Rabenu & Tziner (2015) suggest PA should be individually customized to fit both employees and appropriate to the constant changes in organisations structure. Therefore, councils need to judge what PA systems are suited to their particular council by size and number of employees.

Recommendation Five

The National Task Team from NALC/OVW/SLCC should incorporate the good practice from the Literature Review, research findings and conclusions which have

shown the following: that annual PA with a mid-year review with are the most favoured timescale. An element of self-assessment should be included in the PA. The supervisor of the individual or Chair of staffing to do the PA but take account of others' comments/views (service users view) 360-degree approach in part.

Recommendation Six

Ensure councils are committed to acting on PA to support staff to identify L & D and possible progression in the pay scales or other employment positions within the council. The additional costs will only come when L & D elements are identified actually takes place and involve costs. The costings for this could be more than saved if staff have skills shortages in the workplace that go unnoticed. The Task Team could look also at the reasons councils were not embracing such schemes as; Investors in People or Good Council Awards that may strengthen L& D.

Recommendation Seven

Ensure the PA is part of a PM system that is link to the council Strategic Aims. If this is not followed up everything will just happen in isolation. Clerk and Chair of staffing to ensure PA links into Strategic Plans of the council. An example of this might be that the council is changing its accounting package and need staff to step forward who work using the new package. If someone is identified who is the ability and enthusiasm to carry out this role and they are identified at PA, then identifying booking them on accounts training will feed into the strategic aims to change the accounting package to improve the council financial operations.

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Appendix A Performance Appraisal Definition.

Performance Appraisal could be part or all the following criteria of performance measurements, which have been identified over the last century as contributing to a performance appraisal:

a) Areas for individual/organisations improvement/contribution,

b) Processes and practices that need to be introduced to achieve set targets,

c) The giving of information/guidance to individuals require to improve,

d) The clarification of the criteria for measuring performance

e) The changes needed to achieve performance

f) Ensuring bottom-up communication is fed into the process (e.g., self-appraisal) it should not be just one way process (top down) or seen just as a management tool to intimidate workers

g) The performance appraisal could be used to identify training and development needs

h) Planning for career development

I) Performance related to the amount of pay gained

j) The identification of strengths and weakness in performance.

k) The potential or suitability for promotion,

Appendix B Conceptual Framework on Performance Appraisal & Management in 1st tier councils in England and Wales

Appendix 2. Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of Management Performance / Appraisal Systems in first Tier Councils in England & Wales
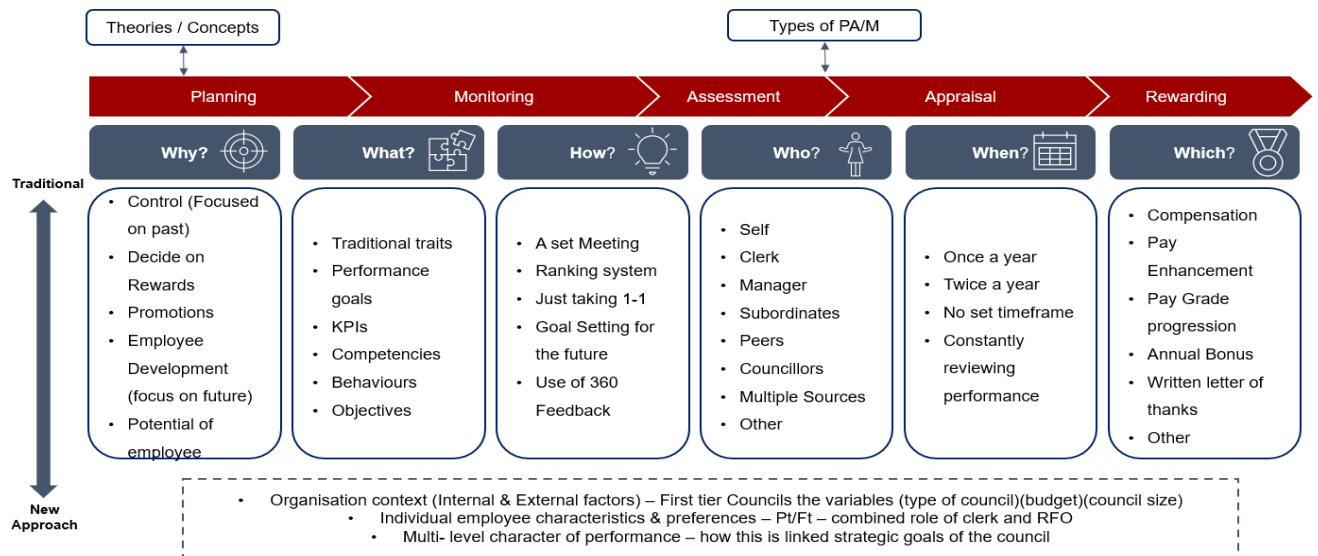
Appendix 2 Figure 2. Research Approach phases
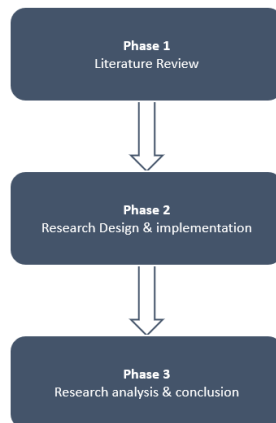
Based on a conceptual framework diagram for process-oriented employee appraisals and rewards. (Shafagatova, & Van Looy,2020,Pg.56)

Appendix C. The Research Tool Questionnaire

Performance Appraisal in Community, Parish and Town Halls of England and Wales
Questionnaire by Cosimo (Cas) Leo

Consent Form

My name is Cas Leo, and I am a master's student from the School of Business at Edinburgh Napier University. As part of my degree course, I am undertaking a research project for my dissertation.

The title of my project is: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL IN COMMUNITY, PARISH AND TOWN HALLS IN ENGLAND AND WALES.

This study will investigate performance management and appraisal in the first tier of local government.

The findings of the project will be useful in finding how much performance appraisal takes place and the type and any valuable ways that performance in the sector can be improved.

This research is not being funded by any organisation. I am Town Clerk and a Parish Councillor and a self-funded student.

I am looking for volunteers to participate in the project whether paid staff or councillors. There are no criteria (e.g., gender, age) for being included or excluded, everyone is welcome to take part.

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire. The researcher is not aware of any risks associated with this research. The questionnaire should take no longer than 10 -15 minutes. You will be free to withdraw from the study at any stage, you would not have to give a reason.

All data will be anonymised; you will not be identifiable. Your name will not be requested or collected, just the main county you work in. It will not be possible for you to be identified in any reporting of the data gathered. All data collected will be kept in a secure place which only the researcher and University has access to. This data will be kept with the University until the end of the examination process is completed. A report will be made available to Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and National Association Local Councils (NALC) if they have assisted in enabling the research to take place. The generic results may be published in a journal or presented at a conference.

If you would like to contact an independent person, who knows about this project but is not involved in it, you are welcome to contact Dr Kirsteen Grant. Her email contact is, K.Grant@napier.ac.uk

1. If you have read and understood this information sheet, any questions you had have been answered, and you would like to be a participant in the study, please now see the consent form. *

	YES	NO
I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	○	○
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason.	○	○
I recognise that I can refuse to answer a question or set of questions	○	○
I agree to take part in the study.	○	○
I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	○	○

Demographic Variables

In order to classify and comment on your responses the following information is needed. Be assured that none of this information will be used to identify individuals.

2. Your gender *

○ Male

○ Female

○ Other

○ Prefer not to say

3. Your Age *

○ Under 30

○ 31 - 40

○ 41 - 50

○ 51 - 60

○ 61 - 70

○ Over 70

○ Prefer not to say

4. What country do you work in? *

☐ England

☐ Wales

5. What county do you work in? *

Enter your answer

6. What sector specific qualification/award do you hold?

☐ ILCA Level 2

☐ CILCA Level 3

☐ Above Level 3

7. What is your Highest Qualification

○ HNC Level 4

○ HND Level 5

○ Degree Level 6

○ Masters Level 7

○ Doctorate Level 8

○ | Other |

8. How long have you worked for the council(s)

○ Less than 1 years

○ 1-5 years

○ 6 - 10 years

○ 11 to 20 years

○ Over 20 years

9. What is your Role *

○ Clerk (Full Time)

○ Clerk (Part Time)

○ Clerk / RFO (Full Time)

○ Clerk / RFO (Part Time)

○ Other (Full Time)

○ Other (Part Time)

○ Councillor

10. How many councils do you work for?

○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

○ 6

11. How many colleagues are you responsible for?

○ None

○ 1

○ 2-7

○ 8 or more

12. How often do you think appraisals should happen?

○ No fixed time scale

○ Within 6 months

○ Annually

○ within 24 months

○ Never

13. Have you been appraised in the last 12 months

○ Yes

○ No

14. I am aware that my organisation holds "Investors in People" or other Good Practice (Good Council Award).

○ Yes

○ No

○ Don't Know

15. What is your precept this year?

The value must be a number

16. What is your Annual Budget?

○ Under £50,000

○ £50,000 - £100,000

○ £100,000 - £500,000

○ £500,000 - £1m

○ Over £1m

17. Question

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a) Performance Appraisal should be linked to monetary rewards.	○	○	○	○	○
b) Promotion should be linked to Performance Appraisal	○	○	○	○	○
c) Performance Appraisal does not take into account individual staff strengths	○	○	○	○	○
d) Staff dislike being appraised by others	○	○	○	○	○
e) Performance Appraisal and staff development are not linked in my council	○	○	○	○	○
f) In my opinion appraisal has contributed to improved staff performance	○	○	○	○	○
g) Appraisal best diagnoses professional and personal development needs	○	○	○	○	○
h) Performance Appraisal has benefited me as a individual	○	○	○	○	○
i) Performance Appraisal improves communication between staff and councillors	○	○	○	○	○
j) Performance Appraisal undermines staff relationships	○	○	○	○	○
k) Personal Appraisal improves opportunities for women	○	○	○	○	○
l) Staff should appraise their immediate superiors	○	○	○	○	○
m) Staff should be appraised by their immediate superiors	○	○	○	○	○
n) An appraisee should not choose an appraiser	○	○	○	○	○
o) Clerks are the best people to appraise	○	○	○	○	○
p) Performance Appraisal should take account of the views of work colleagues and residents/service users	○	○	○	○	○

18. Question

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
a) Performance Appraisal should have an element of self appraisal	○	○	○	○	○
b) People who are not involved directly in the operation, should appraise staff rather than councillors	○	○	○	○	○
c) Performance Appraisal identifies training needs of individuals	○	○	○	○	○
d) Performance Appraisal improves the quality of the service provided to public	○	○	○	○	○
e) Performance Appraisal ensures individuals receive more personal development guidance	○	○	○	○	○
f) Performance Appraisal provides feedback on past personal performance	○	○	○	○	○
g) Performance Appraisal sets performance targets for the next period	○	○	○	○	○
h) Performance Appraisal allows the individual a chance to voice personal concerns in a recorded document	○	○	○	○	○
i) Performance Appraisal allows management a chance to voice their concerns on the individuals performance	○	○	○	○	○
j) Performance Appraisal allows management to inform individuals of key decisions, or working practices on a one to one basis	○	○	○	○	○
k) The performance review should be on-going process rather than at a set time in the year.	○	○	○	○	○
l) The Performance Appraisal system does more harm than good	○	○	○	○	○

m) The benefits of the performance review is it links individual goals and the Council strategic goals.	○	○	○	○	○
n) Performance Appraisal enables staff to raise concerns that they wouldn't otherwise be able to raise at any other time	○	○	○	○	○
o) I receive suitable notice of my performance appraisal interview it is never left to the last minute and is never rushed.	○	○	○	○	○
p) Performance Appraisal should not happen at all; they are out of fashion.	○	○	○	○	○
q) Performance Appraisals are unfair and have lead to bullying by the appraiser with a hidden agenda	○	○	○	○	○

Communications

Please evaluate the following questions according to the following responses

19. Do you have regular feedback with other staff or councillors

   ⦿ Yes

   ◯ No

20. Do you have at least monthly staff/team meetings with other staff or councillors, If so,

	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable
a) does this give you appropriate information on team performance	◯	◯	◯	◯
b) Do you discuss People issues	◯	◯	◯	◯
c) Organisational issues	◯	◯	◯	◯
d) National/Regional scene generally	◯	◯	◯	◯
e) Information on individual, team, or council successes	◯	◯	◯	◯
f) Does your meeting give you the chance to feedback your views	◯	◯	◯	◯
g) Share important news within the team/councillors	◯	◯	◯	◯
h) Do you feel communications within your team are appropriate to enable you to do your job well	◯	◯	◯	◯
i) Do you have meaningful meetings that make annual reviews unnecessary, because regular feedback contributes to more successful team performance than appraisal	◯	◯	◯	◯
j) Do performance appraisals improve team performance	◯	◯	◯	◯

21. Do you currently share best practice within the teams

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

  ○ Don't Know

  ○ Not Applicable

22. Do you feel your performance could be improved by sharing best practice between your team and others

  ○ Yes

  ○ No

  ○ Don't Know

  ○ Not Applicable

Summary

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Contact details of the researcher

Name of researcher: Cas Leo

Address: Masters Student, Subject Area, School
Edinburgh Napier University
The Business School
Craiglockhart Campus
Colinton Road
Edinburgh EH14 1DJ
 Email: 40516795@live.napier.ac.uk

23. Any Further Comments

  Enter your answer

Appendix D The Research Tool (Questionnaire logic)

According to Sharp and Howard (1996 p.145) "The use of a questionnaire has become a common model of gathering information". The questionnaire is limited to take between ten to fifteen minutes to complete. "Too long a questionnaire is likely to reduce markedly the percentage of responses and a low response rate bias" Sharp and Howard (1996, p146).

PA is one of most complained about area of management by both managers and employees. The set questionnaire question in Appendix 3 asks for a response to the statement like 'staff dislike being appraised by others' the response will show whether this is a true statement in councils.

Employers strategic thinking with PA tended to be more related to short-term expediencies aimed at doing enough to get the task done or solving immediate problems with services. The questionnaire tries to establish whether respondents think this.

It was an important factor to try and include as many councils covered by SLCC and NALC in the research to avoids bias and gain a valid response rate. Question One shows the gender breakdown of individual respondents. Question Two shows the mix of respondents in their roles/grades. Question Three shows the supervisory responsibility of respondents. Question Five shows the preferred frequency of performance appraisal in four categories. Other question can be grouped together in themes which can be coded, such as the responses to questions in training and development and career themes the number and order of questions are likely to change following the advice of the pilot group.

Appendix E CPD Reflective log based on CIPD

The 7 step approach to CPD shown on CIPD website.
https://www.cipd.co.uk/learn/cpd/cycle

Stages of the CIPD CPD cycle

- Identify: Understand where you've come from, where you are and where you want to be.
- Plan: Plan how you can get to where you want to be, with clear outcomes and milestone to track progress.
- Act: Act upon your plan and be open to learning experiences.
- Reflect: Make the most of your day-to-day learning by routinely reflecting upon experience.
- Apply: Create opportunities where you can translate theory into practice and put your learning to work.
- Share: Share your learning in communities of practice to generate greater insight and benefit from the support of your community.
- Impact: Measure the overall impact your learning has had on the work you do.

The following narrative focuses on the above steps and is my CPD Reflective Log.

The M.Sc. HRM degree with its research element has been a tough journey for me has been a very challenging course. I have found great deal of satisfaction in learning more about a research project that interested me personally but will be of practical use to the sector I work in. The course has offered me a focus in my professional development in a forty-year career.

The time constraints of the research were particularly stressful at key stages of the year. The Local Government Elections in May 2021 were particularly disruptive to the flow of my MSc studies. Every four years the sitting council ends then an election is held to select new councillors which means a lot of extra work for clerks like me in having to work with new councillors and provide them with induction training and support in their new roles. It is almost like changing and amending almost all information on the council.

My Council had an uncontested election; meaning I had additional work in holding additional recruitment and selection process up to the 21 June 21 to fill 4 vacancies and still don't have a full council until September 2021. Having most of the councillors undertake their training and holding meetings to decide Council business against rolling out a research project was difficult. A period in May and June with few councillors in post to work with.

The Coronavirus Pandemic crisis also meant the usually working practices from online meetings and different processes and practices. Then in May 21 it was all change again: back to the face-to-face meetings for the council. In short, any year

apart from 2021 may have been a better year to study and carry out the research; given the workload.

Even my research respondents' fellow clerks were very busy to be asked to contribute to the research and Councillors were likely to be newly appointed.

I have learnt some useful new skills and rediscovered some forgotten ones or rarely used skills. I have gained an understanding and appreciation of modern digital techniques and distance learning skills. I have enjoyed both primary and secondary research. I have certainly grown as a HR professional, clerk, councillor, and researcher knowing more about the subject and how impacts on the sector.

I had clearly underestimated the effort needed to carry out this M.Sc. at the start of the year. I focused upon up grading my resources such as buying a new laptop and did not allow myself the time needed to understand the University Noddle and library system and its true potential to assist me. I have now reidentified my true starting position and feel I know where I want to be at the end of August 2021.I learnt a value lesion in preparing for such studies in the future.

My timeline plan was submitted in Assignment 1 it had to be ambitious in several ways to achieve the target of a M.Sc. by August 21 and although I tried to stick to the timelines within that document, I feel I have always been, a week behind from assignment 1. Delaying's in getting the questionnaire to the pilot group and then delays in getting the finished questionnaire and the task to promote it to respondents have costed another week delay after I had caught up again. A week may not seem a long time but when you're a week behind with three weeks to complete the whole dissertation it can feel a lifetime. The biggest final hurdle to overcome was the data analyse from a large data set it takes time. I had moved from worrying the respondents were slowing in completing the questionnaire to a final rally in the last 72 hours which of course means more data to analyse however the respondent's completion rate is up lifting; also.

I have collected a lot of data which is interesting but may not be needed in this research project but might assist future research. My biggest concern is to do justice to the data collected to present it in a meaningful way. I may need to work on my presentation skills to achieve this. The timeline plan was successfully. I acted upon it and that the pilot group took looker to respond to me and needed reminders; was perhaps one learning point for me. I need to remember although my research project is the most important piece of work to me it is not to other working professionals, who need to focus on their own tasks. The Pilot group feedback was useful in gaining suggestions to improve my questionnaire that I had not been aware of.

Reflecting on the daily study or perhaps on the weeks' worth work on a specific study element or piece of work did not often happen at first. The starting of a reflection process started after assignment 1 had been submitted and started to happen naturally. Once I started to be focus on approving my existing studies to get better

results. I was able to use the personal reflections of what I thought went well or what wrong and then think about how I could do better with the material.

The single method approach of using the questionnaire was one that I move towards through discussion phase with my supervisor after the first submission which has now meant I acquired a large data set from that exercise, which requires a lot of analyse and time to make sense of what I have obtained. It does feel overwhelming at this point. I feel like a custodian of this bank of knowledge on performance appraisal from the sector and what I need to do is organise it in the most logical way to ensure the sector gets a management report that informs them and to give them strong recommendations to ponder and then take forward based on the literature and the data. The recommendations are based on a year's work and at times has been my single focus to put in all my effort into this task. The main task is to ensure the research findings back up the recommendations to obtain change and progress in the sector.

I have already decided to share a generic report with the SLCC/NALC/ One Voice Wales have communicated with 2 CEO's and One Head of Policy who seem keen to see the report. I have also been contacted by County Officers who see the value of the research project and want to have the results of the research which I will share in the new year by working with them on generic material. The biggest impact doing this research has had on me is it has given me more confidence in using new tools and the ability to bring this project to a successful conclusion and submit the recommendations to the sector to be enacted upon.

The M.Sc. being delivered online, and, in the manner, it has of fellow HR professional coming together at key moments using Microsoft TEAMs for tutorials has suited me. It was particularly useful to me living and working in Cornwall having not to attend the University in Edinburgh, indeed I would not have enrolled if it was delivered on campus only. If I was to do the course again, I would most likely know that I needed to either do a refresher on post graduate study to get up to speed or had given more time to getting up to speed in the January to March phase of the course.

Appendix F Enhancement of The Scoping Study

The improvements to the scoping study were carried out once feedback was received back from my supervisor who pointed out grammatical and structural improvements, such as those on contents page numbering, list of figures fonts and chapter headings. To be realistic my supervisor had also helped me a lot in the pre submission stage with helpful suggestions with 1-2-1 and short extension to rework some of my material. I used the formal feedback sheet and marketing criteria along with the suggestions/observations on the questionnaire to enhance the research tool. The Scoping Study assignment and its marking lead to lots of suggested improvement to be incorporated into the work including having a chapter on the sector to improve the flow of the work.

I had to put in a simpler tick box consent page to the one I had. I also had asked for the respondent's name in the questionnaire, and it was pointed out it this was not necessary. I therefore amended this question to ask to the county the respondent worked in. This prove useful later in chasing up county officers if the response rates were low in any county area. I had also used the word 'I' in my questionnaire a lot and needed to avoid using it.

In the questionnaire I worked on improving its presentation and design it better to feedback the data in a more logical way. The advice to change the word Sex to Gender was acted upon. The advice to introduce a further selection to 'prefer not to say' in the gender question was also adopted. The supervisor also pointed out some questions that may needed to be reviewed/or explained or amended such as one on motivation. I took the opportunity to enhance my work with the supervisors' comments although I left one question remain since it was on based on the precept and is important in judging the size of a council.

The next chance to improve the questionnaire was at the pilot stage and several comments enable me to do this from the five members of the pilot group such as grammatical and structural improvements. They suggested explaining what NALC/SLCC stood for in the questionnaire and introducing another job role category and some other suggestions to improve the questionnaire.

While data was being collected in the 3-week window I reviewed all work up to this point submitted in the Scoping Study and started to amend items and use more

reference material; but tried avoiding using direct quotes which had been overused which was a point raised by the supervisor.

I found in time the readability and the flow of chapters improved with rereading and amending them further I got into the course on discovering new material or correcting items. I changed one of the objectives with one word change which was instead of using the word 'used' to 'prefer' to be more accurate on what data I was actually collecting. I also looked at other research projects to see if I could learn more about the remaining chapters will link with the Scoping Study

Appendix G Recommendations Action Plan Table

Recommendations	Persons Responsible	People of Interest	Resource needed	Time scale	Priority Order
1 Councils need to clear the back log of outstanding PA's from the last 12 months.	Individual Clerks, Chair of Staffing.	Councils will need time to process documents and agree documents.	Time to process PA/ interviews to arrange. No additional costs just time.	Next 2 months	1
2 Enshrined the right to annual PA into a contract of employment with a mid-year or quarterly review.	Individual, Clerk, HR, legal.	NALC/OVW/SLCC	Time to process and adopted into contracts. To be adopted into model contracts of the membership organisation. No additional costs just time to get legal advice through NALC/OVW.	The next six months	2
3 Ensure at least 2 councillors have PA training 1 being the Chair of staffing.	Chair of Staffing, Clerk, Councillors.	NALC/OVW/SLCC Councils.	Training for Chair of Staffing and I other councillor. Courses need to be made available through national bodies. £200 for training places initially and retraining costs when needed.	To start next 3 months and continue with the roll out of additional courses.	3
4 Provide agreed national	NALC/OVW/SL	NALC/OVW/SLCC	National Team made	Next 6	To be

templates to assist councillors (especially for smaller councils below £50K with a single employee). Design a suite of four PA templates with guidance to suit the size of councils incorporating good practice.	CC			of sector organisations to review examples of current PA Forms used to help create new templates and agreed their use by councils.	months	done with 5 below
5 Ensure the annual PA has element of self-assessment and also involve the views of others councillors/service users in the process.	NALC/OVW/SLCC	NALC/OVW/SLCC		National Team to review current templates and agreed contents in the templates such as self-assessment with clear instructions guidance.	Next 6 months	To be done with 4 above
6 Ensure councils are committed to acting on PA's to support staff to identify L & D and possible progression	Clerks Councils and councillors	NALC/OVW/SLCC		The additional costs will only come when L & D identified actually takes place. The costings for this could be more if staff have skills shortages not being met.	To take place from the completi on of PA	6
7. Ensure the PA is part of a PM system that is link to the council Strategic Aims.	Clerks/RFO's Councils and councillors	NALC/OVW/SLCC		Clerk and Chair of staffing to ensure PA links into Strategic Plans	To take place from the completi on of PA	7

Appendix H Responses to Question 17

17. Question

More Details

Legend: ■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

a) Performance Appraisal should be linked to monetary rewards.

b) Promotion should be linked to Performance Appraisal

c) Performance Appraisal does not take into account individual staff strengths

d) Staff dislike being appraised by others

e) Performance Appraisal and staff development are not linked in my council

f) In my opinion appraisal has contributed to improved staff performance

g) Appraisal best diagnoses professional and personal development needs

h) Performance Appraisal has benefited me as a individual

i) Performance Appraisal improves communication between staff and councillors

j) Performance Appraisal undermines staff relationships

k) Personal Appraisal improves opportunities for women

l) Staff should appraise their immediate superiors

m) Staff should be appraised by their immediate superiors

n) An appraisee should not choose an appraiser

o) Clerks are the best people to appraise

p) Performance Appraisal should take account of the views of work colleagues and residents/service users

100%   0%   100%

Appendix I Responses to Question 18

18. Question

More Details

■ Strongly Disagree ■ Disagree ■ Neither Agree Nor Disagree ■ Agree ■ Strongly Agree

a) Performance Appraisal should have an element of self appraisal

b) People who are not involved directly in the operation, should appraise staff rather than...

c) Performance Appraisal identifies training needs of individuals

d) Performance Appraisal improves the quality of the service provided to public

e) Performance Appraisal ensures individuals receive more personal development guidance

f) Performance Appraisal provides feedback on past personal performance

g) Performance Appraisal sets performance targets for the next period

h) Performance Appraisal allows the individual a chance to voice personal concerns in a recorded...

i) Performance Appraisal allows management a chance to voice their concerns on the individuals...

j) Performance Appraisal allows management to inform individuals of key decisions, or working...

k) The performance review should be on-going process rather than at a set time in the year.

l) The Performance Appraisal system does more harm than good

m) The benefits of the performance review is it links individual goals and the Council strategic goals.

n) Performance Appraisal enables staff to raise concerns that they wouldn't otherwise be able to rai...

o) I receive suitable notice of my performance appraisal interview it is never left to the last minute...

p) Performance Appraisal should not happen at all; they are out of fashion.

q) Performance Appraisals are unfair and have lead to bullying by the appraiser with a hidden agenda

100%   0%   100%

Appendix J Anonymous Comments from Respondents to Question 24

1	anonymous	Whilst you ask how many councils we work for (in my case 2) virtually all questions don't allow for an answer for each Council where they differ.
2	anonymous	It's a tricky study because of the massive diversity in scale of P&TCs. Some of the questions in the survey will read very differently to a Clerk of a large Council with 40+ staff (like me) than to a part time Clerk who the only employee is. It might also have been useful to ask whether the responded believes that appraisals are done well in their council, and how well equipped they feel in terms of training, experience, and resources, to appraise and be appraised. I have supplied copies of my council's appraisal and development policy/process to a large number of smaller councils who have contacted me, but we also invested in three full days of training for our managers on how to approach appraisals, how to have difficult conversations, setting good targets, etc and we did some role-play examples of different appraisal scenarios. It's this training and mutual support that makes Appraisals effective, not the policy/process itself... Good luck with the research and I would be very interested to read your conclusions as I am a massive advocate!
3	anonymous	Your title is misleading - you should call it town councils and not town halls. That shows a deep misunderstanding of the sector by you and I almost abandoned doing it.
4	anonymous	My Council's Performance Management Policy is not linked to incremental incentives for staff, as a result most staff feel the appraisal process is a 'paper' exercise
5	anonymous	Not sure what you define as performance management, but appraisal should be a forward-looking discussion about the training requirements of the staff member based on council plans for the coming year. It should not be an end-of-term review.
6	anonymous	A good appraisal process only works when both parties take it seriously, forward plan and are committed to the process. If either party has a lack of respect for the other the process is likely to be without value. Without good human interaction you have no effective appraisal process.
7	anonymous	My only performance appraisals have been by Councillors. NALC/SLCC colleagues were horrified by this! Detailed NALC or SLCC templates would be very useful. Please only quote the last two sentences if quoting any of this as the first part will identify me to many local Clerks.
8	anonymous	Whilst I support PR nothing knew should be discussed here as regular team meetings and 1:1s should be carried out weekly or monthly and any concerns about performance addressed immediately and ditto praise
9	anonymous	To note - we ended up not having an appraisal last year due to Covid and just getting on with things. Usually we have an annual appraisal, which needs to be reinstated.
10	anonymous	Performance appraisals are time consuming, and I would question their effectiveness when the amount of staff is very limited -this is especially true of parish

		and small-town councils. As a Clerk I want to be dealing with council issues and residents - tasks are allocated between the staff to deal with often at short notice and time critical. I would think that having to do appraisals when the team is very small could be unnecessary as weaknesses and strengths are easily identified.
11	anonymous	Appraisals need to be transparent and based on honest reasons and are just one part of open management. Too often there are hidden agendas or incompetent appraisers.
12	anonymous	Some of the questions seemed contradictory to others about the presumptions.
13	anonymous	I am the only employee within a Parish Council. In my experience a good working relationship with the Chair of the PC is vital for work feedback and management
14	anonymous	I would advocate staff development reviews to all organisations employing staff
15	anonymous	This is a very binary choice - GOOD performance appraisal, with trained appraisers, ongoing review / 121 meetings and as part of a wider, organisational ethos, can be exceptionally useful. BAD appraisals are damaging. So many of my answers are 'yes, if done right' or 'not if done badly'!
16	anonymous	This is really interesting research, Cas. I hold the view that appraisals done properly are a positive tool for both employee and employer, however a poor appraisal system can damage the relationship. I use appraisals as part of an ongoing open dialogue with my staff team, they do not replace staff/councillor meetings but neither do they provide the only space for those discussions. In my experience, many councils do not have the necessary expertise in-house to carry out their own appraisals, so either training should be given or an external company bought-in to run the appraisal process. There is often too much focus on poor performance or time management rather than positive feedback when all is good. It would be lovely to think that monetary incentives could be offered for good performance, but this rarely happens in the public sector, hence why many of the good officers leave for private sector jobs.
17	anonymous	1. I strongly believe that appraisal is an informal ongoing process between myself and my staff BUT 2. That does not take away the need for & value of an annual and more formal session AND 3. The fact that I have not had a formal appraisal (under our S/O's) from the Chairman is not something I worry about because we have weekly, sometimes more frequent meetings at which no subject is off-limits.
18	anonymous	Small parish councils are normally very poor at giving annual appraisals and as Clerk I have nearly always had to remind the Chairman and it is often a rushed process. However, my second Council I work for is a refreshing change and this I felt was due to the Chairman being much younger and with a different attitude to the whole process of appraisal and what it means. Unfortunately, many Councillors are of retired age and are not up to date with how to carry out an appraisal in a modern and forward-thinking way.
19	anonymous	I can only answer the questions as a lone worker with no other colleagues.
20	anonymous	I have worked as clerk for council for nine years and never had an appraisal despite asking for it on several occasions and it being minute in Parish Council meetings that it will be done, and the responsibility allocated. It is never followed through.

21	anonymous	In the 10 years I have worked for the Parish Council I have never had an appraisal although I have asked for one.
22	anonymous	We are a small Council; I am the only employee, so some questions are not applicable. Good luck.
23	anonymous	I am the only employee for my two councils, and the section on staff appraisals did not really apply to me. I have never had an appraisal but can see the benefit of annual appraisals. My concern would be that if it is anything other than a 'let's see how things are going' then councillors would be the appraisers and as they have relatively little knowledge of government procedures, how would they know how I was performing. There was also a question about performance being linked to promotion. Many councils only have the one employee and being Clerk is the 'top of the tree' so there is no promotion to be gained.
24	anonymous	Whilst I am more than happy to have performance appraisals as I have throughout my working life, I find in small Parish Council it tends to be the Clerk who sets the standards for the councils as Councillors are usually ill prepared for formal appraisals.
25	anonymous	My experience of appraisals is tainted due to negative experiences working in County Councils - my current parish councils have shown no inclination to carry them out so I haven't encouraged them to do so.
26	anonymous	we are a small Parish council with only 9 councillors and one secretary who is the person appraised - probably would be a good idea if councillors were too yet it is undersubscribed - we are one councillor short at the moment so anything that put people off this increasingly demanding voluntary work would probably not be welcome, even if in the long term it made things more effective and better for all
27	anonymous	Most of the statements to which I have ticked 'agree' is on the basis of what I would imagine would or should be the case, rather than what happens in our council, as I have probably had no more than 2 or 3 appraisals in 14 years.
28	anonymous	For a small team in a close environment, I advocate the "water-cooler moments" model of frequent, informal, conversations
29	anonymous	In some cases, I have answered as to what should happen or my experience elsewhere - as my appraisal process is self-generated on behalf of the councillors (I force them) otherwise it would not happen (which isn't really covered by this questionnaire - sorry)
30	anonymous	Gender question is unpleasantly worded but otherwise a reasonable survey
31	anonymous	Good luck with your work
32	anonymous	As clerk to a small parish council much of this questionnaire did not really apply but I hope it helps
33	anonymous	Difficult as a Councillor to answer a lot of these questions. I have been involved in appraisals in my working life, so some of my answers are from this experience. Many answers really depend on the management team, and what appraisal model the Council chooses to use. Appraisals are often not bothered with and are the first things to be dropped when the management team are busy in this Council.

34	anonymous	In various jobs of my working life, I have only had two appraisals. I always felt dissatisfied with the management when the appraisal is not carried out regularly, make time and listener to your workforce.
35	anonymous	I have only been in post a month, so my views on appraisals are mainly from a non-council background.
36	anonymous	i was unsure how to answer some of the questions - what DOES happen or what SHOULD happen or what COULD happen. they are all different. appraisals are a useful vehicle IF they are carried out effectively and used / referred back to throughout the year.
37	anonymous	If there is a good working understanding with my 'boss' then appraisals for me have been motivational and rewarding. For me appreciation and approval is just as motivational as money. However, I have also experienced a poor working understanding which led to a highly demotivating appraisal leading to my later resignation. If they can't bring themselves to be appreciative during an appraisal you wonder, why you are working for them. Therefore, the way they are run is very critical. These 1–2-year occasions have for me has been the only opportunity to raise my concerns about the excessive unpaid hours and request an increase in paid hours. Once again, success or failure can motivate or demotivate.
38	anonymous	Answers vary as I haven't had a performance review. However, I think they should be a two-way process and conducted by someone who has had training in order for PRs to be constructive and productive. I have carried out PRs in previous professional career and undertook training to try to ensure the best possible outcome from the process for all parties both
39	anonymous	Difficult to respond to some questions, as a Councillor, as not an employee.
40	anonymous	Some of the questions are not relevant to Councils with only 1 employee, eg those referring to teams and whether or not Councillors not should be involved in the appraisal - there's no-one else. Appraisals can be used against an employee - that was the intention of introducing it for me, but the Cllrs lost at the election so that wasn't implemented.
41	anonymous	the appraisal can depend on the relationship with the clerk and chair, and this influences the outcome of the appraisal and can be a personal sleight on the clerk and make the relationship very difficult. To be called a Clerk is deemed as subordinate to the Chair and so even the title is a negative point before the appraisal starts
42	anonymous	Good Luck, I hope answering this survey helps you
43	anonymous	Performance appraisals are a good idea and should lead to great improvements for staff and council, but much depends on the appraiser and the desire to use a performance appraisal correctly or even know what it is. Small parish councils are often full of councillors unwilling to learn and participate.
44	anonymous	Appraisals should be a two-way process, employer to employee and employee to employer. Councillors need to note that appraisals are supposed to be a positive experience; it's not an opportunity to pick holes in the employee. The success or not of the appraisal will be determined by the appraiser. Clerks have to put up with whomever is chosen, and I do not feel this is a fair process. People who assess can

		also bring their own perception and often do not fully understand the job or the content. The Clerk works for the Council and not for an individual councillor.
45	anonymous	Some of the questions were a little ambiguous and needed follow up comments
46	anonymous	121s between staff are most important, as this enables two-way communication throughout the year. The purpose of a performance review or appraisal however it's phrased, provides more time for an in depth open and honest conversation between two individuals (manager and direct report) to get into more detail, review what's worked well, and areas for improvement. There is still a need for appraisals, but in association with 121s, team meetings etc.
47	anonymous	What a great survey. This has inspired me as Chairperson to engage the team in monthly meetups, where we will cover your suggested topics. Very many thanks, and best of luck with your qualification.
48	anonymous	I have never been appraised in my capacity as clerk in over twenty years
49	anonymous	Within the Parish Council system there is an issue with credibility of the appraiser as an otherwise excellent Parish Councillor is not necessarily an excellent or even adequate appraiser of professionally qualified staff. Particularly as, at this time, training of any sort is not mandatory for Parish Councillors so even if offered need not be taken up.
50	anonymous	I am a little confused. Some questions ask about performance appraisals, others about performance reviews and others again about team meetings. My understanding is that these are very different and serve different purposes. I work for two councils of different sizes. In one I am the only employee. I have never had a formal appraisal in 11 years of working in the sector. None of the Council's I have worked for ever conducted a formal appraisal, despite the fact that I asked for it. Ultimately, you chose your battles. and insisting on an appraisal when councillors feel reluctant is not one, I am prepared to fight. My staff are outdoor staff and whilst bright (at least some of them) generally reluctant to learn new skills unless practical and directly linked to their manual jobs. Our team meetings and one to ones cannot undo the harm a negligent education system has done.
51	anonymous	Hope the studies go well, best wishes for the future.
52	anonymous	My appraisal is an annual requirement of my contract. After a successful appraisal, I am due an annual pay increment. I always have to remind councillors that my appraisal is due and different councillors form an appraisal panel each year. I have to complete a self-appraisal and I know that councillors submit their comments & feedback to the Chair. Whilst I don't mind having the appraisal, it feels like a very formal process for a 6-hour p/w job which is, in general, pretty informal in many other respects.
53	anonymous	It is difficult to see how councillors can carry out a meaningful and fair appraisal of the Clerk.
54	anonymous	There should be standard levels of performance feedback required for each tier of council (or tiered levels of precept). Smaller councils are particularly poor at the provision of performance feedback - but this could be a lack of understanding as to exactly what the clerk/RFO role entails!!!!!

55	anonymous	No
56	anonymous	Frequently the success of an appraisal is closely linked to the ability of the appraiser - openness, honesty, and the ability to listen are key. In my experience this is often seen as a tick box exercise. A good working relationship should enable the appraisal process to be part of regularly working and so at the annual appraisal the focus can be on looking forward rather than back and working together to meet common goals.
57	anonymous	I wholeheartedly support Staff Development Reviews.
58	anonymous	The questions do not clarify if you are talking about staff or elected Cllrs therefore the answers will not give you a valid response. Q8 Cllrs do not work for a council. Q11? Responsible for colleagues? In what capacity. Q12 Within 6 months of what? Q17 k improves opportunities for women is a totally inappropriate. l and n depend if there is a clash of personality but should normally be line manager. Q18. It feels like annual appraisal and more frequent supervision meetings are being mixed up. Q20 Needs to define between Cllrs and Clerks as roles are different. There are formal monthly meetings and weekly ones with the clerk and as necessary with others. The questionnaire needs refining.
59	anonymous	Few Councillors have the skills/experience to do an appraisal, despite being offered training. I therefore often find that I am leading my own appraisal. This year's appraisal did not get written up as the councillor initially forgot but is now ill.
60	anonymous	Whilst I appreciate that in many organisations, the process of annual Performance Appraisals is not only useful but can be essential, for Parish Councils with often few employees and only a part-time Clerk, the process can be unnecessarily onerous. Performance Appraisals can often be a "box-ticking" exercise to show that HR procedures are in place but in reality, they actually add to a Clerk's often already over-heavy burden of work. In a situation where communications are open and there is a supportive and constructive environment, the procedure of carrying out the performance appraisals is an unnecessary and often burdensome process. I have no issues raising individual concerns with councillors as and when they crop up, knowing that they will be received appropriately, and the rest of the team similarly raise issues with me in the same way - this results in matters being dealt with quickly and responsively rather than being left to "fester" until they become a bigger problem if they are left to be raised during a performance review. We don't have many employees and the majority of the ones we do have are predominantly manual workers who are often daunted by the paperwork involved in the official performance review and they prefer to deal with things more informally as part of more general and regular catchups. I appreciate that systems have to be in place to maintain performance and offer opportunity but an annual performance review, in my view, is not the best way of achieving this.
61	anonymous	I hope this helps as I am a councillor, and most questions are for staff
62	anonymous	Very pleased to find that you are looking at this. As a councillor in a very dysfunctional Parish Council, I was not able to answer all of your questions. As an elected representative for two years now, I have observed that much is kept secret. I have research around power and governance and so if you carry on in this area of research, perhaps we could talk research. Good luck with the dissertation.
63	anonymous	For some of the answers it would have been helpful to have a commentary box.

64	anonymous	Appraisals during Covid have not been done
65	anonymous	Most councillors have no idea how to conduct an appraisal and perhaps there should be compulsory training for Councillors on a staffing committee.
66	anonymous	I thought this was for Councillors to complete (I am a Councillor) but the questions were phrased as though they were for Clerks.
67	anonymous	As I am the only employee of the council, some of the answered questions do not fully apply. An option of N/A would have been helpful
68	anonymous	In ten years, I have never had an appraisal but there is only me and four unpaid Councillors!!
69	anonymous	My council is very small, and I am the sole employee. As such, a formal appraisal process is not really appropriate, and many of my answers reflect this view in that the questions are not applicable. Where I have answered more general questions, this is because I have had experience of staff appraisal processes in previous employment roles, not just within local government.
70	anonymous	The public sector approach to performance appraisal is much more mechanical than in the private sector. Public sector seems always to be looking over its shoulder to be sure it is not doing anything 'wrong'. In private sector we just get on with it.
71	anonymous	Difficult to answer as a Parish Council Chairman - too much focussed on the Clerk role
72	anonymous	Your questionnaire is not designed for councillors
73	anonymous	We don't do any performance appraisal in our parish council
74	anonymous	The available responses might be misleading, particularly since all questions must be completed. I have extensive experience of different models of appraisal, but these questions don't helpfully distinguish. Respondents don't have to be appraisers or appraisers, so some of the responses are based on what appraisal should be or could be if done well. Neither agree nor disagree is sometimes used instead of not applicable. There is no room for nuance. You may need more information about context to make best use of the information.
75	anonymous	I've only been in post since April 2021, so my answers probably aren't that useful as I've never had an appraisal in this post. From what I understand the previous clerk who worked her 15 plus years never had an appraisal and the staff member who worked here over 20 years never had one. Therefore, I am unsure if I will receive one, I have mentioned it though.
76	anonymous	difficult to answer as the single employee of a parish council - no-one has real knowledge of what I actually do day to day, so appraisals are fun events!
77	anonymous	I hope this isn't too late for you. Appraisals can be a good thing for both the business and the appraisee however it depends very much how it is handled. I currently have to prepare a report on what I've done and feed back to the full council (7 members) at the meeting to support my pay progression. I would like to change this to a one-to-one system, but I don't believe at this time I would be supported in that.

78	anonymous	I work for two parishes; my answer is based largely on one of my parishes where there is no formal appraisal process. I will submit another response based on my experience with my other parish.
79	anonymous	I am chairman of our parish council and the Clerk, and one other staff have never received an annual appraisal. It is something I'm aware ought to be done.
80	anonymous	In my role as a Clerk for 4 years for 2 Councils I have never been appraised - this obviously makes these questions a bit difficult to answer.
81	anonymous	Difficult to answer for one of my PCs because it has not carried out a performance review since I was appointed in 2018.
82	anonymous	I have never experienced an objective appraisal, no matter what lip service was paid to making it so. In a previous career, I was driven to suicidal thoughts by the appraiser, who was a peer and not a superior. When we returned to our side-by-side desks, she apologised with a box of chocolates and expected me to carry on as if everything was ok. The experience has made me fearful of the process ever since, even though I subsequently conducted appraisals on members of the team I managed. I hate the process, hate when it is linked to pay and think it should be dispensed with.
83	anonymous	There is an annual performance review and then a six-month update. The problem is the Clerk does not respond to any of the training and the difficulties of how to improve performance persist.
84	anonymous	Named given in error deleted

Appendix K Questionnaire Questions Likely To Give Information On Specific Topics

<u>Variables</u>

	Question Number	
Gender	2	
Age	3	
County/Country	4	5
Sector Qualifications	6	
Highest Qualification	7	
Experience	8	
Role	9	
Number of councils worked for	10	
Number of colleagues you are responsible for	11	
Good Practice Awards	14	
Appraisal timings	12	
Appraisals in the last 12 months	13	
Financial Information	15	16

<u>PART 1</u>

<u>Communication Issues</u>	Question Number				
The value of using PA	17c	17g	17h	18i	18n
PA used for the identification of training & development.	17e	17g	17c	18e	

PA responses showing job satisfaction	17h 18m	18d	18f	18h	18j
PA influence on your role or intended role	17c	17h	17j		

PART 2
General Attitudes to Performance Appraisal

Question Number

Staff views on the council use of PA	17c 17j 17p 18e 18j	17d 17k 18a 18f 18n	17e 17i 18b 18g	17f 17n 18c 18h	17i 17o 18d 18i
The importance of having Performance Appraisal	17a 18m	17j	18l	18j	
Performance Appraisal is a source of information on an individual's changing responsibilities	18n				
Job security under threat from Performance Appraisal	18i				
Attitude towards change	17c				

PART 4

Expectations and attitudes towards Performance Appraisal.

	Question Number					
Advantages and disadvantages of Performance Appraisal	17c	17h	17f		17	17f
	18h	18i	18j	18m		17n
Staff ownership of Performance Appraisal	17c	17d				
Staff expectation from Performance Appraisal	17d	17m				
Pay	17a					
Promotion	17b					

PART 5

	Question Number				
Participation	17c	17i	18f	18h	18i
	18m	18o			
Communication	17h	17m	17n		
Involvement	17h	17m	17n		
Commitment	17d				
Satisfaction	17d	17f			
Motivation	17d	17f			
Cooperation	17d	17i	18n		

Effort / Performance / Rewards	17e	17h		18m	
Concern	18m				
Perceived task / Individual operation's performance	17c	17e			
Equality	17c	17k			
Management	18k		9 17o	18i	18j

Team Working/Team Goals/Organisation Performance/Best Practice   20