



# **Kennet District Council**

## **Managerial Competency Framework**

**2005**

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# **Managerial Competencies**

## **Explanatory Notes**

### **Introduction**

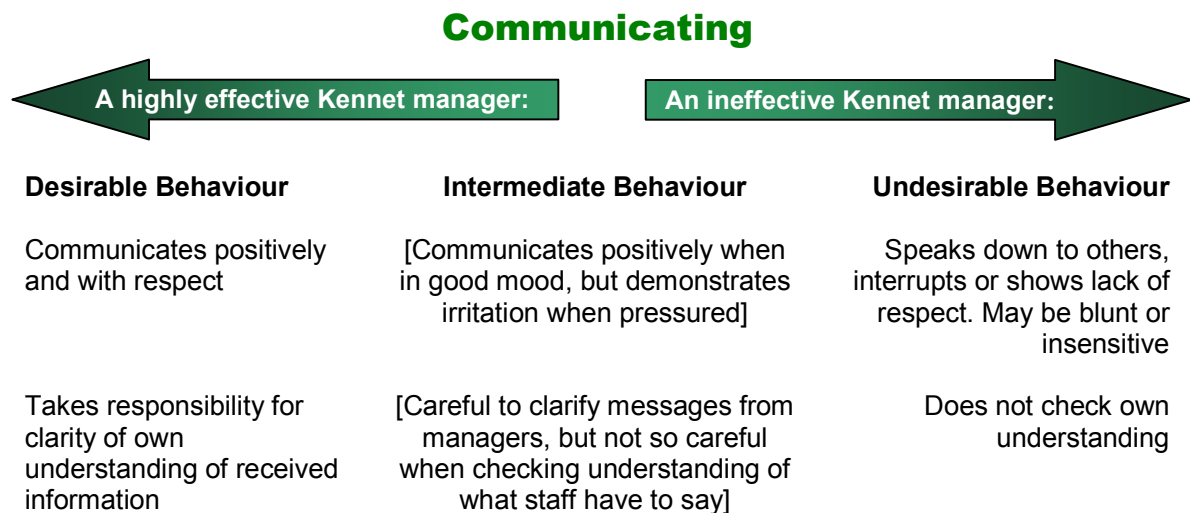
The competency framework for Managers at Kennet District Council has been developed using valuable input from members of the managerial group, their direct line reports and Councillors. In defining and benchmarking the competencies, Insight HR Consulting have also incorporated existing knowledge from their experience of working with other local authorities. The result is a blueprint for performance of an excellent Kennet manager which specifies what is now required of managers from first line managers (including team Managers) through to the most senior managers, in terms of the behaviours, skills and qualities needed to take Kennet forward.

### **Understanding the framework**

The competencies are defined by summary headings supported by a number of specific behaviours or characteristics. These behaviours are described in terms of polar dimensions. At the 'positive' extreme of each dimension is the description of a desirable behaviour which would be demonstrated by a person who possesses the competency in question. At the other end there is the opposing undesirable behaviour, which is to be avoided. For each competency, therefore, the ability of the manager to consistently demonstrate as many positive behaviours as they can indicates the degree to which they possess that competency. Where the tendency is to behave towards the negative end of a dimension, a clear development need can be identified.

A spectrum of behaviour exists between each extreme. So, if an individual demonstrates behaviour that does not perfectly match a positive extreme, it does not necessarily mean that they are consequently aligned with the negative extreme. In fact, their behaviour may be consistent with a point somewhere in the middle. Similarly, it is possible for a leader to show both positive and negative sides of the same dimension at different times, and to have their overall performance fall between the two. If this is the case, then a development need to achieve consistency in performance (e.g. between different circumstances or people), can be highlighted.

The following example of two of the dimensions from the *Communicating* competency includes the extreme positions, and also examples of behaviours which may sit between the two, to illustrate the continuum between them.



Since this is a generic framework covering a range of positions, from 1<sup>st</sup> line managers through to senior managers, there may be a limited number of behavioural indicators that are more applicable to certain roles than others. For example, a 1<sup>st</sup> line manager may have limited contact with Members, and may therefore have limited opportunity to show 'Political Awareness' (M10). (The Political Awareness competency has been identified as being primarily for senior and some middle managers and is clearly labelled.) In these instances, the line manager would usually agree which are the most critical areas to focus on, or an individual may apply their own use of judgment in identifying behaviours most applicable to their own role.

### How the framework will be used

Although the framework specifies qualities of the 'perfect' Kennet manager, it is accepted that it would not be realistic to expect anyone to exhibit all positive behaviours over all ten competencies all of the time. However, there is an expectation that managers strive towards the model of the ideal Kennet manager. The framework should therefore be viewed as a developmentally focused tool that allows performance *relative* to the extremes to be meaningfully assessed, monitored and compared over time.

Comparing managers' performance against the competency framework will enable accurate specification of what they do well, and what it is that requires development. The framework also enables consistency to be achieved in monitoring ongoing performance and progress.

Competency frameworks are often also used in recruitment and selection as a framework against which to measure candidate's performance.

## Leading and Inspiring People (M1)

*Leads and motivates people. Is approachable, inspirational and demonstrates integrity and fairness. Is a strong, confident and personable leader*



Demonstrates commitment, dynamism drive, energy, enthusiasm and optimism

Inspires and motivates others. Generates commitment, confidence, pride & ownership

Earns and retains respect and loyalty. Gives something to aspire to

Is emotionally resilient. Has 'mental toughness'. Copes with stress/ pressure

Maintains confidentiality – can be trusted

Is accountable – willing to take direct responsibility even in difficult situations.

Is reliable and dependable

Demonstrates honesty and integrity

Is personable and approachable. Puts people at ease and breaks down barriers Has an 'open-door' policy. Is visible

Is fair, objective, equal and consistent

Is patient, understanding and tolerant. Treats others respectfully. Values people

Demonstrates genuine concern for others Takes an interest in people

Has a good sense of humour

Is unenthusiastic, flat, steady or uninspired. Is negative, disengaged or pessimistic

Does not inspire or motivate people. Struggles to draw people with them

Depends on hierarchy to command respect. Manages by fear. Doesn't lead by example

Is volatile, unpredictable, moody or panics. Has inappropriately visible, strong or excessive reactions

Gossips, breaks confidentiality. Is indiscreet

Defers responsibility or blames others when things go wrong

Is unreliable or undependable

Plays the game, but works to own agenda. Appears sly, manipulative or defensive

Is aloof, formal or less approachable. Has a 'closed door' Is rarely seen

Treats people inconsistently or unfairly

Is impatient, disrespectful or arrogant. Only values positions and qualifications

Has little interest in others. Talks to staff to issue instructions. No social interaction.

Uses humour inappropriately. Does not show a sense of humour

## Communicating (M2)

*Communication is strong in terms of content, frequency, style or method, and reaches all appropriate audiences. Listens effectively and discusses openly as well as passing on information.*

A highly effective Kennet manager:	A less effective Kennet manager:
Is articulate. Communicates clearly and concisely	Finds communication difficult. Gives mixed messages
Uses appropriate language and pitches information at the right level	Does not talk at an appropriate level. Uses jargon
Communicates confidently and is assertive	Is reluctant, hesitant and lacks confidence.
Uses communication to create a positive impact. Is patient, interesting and inspiring	Uses patronising language or tone of voice, inappropriate or derogatory language
Is sensitive to the impact of their communication on others	Lacks awareness of the impact of communications on others
Provides clear, concise reports, press releases and other written communications. Writes creatively and fluently	Presents written communication that is unclear, lengthy or poorly written
Listens well, without interrupting or judging. Remains objective. Asks questions	Does not listen. Interrupts and talks over others. Appears disinterested, or rushes people along. Talks at people.
Accurately and promptly passes information on to others, in all directions, using formal distribution channels as appropriate	Communicates inconsistently with others. No formal knowledge distribution. Sees knowledge as power to be held on to.
Identifies the best style of communication. Uses a variety of communication methods	Excessive use of email, or any other single communication method

## Developing People (M3)

*Invests time and effort in 'people issues'; recruiting, retaining, training and developing good people. Effectively manages performance. Empowers others and encourages personal development. Enhances professional expertise and maximises potential.*



Invests effort in recruiting good people.  
Demonstrates sound recruitment practices

Recognises, addresses and prevents high staff sickness or turnover

Takes responsibility for staff development and management

Supports training and development and progresses people through their careers  
Nurtures skills, abilities and talent

Is genuinely open to feedback, responds positively to learning opportunities and keeps abreast of own development

Keeps up to date with changes in their field  
Has the knowledge and technical competence to do their job

Develops a 'tone', culture and language of performance management

Holds people accountable. Challenges poor performance or issues directly and early on.

Gives feedback and praise that is meaningful and relevant

Publicly respects and recognises achievements. Appreciates others' work.  
Gives formal recognition

Does not prioritise good recruitment.  
Demonstrates poor practices

Does not recognise, address or prevent high staff turnover

Pushes 'HR' issues to HR. Handles these issues poorly

Provides poor induction or training for staff.  
Misses chances for succession planning or developing talent. Undermines confidence

Does not recognise own areas for development. Does not act on feedback or known areas for development

Lets expertise become obsolete Does not keep up to date with technical or continuing professional development

Does not promote or actively manage performance

Avoids or makes light of issues. Leaves issues to develop into formal procedures

Gives no feedback or only gives criticism,  
Gives inappropriate praise

Never says thank you. Has a lack of awareness of what work people do. Takes credit for others' ideas or work.

## Working Collaboratively (M4)

*Works co-operatively with a range of people, both internally and externally. Builds and strengthens partnerships, with other service areas, suppliers and other professionals. Works effectively within and leading teams*



Is persuasive and engaging

Is autocratic, controlling or bullying.

Is genuinely consultative. Is eager to hear new ideas, open to suggestions, prepared to be challenged and compromise

Devalues others' contributions. Is not willing to change or listen to new ideas. Does not listen to reasons or explanations

Builds and maintains a wide range of positive, open and productive relationships

Does not raise issues openly. Plays the game, has own agenda

Works in collaboration with colleagues across disciplines. Looks for win-win outcomes for everyone

Does not understand other teams' needs. Wants the spotlight to be on own area. Is selfish or would prefer to work alone

Keeps partners and stakeholders informed and involved

Does not engage and involve stakeholders

Supports colleagues. Is willing to defend them against criticism appropriately

Undermines people. Exposes colleagues to undue pressures and criticism

Understands and develops the strengths of the team. Gets the best from their teams

Does not appreciate the strengths within the team or get the best from them

Helps the team to gel. Builds team identity, encourages commitment, contribution, participation and cohesion

Leaves the team to get on with the tasks. Does not develop commitment. Dictates

Ensures that teams discuss and explore ideas and monitor and review own improvements

Takes control from the team and does not involve or engage them in improvement planning

Engages staff meaningfully in the construction of plans or goals, with teams taking responsibility

Undermines ownership and devalues people's input

## Planning and Prioritising (M5)

*Plans, prioritises and organises time and tasks effectively. Translates objectives into tangible action plans. Manages their workload and time effectively.*



Focuses on the main objectives. Gets the priorities right. Is able to look at the bigger picture and not be distracted by trivia

Does the enjoyable but low priority tasks rather than the most important tasks. Easily distracted, poor prioritisation

Plans ahead. Creates time and space to think long-term

Gives little time for planning – is too busy doing tasks. Is short-sighted in planning

Plans time to allow people to contribute effectively. Appreciates other people's workloads, commitments and pressures

Too much delegation. Does not respect other people's plans, commitments and pressures

Allows time to be available to staff

Is too busy to give time to staff.

Delegates effectively. Can let go of tasks. Trusts people to do their job

Not enough delegation. Tries to do too much alone. Is suspicious. Over-monitors, interferes or chases people excessively

Delegates clearly so staff feel empowered and are clear on objectives

Fails to delegate clearly so others are unclear and struggle to deliver

Pays sufficient attention to detail

Makes mistakes through not checking work

Demonstrates good time-keeping – keeps appointments and is punctual

Does not keep appointments or arrive at agreed times. Is 'too busy' for meetings.

Meets deadlines

Misses targets and deadlines

Works efficiently and productively. Is well-organised, thorough and conscientious.

Is disorganised, chaotic or panics. Crisis management

Demonstrates and respects a good work-life balance

Disrupts own or others' work life balance

## Delivering Results (M6)

*Demonstrates commitment and persistence in achieving results. Maximises the impact and benefit of available resources. Takes responsibility for progress against plans, targets and objectives.*



Translates the vision into goals and objectives for his or her area

Relies on statutory indicators

Manages resources effectively. Maximises the benefits of available resources

Does not target resources to priorities or maximise their benefit

Establishes meaningful, clear, demanding and realistic targets and priorities

Sees targets as unrealistic or has conflicting priorities. Fails to address need

Meets targets. Remains focused through to completion. Delivers results

Changes the goal-posts at the last minute. Does not achieve targets

Drives efficiency. Delivers quality improvements/continuous improvements

Looks for increases in budgets to solve problems

Is resourceful and finds solutions. Dissolves problems and finds ways around obstacles

Sees obstacles, lets problems grow or finds new ones

Demonstrates financial management skills, manages budgets effectively

Overspends/misuses budgets. Spends without caution. Lack of budget control

Monitors workloads, reviews progress and manages performance

Does not monitor or review progress against objectives

Is dynamic and restless to achieve and improve things. Not afraid to implement new ideas. Instigates change

Doesn't instigate or drive change. Appears to accept change but fights a 'rear-guard action', undermining it. Resistant

Is compliant with legislation, codes, regulations, policy and procedures

May see rules and procedures as optional or actively not comply, inappropriately

## Making Effective Decisions (M7)

*Demonstrates good decision-making processes. Critically analyses and evaluates information effectively. Demonstrates objective judgement and is prepared to take key decisions, in a rational and timely manner.*



Makes timely decisions

Takes time to critically and objectively understand alternative viewpoints and options before making a decision

Takes ownership and responsibility for decisions

Has the ability to say no. Is not afraid to make difficult, or unpopular decisions

Demonstrates a substantial level of analysis. Adopts a systematic and informed approach to problem solving

Demonstrates the technical knowledge to support operational decisions

Thinks through the implications of decisions  
Considers repercussions for everyone

Knows when to show tenacity in the face of resistance, and when to modify or change decisions

Assimilates and evaluates new information quickly. Quick-thinking

Does not allow personal feelings or involvement to influence decisions which should remain professional

Either rushes to be decisive or is indecisive

Considers only a limited range of views or options before reaching a decision. Own agenda or prejudices take priority

Hides behind others' decisions or defers to others. Does not own their decisions

Wants to make everyone happy and can't  
Avoids difficult decisions

Considers only the obvious surface level factors. Makes reactive and piecemeal decisions

Makes decisions without the technical expertise necessary

Makes decisions without considering the fallout or impact

Wavers when encountering difficulties.  
Agrees too readily for a 'quiet life' or too stubbornly stands by their decisions

Takes too long to appreciate new information

Allows personal feelings or bias to cloud professional judgement

## Customer Care and Customer Focus (M8)

*Demonstrates care and consideration for customers. Meets or exceeds the changing demands and expectations of customers. Promotes a genuinely customer focused culture. Actively involves customers and is empathic to their needs.*



Promotes a genuine customer focused culture. Encourages customer focus in staff

Assumes and supports an overly member or officer led culture. Under-emphasises or under-values customer focus

Is able to work well with a wide range of customers. Encourages representation from all sections of the organisation or community

Works with a limited range of customers  
Ignores minorities or marginalises underrepresented groups

Is consistent and fair to all customers

Discriminates or is inconsistent in service provision

Proactively shifts from provider convenience to customer need in service delivery

Constructs services that meet service area aims or convenience but do not address customer needs

Engages with, really listens and responds to customers needs. Recognises the priorities and preferences of customers

Make assumptions about customer needs. Does not really listen to customers, or identify customer priorities or preferences

Designs services to deliver what customers actually want or need. Provides aligned or integrated services for customers

Fails to match resources to customer needs. Does not align or integrate services across different functions for customers

Thinks through the impact of changes on service delivery

Gives little thought of the implications of change on customer experience of services

Invites customers' comments and provides feedback to customers following consultation or changes

Does not 'close the loop' and tell customers what has happened following consultation

Values, and is open to, customer feedback and rectifies issues raised. Handles complaints effectively

Deflects attention from deficiencies. Rejects or has little interest in feedback. Ignores complaints or mismanages them

## Promoting Kennet (M9)

*Publicises organisational successes, seeks to build the reputation of Kennet and presents a positive image of the authority. Demonstrates organisational citizenship and commitment to the organisation.*



Demonstrates corporate loyalty. Promotes the Council as a positive, engaging and competent organisation

Does not demonstrate loyalty or support the key objectives and vision. Is negative and cynical about the Council or parts of it

Puts Kennet's interests ahead of own interests

Works to a personal agenda

Sees promotion of services and successes as part of the 'day job'. Recognises the need to promote Kennet positively

Too busy 'doing the tasks' than 'wasting time' promoting services

Identifies and takes opportunities to successfully promote Kennet DC activities and achievements.

Moves on to the next 'thing' without celebrating or publicising success

Looks for a positive news story in a project and tells stakeholders

Ignores the media and key stakeholders

Finds creative ways to promote and raise the profile of the authority

Misses innovative ways to promote services and successes

Is outward looking, and proactive in contacting people

Stays in the office. Keeps their head down

Understands customer expectations and appreciates which aspects of service delivery are key to promote

Spin, and no substance. Does not appreciate what really matters to customers or key aspects of services to promote

Uses performance indicators that are meaningful to customers

Uses performance indicators that are meaningless to customers

Delivers the message and proactively communicates with customers. Explains policies openly

Relies on customers to manage contact or find things for themselves. Communicates through limited channels

## Political Awareness (M10)

(Senior and some middle managers)

*Demonstrates political awareness and sensitivity. Understands the impact of the political environment, both locally and nationally. Works effectively with Councillors and encourages open, professional and respectful two-way communication in the spirit of partnership.*



Works in ways that are compatible with political goals

Works in ways which are inconsistent with political direction

Manages relationships between Kennet and other local authorities or stakeholders

Does not work effectively with other local authorities and stakeholders

Develops and maintains informal and open relationships with members. Is at ease and relaxed with members

Has formal and 'arms length' relationships with members. Is awkward, shy, defensive, aggressive or ill at ease with members.

Sees the political implications of decisions

Is flippant to the politics of situations

Demonstrates tact, diplomacy and respect with members

Is disrespectful or lacks tact with members

Engages early and proactively with politicians. Welcomes and encourages constructive challenge

Sees Councillors as obstacles to be avoided if possible. Ignores or alienates politicians. Does not encourage challenge.

Cares about what politicians think

Does not care what members think

Understands the political aspirations of Councillors

Is insensitive to, or unaware of political agendas. Is politically naïve

Supports Councillors in developing focused aspirations. Recognises how Councillors will measure success

Does not support Councillors to develop focused aspirations, or appreciate how Councillors will measure success

Helps Councillors to understand what can't or must be done

Does not take the time or make the effort to help Councillors to understand issues