Background

With the introduction of the 21st Century Council we are reviewing the knowledge, skills and behaviours that we need to ensure our success in the future and put us in the best position to provide a high quality service to the communities we serve.

Our Aims

Key to our success is our people, and we want to ensure that everyone:

- Understands the organisation's vision and the focus on outcomes and value for our residents and how their work contributes to it
- Is clear about how well they are performing; that they are consistently challenged and supported to be the best they can be
- Has access to the training and support they need to improve their performance and develop their skills
- Collaborates across organisational boundaries, layers and functions in the organisation to build effective partnerships both internally and externally
- Understands the implications of the changes in the organisation's environment and are confident in the new ways of working

We are going to need leadership that focuses on high challenge, high support and that demonstrates:

- A focus on our people
- Clarity and consistency
- Determination and resilience
- Confidence in ourselves and sharing that confidence with others
- Knowledge and understanding of how the Council works as a whole
- Effective communication skills
- An ability to convert vision, strategy and policy into effective implementation
- The courage to ask difficult questions and to deliver difficult messages

In summary, we want every member of staff to feel connected to the organisation, valued for their contribution, and working to be the best they can be.

Introducing the Competency Framework

In order to help us achieve our goals, we have developed a competency framework that identifies the key qualities that we are looking for in our staff and leaders. The framework is tailored to our specific environment and is applicable to all roles across the organisation. It aims to enhance both individual and organisational performance and will be used across the organisation in the development of:

- Job descriptions
- Recruitment and selection processes, including assessment centres
- Performance management, including appraisal
- Learning and development
- Talent management and succession planning

This is the complete framework which will be applied as appropriate for a particular purpose. For example, job candidates will only receive a summary relating to the role they have applied for, not the whole document.
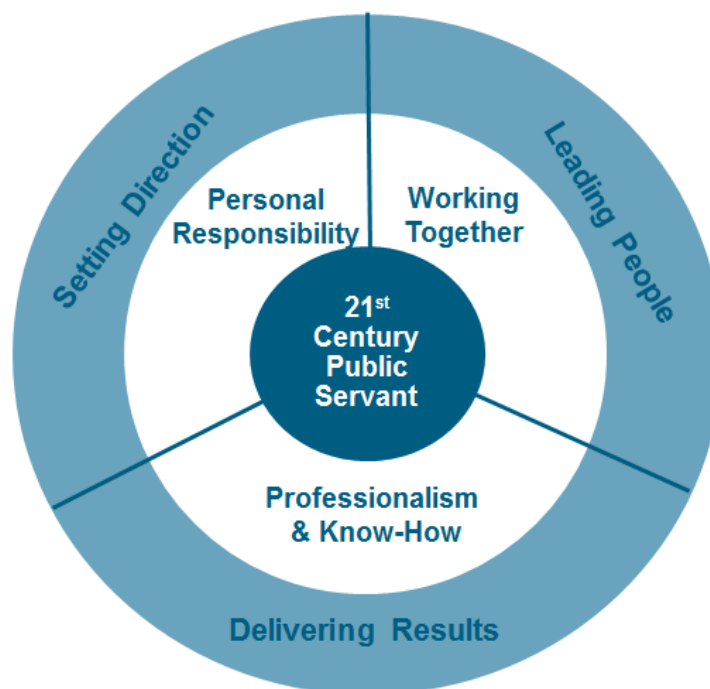
The qualities have been divided into 4 themes; these are the *core competencies* for everyone:

- **21st Century Public Servant:** this is central to all we do and includes being adaptable, resilient, focused on change and improvement, being innovative and having commercial awareness
- **Personal Responsibility:** includes taking ownership and being accountable for your work while operating with honesty, integrity and respect

- **Professionalism and Know-How:** includes how you plan and organise your time to deliver high quality work, including your own learning and development
- **Working Together:** includes how we work together as One Team, communicating effectively and providing a high level of customer service both internally and externally

For those roles with leadership accountabilities, there are 3 additional *leadership competencies*:

- **Setting Direction:** includes strategic thinking, ambition for the council and personal courage
- **Leading People:** includes enabling people, sharing the vision and inspiring others
- **Delivering Results:** includes being performance-focused, driving improvement, setting the right pace for change, influencing others and being politically astute

> *These measurable competencies describe how we need to perform our roles, rather than what we need to achieve. Your role objectives will still set out what you need to achieve each year, and the skills and knowledge required for each job role are set out in individual job descriptions.*

Each competency contains bands that can be used to assess the behaviours that are consistently demonstrated. There are four bands: **Foundation, Proficient, High Achiever, Role-Model**. Each competency is explained in more detail in the following pages, with a description of the expected performance levels and examples against which people can be appraised.

The behaviours become more challenging as you move through the bands. **The bands are cumulative, so someone who is expected to demonstrate Role-Model behaviour would also be expected to demonstrate all previous positive qualities.**

The examples given against each behaviour describe the types of things that you might see individuals demonstrating this behaviour doing; they are a guide rather than an exhaustive list. Examples of behaviour that needs to be challenged or developed are also included to aid thinking and discussions.

CORE COMPETENCY - 21st Century Public Servant

This is central to all we do and includes being adaptable, resilient, focused on change and improvement, being innovative and having commercial awareness

Foundation

✓	✗
Resilient and robust when faced with difficult and challenging situations	Focuses on the negative, affecting their ability to overcome challenges
Aware of their position and influence as a representative of the wider council	Unaware or disinterested in their influence as a council employee
Demonstrates wider thinking in work activities; identifies and suggests improvements	Prefers things the way they are and reluctant to change how they work

Proficient

✓	✗
Proactively seeks feedback on own performance and aims to improve on it	Avoid feedback on own performance and/or responds poorly to it
Embraces change, understanding the need for it and the benefits it can bring	Closed to change, seeing only the negative aspects
Reflects on the situation and uses coaching opportunities to help move forward	Does not reflect on issues or resistant to coaching

High Achiever

✓	✗
Remains confident in ambiguous situations and champions organisational change	Becomes anxious and unable to effectively work under ambiguous situations
Helps team and colleagues to adapt to and overcome concerns about shifting direction; manages resistance to change positively	Fails to appreciate the need to adapt and/or unable to support others through any transition; negative and/or dismissive of change
Considers and suggests ideas for improvement across the organisation, sharing insight with others in an effective manner	Fails to consider or share ideas for improvement, or tries to force through their ideas

Role Model

✓	✗
Responds decisively and quickly to emerging opportunities or challenges, adapting delivery models and strategies as required	Slow to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges, ignoring the need to reshape strategies as required
Shows commercial understanding, maximising financial opportunities and pursues organisational excellence	Demonstrates little commercial awareness and does not challenge ineffective organisational performance
Demonstrates awareness of other leading organisations and uses this information to benchmark own strategic direction	Does not recognise the need to benchmark strategies with leading organisations to identify opportunities for improvement
Challenges others to innovate and think outside the box, creating the culture and setting the expectation that this is the norm	Suppresses innovation and creativity; continues to rely upon current approaches

CORE COMPETENCY - Personal Responsibility

This includes taking ownership and being accountable for your work while operating with honesty, integrity and respect

Foundation	
✓ Possesses a "can do" attitude; trustworthy, dependable and delivers on what is promised	✖ Limits themselves within their role; fails to meet colleague and customer expectations
✓ Listens, checks understanding and reflects before responding	✖ Responds too quickly with the wrong information, creating misunderstandings
✓ Conveys enthusiasm and interest in their work	✖ Conveys apathy and/or disinterest
✓ Consistently demonstrates a high level of respect, honesty and integrity	✖ Displays inconsistent behaviour that does not reflect our key values
✓ Takes personal responsibility for their work, including any mistakes	✖ Finds excuses not to own their work and/or blames others for their mistakes

Proficient	
✓ Acts on own initiative without being prompted	✖ Waits to be pressed into action
✓ Sets and shares realistic expectations	✖ May over-promise or not commit to action
✓ Takes full ownership to solve queries, only refers when necessary	✖ Wants someone else to solve problems without attempting to solve them first

High Achiever	
✓ Trusts others to deliver and effectively delegates responsibility where appropriate	✖ Controlling: resists delegating responsibility and/or micromanages
✓ Works creatively within the organisational framework	✖ Acts as a "maverick", outside of organisational norms
✓ Considers the impact of their style on others; conveys a strong professional impression	✖ Lacks insight into how their style may be perceived by others

Role-Model	
✓ Solution-focused; makes informed judgements, takes responsibility; publicly stands by and explains difficult or unpopular decisions	✖ Indecisive or makes poor decisions and rejects responsibility, giving in when challenged or blaming others
✓ Accepts responsibility when things do not go according to plan at an organisational level	✖ Looks to pass blame or responsibility when set-backs occur on an organisational level
✓ Creates a supportive environment that promotes empathy, respect, honesty and integrity	✖ Creates an uncomfortable environment where colleagues do not feel safe or able to come forward with issues

CORE COMPETENCY - Professionalism and Know- How

This includes how you plan and organise your time to deliver high quality work, including your own learning and development

Foundation	
✓ Uses appropriate methods to deliver quality work in a timely and consistent manner to internal and external customers	✗ Does not consider the quality of their work, the need for pace and accuracy or the impact this may have on the customer.
✓ Uses clear and simple language; checks grammar and spelling; has the required level of written and spoken English language skills	✗ Work lacks clarity due to use of jargon, poor spelling and grammar; does not review their own work
✓ Looks to improve their skills, knowledge or experience; takes advantage of learning and development opportunities	✗ Does not take advantage of opportunities to develop themselves
✓ Open to integrating new information in the work environment; proactive in applying new learning, information and skills within their work, such as proactively supporting the self-serve environment	✗ Reluctant to take on new information and use it in practice

Proficient	
✓ Persistent: works through demanding challenges to achieve goals	✗ Reluctant to work through challenges: prefers straight forward tasks/goals
✓ Approaches their own work in a logical and orderly manner to deliver quality outcomes	✗ Fails to prioritise work, often failing to deliver to expectations
✓ Works within relevant policies and regulations to solve problems	✗ Hides behind policies and regulations, using them as a reason for not finding solutions
✓ Able to tackle a range of issues/questions from both colleagues and customers	✗ Lacks knowledge or effective interaction with others to tackle issues/questions

High Achiever	
✓ Consistently maintains expected service levels, taking prompt action as required	✗ Shows little concern for quality standards of outputs or slow to take remedial action
✓ Continuously benchmarks and monitors results and performance	✗ Takes an inconsistent approach to monitoring performance
✓ Provides direction and clearly outlines what is expected	✗ Sets unrealistic goals and confusing priorities which causes frustration
✓ Conveys a strong professional impression in written and verbal communication	✗ Often imprecise or confusing in written and verbal communication

Role-Model	
✓ Highly credible and invests time in keeping informed; sought after to share knowledge	✗ Not seen as a subject matter expert or a source of current knowledge
✓ Passionate about delivering a high level of customer service and proactively looks for ways to improve the customer experience	✗ Does not proactively tackle customer service issues, allowing service to be negatively affected by inaction
✓ Understands the need to, and effect of, delivering value in all services, removing organisational blocks on performance	✗ Does not focus on delivering value across the council as a whole and creates or ignores blocks to efficient working

CORE COMPETENCY - Working Together

This includes how we work together as One Team, communicating effectively and providing a high level of customer service both internally and externally

Foundation	
✓ Considerate of the views of others; acts fairly, in a polite and respectful manner, embracing equality and diversity ✓ Critical friend, willing to constructively question and challenge the team and wider organisation ✓ Quickly builds appropriate rapport with colleagues, customers and stakeholders ✓ Keen to learn from others	✖ Can be insensitive, intolerant and impatient; fails to consider other people and their approach ✖ Derogatory about the organisation and/or team, or adversarial in questioning ✖ Slow/disinterested in building rapport or makes inappropriate connections ✖ Does not value the experiences of others

Proficient	
✓ Inclusive approach, cooperates well with others, ready to help and support colleagues and wider team ✓ Openly shares information and consults with colleagues across the organisation ✓ Works well within a team and actively helps create a positive and supportive environment ✓ Effectively balances the needs of individual customers with the needs and responsibilities of the wider council	✖ Shows limited interest in working collaboratively; reluctant to help others or offers inappropriate support ✖ Keeps knowledge and information to themselves ✖ Does not contribute to creating a positive team environment; prefers working in isolation ✖ Focuses on individual customers to the detriment of the council or focuses on the council to the disadvantage of the customer

High Achiever	
✓ Builds capability and empowers others; recognising their contribution and providing constructive and specific feedback ✓ Adapts communication style to suit the needs and understanding of the audience and situation; brings colleagues on-board ✓ Sets clear expectations and goals ✓ Able to carry the message of the organisation in a positive manner	✖ Focuses on managing upwards; ignores or undervalues the contributions of others; does not provide feedback or recognition ✖ Does not understand their audience or vary their style; unable to effectively communicate at all levels ✖ Sets unclear, irrelevant or unachievable targets ✖ Insincere, dismissive or lacks enthusiasm when speaking about the organisation

Role-Model	
✓ Promotes cross-team working with internal and external stakeholders, facilitates making relationships work effectively ✓ Promotes a culture of collaboration by sharing knowledge and resources across the organisation	✖ Encourages narrow ways of working by preventing own area from engaging with and working across teams and organisations ✖ Creates and allows silo working; supports an "us and them" culture within the organisation

Leadership competencies are additional for everyone who has leadership accountabilities

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY - Setting Direction

This includes strategic thinking, ambition for the council and personal courage

High Achiever	
✓ Relishes challenges, demonstrates courage in taking on stretching challenges with enthusiasm and a strong belief that they can deliver	✗ Lacks enthusiasm for new challenges and uncertain if they/their team can deliver; focuses on the negative or problems that may occur
✓ Effectively anticipates and responds decisively to change, acting flexibly to adapt to shifting priorities	✗ Slow to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges, ignoring the need to reshape strategies as required
✓ Able to back up their position with data and reasoned argument	✗ Arguments lack evidence and conviction

Role Model	
✓ Displays entrepreneurship	✗ Unwilling to develop a more commercial or alternative approach to public service
✓ Ensures a risk management culture: able to make difficult decisions with limited information, assesses the viability of opportunities and encourages innovation and flexibility	✗ Highly process driven and overcautious; hesitant when making difficult decisions; promotes a risk-averse culture with little analysis of viability of opportunities
✓ Sets and develops organisational strategy in line with organisational vision	✗ Does not direct a clear strategic vision, preferring to primarily focus on immediate or personal goals

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY - Leading People

This includes enabling people, sharing the vision and inspiring others

High Achiever	
✓ Develops high performing teams, adapting the leadership style required in order for the individual and team to flourish	✗ Expects others to adapt to their own behaviour, not taking into account the leadership needs of the team and individual
✓ Capable influencer, ability to see issues from other points of view, negotiating well with others and builds consensus for decisions	✗ Focuses on getting their perspective across, failing to incorporate the views of others and overrides disagreement
✓ Promotes partnership working, taking active steps to remove blockages or obstacles	✗ Partnerships are limited to internal or existing relationships

Role Model	
✓ Leads from the front, inspiring others towards a common goal	✗ Allows others to take the lead without initiating others to action
✓ Acts as an ambassador for the organisation; credibly communicates the future vision and direction; speaks with authority and conviction that inspires; owns the message they deliver	✗ Lacks impact and clarity when interacting with others, not taking an active role to represent the organisation; speaks with a lack of gravitas and direction, fails to inspire others
✓ Ensures the wider team are clear about their performance, and have the skills and development they need to improve	✗ Does not give appropriate feedback or support development opportunities to improve performance

LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY - Delivering Results

This includes being performance-focused, driving improvement, setting the right pace for change, influencing others and being politically astute

High Achiever	
✓ Takes ownership and spearheads transformational change initiatives	✖ Interested in only cosmetic change or lacks ownership for larger programmes
✓ Understands how shifts in the local/national political environment might impact services	✖ Does not link the wider political influence to the environment in which they are working
✓ Understands the formal and informal culture within the organisation and between local stakeholders	✖ Unaware or disinterested in the culture of the organisation and the stakeholders we work with

Role Model	
✓ Delivers sustainable change on target, with awareness of the impact of those changes	✖ Unaware of the impact of implementing change or being unable to meet the timescales
✓ Sets demanding quality standards and monitors organisational outputs against these standards	✖ Unconcerned about quality standards and accepts substandard performance
✓ Creates a culture of flexibility that is able to effectively respond quickly as priorities change	✖ Slow to respond, fails to reprioritise; rigid thinking when presented with new ideas
✓ Understands the more detailed political context they operate in, taking into account the wider impact; networks effectively with politicians and helping their teams do the same	✖ Has limited insight into the political context they and their teams operate in or the wider impact of decisions; limited networking with politicians