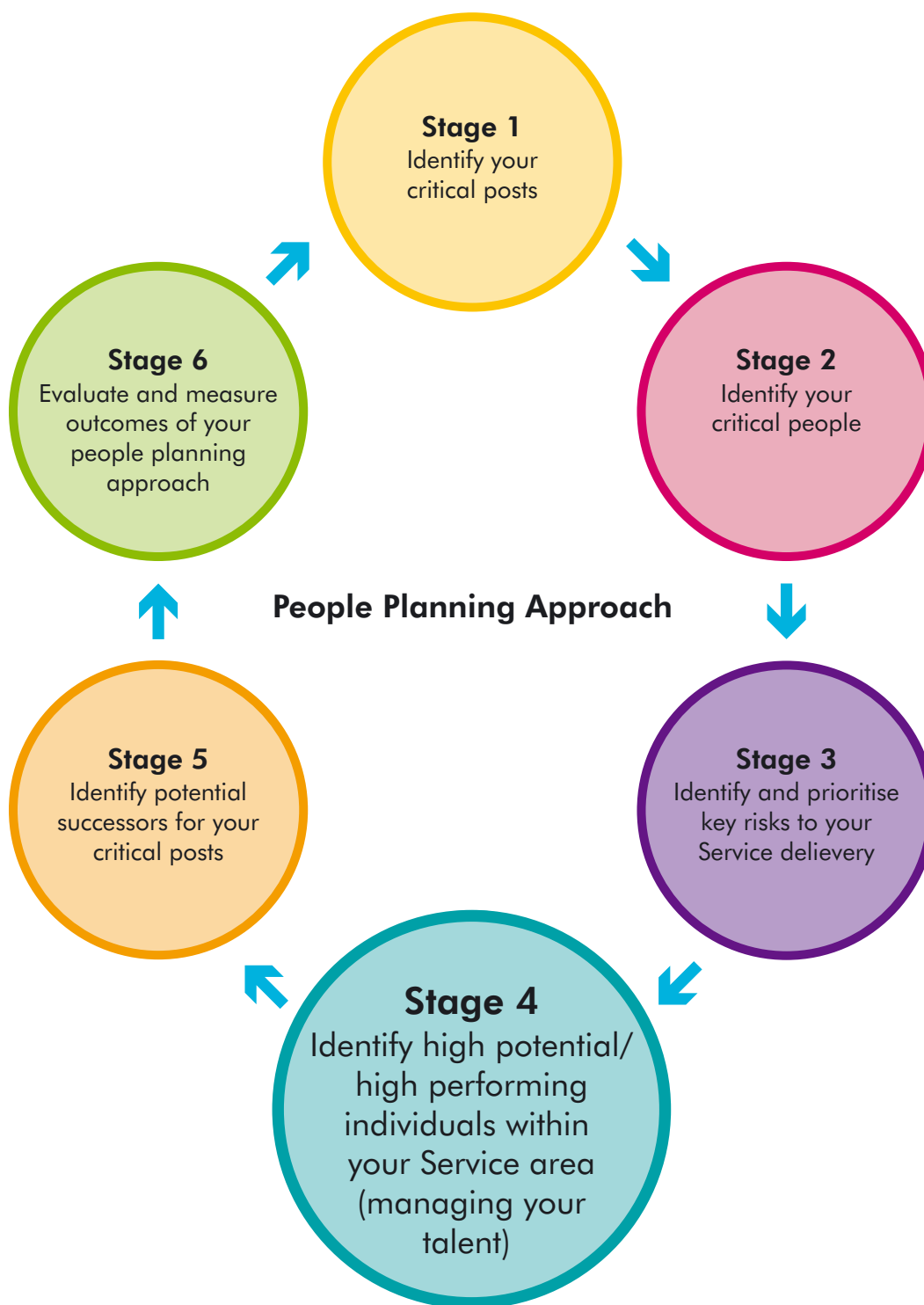




PEOPLE PLANNING TOOLKIT

Stage 4: Managing your talent







What is talent?

'Talent' is defined as a dormant or untapped quality to be accessed in the future, either in an individual employee or a group of employees. 'Talent' is an indicator of the capacity to learn, as well as the speed with which a person can adapt to new challenges. It should be noted that talent is not the same as educational achievement – an individual doesn't need to have had any formal education to be considered 'talent'!

What is talent management?

Talent management is defined by the Institute of Management as a means of identifying, releasing and guiding untapped potential in people.

Within the Council, this translates into developing a planned strategy for investing in the development of talented individuals, retaining their commitment to the Council and properly using their abilities to leverage high performance in the delivery of Council services.

How do we identify our talent?

Identifying talent is not easy as you are trying to identify potential – that is, something that 'could be' as opposed to something that already exists. As potential is all about future performance rather than current performance, it is impossible to predict an employee's potential to assume bigger or more challenging roles with 100% confidence or complete objectivity. However, a range of factors may assist you to develop a reasonably accurate and comprehensive picture of an employee's potential.

Hints and tips:

You may well identify an employee as 'high potential' and they subsequently fail to realise that potential. Don't be disheartened – this is only to be expected. You must, however, ensure that you review your high potential/high performing employees on a regular basis so that this is identified early on and that your investment in terms of time and money is not wasted.

It is recommended that you use the high potential/high performance matrix that is set out in this guide to identify your talent. This guide will help you identify who your high potential/high performing employees are and how to plan their development effectively so that you have a ready pool of talent which can compete for vacancies, and specifically, Critical Post vacancies within your Service area.

Hints and tips:

The objective of developing a ready pool of talent is not to ear-mark employees for promotion but to provide focussed and accelerated development for employees who are considered to have the ability to take on higher and more complex challenges. This does not guarantee promotion in any shape or form and all vacancies will continue to be filled subject to an open, fair and transparent competition process. However, one of the key advantages of talent management is that, done well, such an approach equips your employees with the skills, knowledge, experiences and exposure that are required for your key vacancies – all that's left for the employee is to demonstrate this at the application and selection stages of the recruitment process!

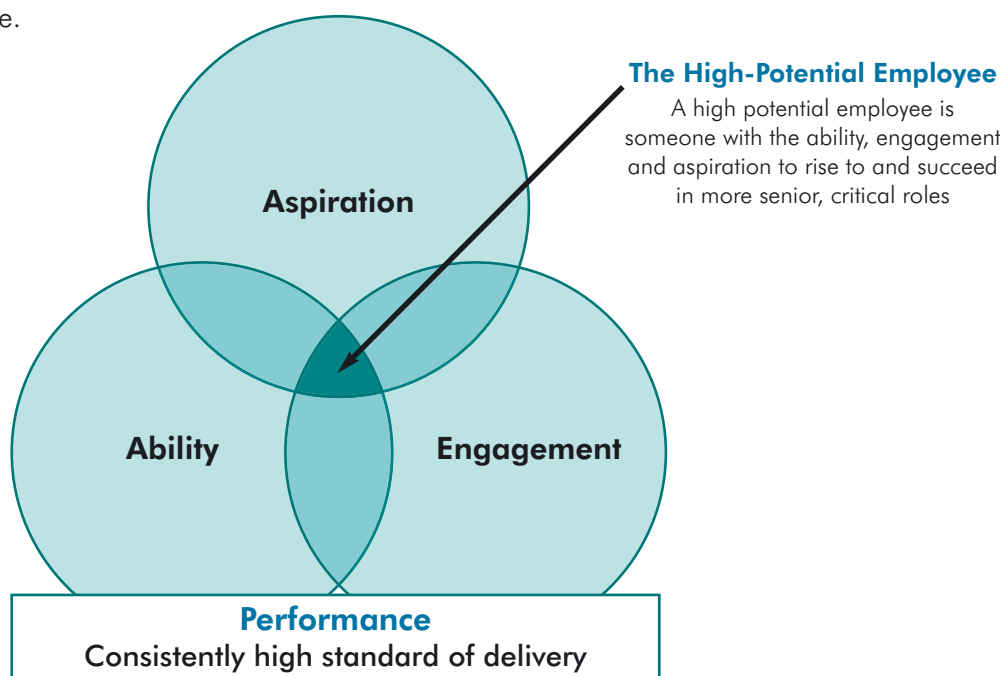


Identifying your high potential employees

A high potential employee is one considered to have the ability to take on higher and/or more complex challenges. Depending on the context and their current role, this may mean progressing one, two or more organisational levels in future, or taking on broader and more critical roles at the same level.

All high potential individuals will be high performing as they will be demonstrating some ability or potential ability to function in a bigger role. Not every high performing employee, however, will be identified as high potential. Why? Some high performing employees will have already reached the highest level at which they are able to function effectively. Others may simply not want to move to the next level or a bigger role.

The following model identifies the critical traits that will help define whether an employee is to be considered high potential. To rise to and succeed in more senior, more critical roles, employees must have the aspiration, engagement and ability to do so. Ability is most important, engagement second, and aspiration third, but none alone can serve as a guarantee. Without significant amounts of all three, employees will simply fail to excel in the next more critical job.



Aspiration

The extent to which an employee wants or desires the set of responsibilities, challenges, and rewards that succeeding in a more senior, more critical role entails.

Ability

A combination of the innate characteristics and learned skills that an employee uses to carry out his/her day-to-day work.

Innate characteristics

- Mental/cognitive agility
- Emotional intelligence

Learned skills

- Technical/functional skills
- Interpersonal skills

Engagement

Engagement consists of four elements:

- Emotional commitment – the extent to which employees value, enjoy, and believe in the Council
- Rational commitment – the extent to which employees believe that staying with the Council is in their self-interest
- Discretionary effort – employee willingness to go “above and beyond the call of duty”
- Intent to stay – employee’s desire to stay with the Council



Past performance and observed behaviours have been proved time and time again to be the most effective means of predicting future performance. However, identifying high potential employees is about more than just predicting future performance. Roles of greater responsibility and/or greater breadth tend to have very different kinds of requirements in terms of technical skills, behaviours, business experience and the types of challenges that will be faced in the new role compared to the previous role in which the employee has a proven track record of performing well.

A robust talent management approach is essential to avoid employees being promoted into bigger/broader roles based solely on past or current performance and then perhaps struggling or even failing completely in the new post.

Key steps to identifying your high potential employees

- 1) The Senior Management Team/Group Management Team/Corporate Management Team will meet initially to seek consensus on what factors constitute high potential within their particular Service area. In doing this Chief Officers should refer to the Council's competency framework which sets out key skill and behavioural requirements for each family of jobs.
- 2) Details of what high potential "looks like" in the Service area is then cascaded to all managers responsible for identifying and nominating high potential employees for further development. The following list suggests relevant sources of information that could help you assess your employees against the agreed high potential indicators. This list, however, is not exhaustive:

Performance	Ability
Current performance, capability strengths and gaps, results and performance ratings	Manager assessment of key characteristics – e.g. decision-making; risk analysis; problem solving; strategic capacity; emotional intelligence; adaptability; commitment to learning – mapped against a template of future leadership/critical post requirements

Performance	Ability
Corporate knowledge and experience which will be relevant in future	External assessment tools including psychometric testing e.g. work style; leadership or motivation inventories to identify strengths and potential 'derailing' factors
360° feedback	Assessment centre data based on realistic simulation exercises, case studies and interviews, designed against future critical role and leadership requirements
Behavioural interviews to determine past performance in challenging situations	
Individual manager nominations supported by the views of a range of others	Career history/biographical data
Observed behaviours	Career preferences and intentions

- 3) Once you have started to assess employees against the agreed high potential indicators, you may wish to plot this data in a way that will help guide and inform your decisions as to who in your team should be considered for further, accelerated development and within what timeframe using the following performance/potential matrix. It is recommended that, at the very minimum, you carry out this assessment for all your Critical Posts (identified in Stage 1) and your Critical People (identified in Stage 2). However, if you wish to extend the assessment process to all employees within your team then the same principles apply.



POTENTIAL	High Growth Potential/Seeks New Challenge	Box 7: Role Mismatch/New to role	Box 8: Growth employee	Box 9: Next generation leader
	Growth Potential/Role Expansion	Box 4: Role Dilemma/New to role	Box 5: Core employee	Box 6: High Impact Performer
	No/Limited Growth Potential	Box 1: Under performer	Box 2: Effective employee	Box 3: Trusted Professional
		Does not meet/partially meets expectations – should not be in this category for more than 6 months	Meets expectations	Exceeds expectations
PERFORMANCE				

Box 7: Role Mismatch/New to role

- Temporary situation (new in function, expected to become fully performing in 6 months)
- May require on-the-job coaching due to promotion or new in the Council/Service area
- Needs a lot of information about culture and/or exposure to technical knowledge
- Full performed in previous roles and is working to expand capabilities to perform in a larger role
- If no improvement in performance this becomes a capability issues and should be dealt with in accordance with the Capability Policy
- Regular 1-2-1's required

Box 8: Growth employee

- Always achieves targets/deadlines/manages workload
- Always meets expectation
- Occasionally exceeds expectations
- Keeps up with changes that impact upon the service they deliver/Council as a whole
- Comes up with innovative ideas/pushes boundaries/challenges status quo
- Demonstrates capabilities and competencies that are requirements of the next level
- Could currently take on roles of next tier (deputise)
- Needs challenge, opportunities to develop performance further

Box 9: Next generation leader

- Constantly exceeds expectations, delivering over and above what is required for the role within given timescales
- Demonstrates a range of capabilities and competencies that are required at the next level
- Has the potential/ability to move vertically or horizontally if the opportunity arose with a high probability of success
- Has vision, can map where and how to progress as a Council in the future
- Sets and strives to achieve stretching targets/new boundaries
- Highly driven and self motivated
- Sets high expectations for self and others
- Requires challenges to keep motivated
- Could become a mentor
- Requires challenging development opportunities
- Is accountable for decisions/actions

Box 4: Role Dilemma/New to role

- Mismatch in current role (e.g. good at some things but large knowledge or performance gaps)
- May demonstrate competencies that are better suited to other roles
- Low confidence in their own developmental potential
- Needs corrective action plan with clear milestones – if no improvement in performance this becomes a capability issue and should be dealt with in accordance with the Capability Policy
- Regular 1-2-1's required
- May need to move to a more appropriate role within 6 months

Box 5: Core employee

- Always performs to required standard
- Always achieves targets/deadlines/manager's workload
- Keep up with changes that impact upon the service they deliver/Council as a whole
- Researches and implements sector specific best practice
- May need encouragement to achieve full potential – coaching, more challenging targets, greater and broader Council involvement

Box 6: High Impact Performer

- Constantly exceeds required standard/expectations
- Demonstrates some capabilities and competencies that are required at the next level
- Very good representative of the Council both internally and externally
- Good interaction with colleagues, peers and managers
- Uses a wide internal and external network effectively to achieve goals/advise on future developments
- Thrives on challenge

Box 1: Under performer

- Does not currently demonstrate the right competencies for the role
- Actions to be put in place to improve performance – Capability Procedure
- Not demonstrating the appropriate technical skills
- No confidence in their own development potential
- No promotion potential
- Big gap between what is needed and current performance
- Regular 1-2-1's required

Box 2: Effective employee

- Usually performs to required standard/achieves work targets within timescales
- May find it difficult to keep up with developments/issues that impact upon their role/service area/Council
- Not currently ready to consider applying for a high grade role
- Requires motivation and support to become a Core Employee/ Trusted Professional in the first instance

Box 3: Trusted Professional

- Professional backbone of the Council
- Excellent knowledge – the one everyone learns from
- Performance always reliable in all aspects
- Strong desire to remain in current position/at current level
- Stays up to date with current developments and methodology relating to their role
- Could become a mentor/coach



Note: this is a snapshot of your Service area only. Assessments will change over time given changes in performance during the year or personal circumstances and/or other factors that influence employees' decisions to participate in accelerated development programmes.

Employees will move between quadrants over time – the key is to base your assessment on as much objective information as possible in order to target your development strategies effectively.

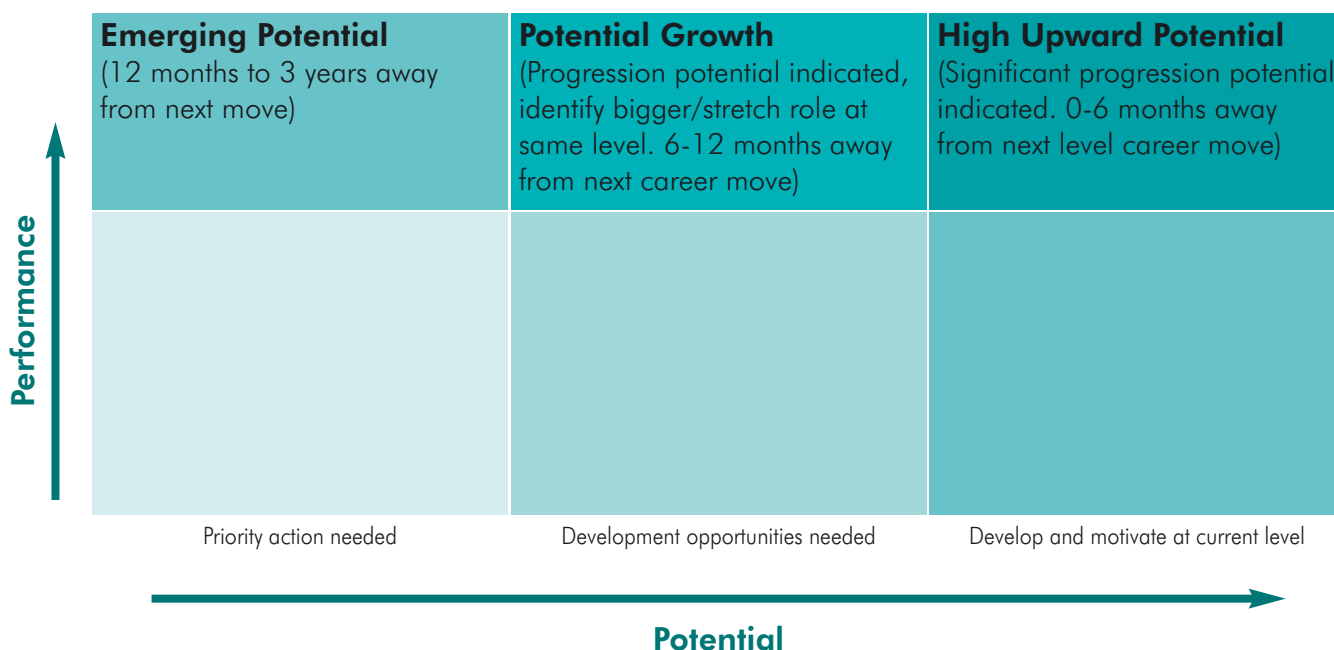
Those employees who sit in Box 9 are the primary candidates to be considered for accelerated development interventions. Their development needs to be targeted to encourage/enable them to be considered ready for opportunities at the next level relatively quickly, that is, within the next 6 months.

Note: Once considered “ready” these individuals will compete for promotion and/or vacant roles with other candidates (who may or may not have undertaken accelerated development opportunities) in an open, and transparent competitive selection exercise.

A wider pool of employees demonstrating potential is available by considering those employees who fall into Boxes 6 and 8.

For ease of reference this information can be documented as follows:

Service Area/Group, Month/Year



- 4) Once you have identified your high potential employees, you will nominate these individuals to the relevant Senior Management Team/Group Management Team/Corporate Management Team via your Chief Officer. A meeting will be set up with the sole purpose of discussing the suitability of the nominations submitted by individual managers. Wherever possible, the Chief Officers present should have worked with or at least have had some kind of work-based interaction with the nominated employees in addition to robust evidence to support the manager's nomination. Where this is not the

case, the nominating manager and any other managers who have worked with the individual should be included in the discussion about the suitability of the nominated employee for accelerated development.

Need to make a decision around how the Talent Management approach is communicated within the Council – is it open and transparent? Are we going to develop a culture where managers justify why someone is not on the talent programme and what they need to do to be considered? Or is this something that is discussed between the manager and the individual and kept discreet?



Developing high potential employees/managing your talent

Once your high potential employees have been identified, the real value of this approach is in developing these employees effectively.

At this point there are a number of factors to consider:

- Some high potential employees may choose not to participate in development programmes due to family commitments or personal circumstances. Whilst these career preferences and intentions may change over time, these employees need to be valued for the contribution they make at their current level and strategies need to be put in place to continue their development and retain them for the longer term.
- Just because an employee is identified as high potential, this potential still needs to be developed to be successful. High potential won't necessarily be realised unless nurtured through targeted and tailored development experiences.
- High potential employees often move comparatively quickly through various roles (laterally or vertically). They may be at different stages of their career, and differ in their experience levels, but will all have individualised development needs which need to be addressed. No two development plans will therefore be the same.
- Participation in accelerated development programmes does not guarantee promotion within the Council and all employees need to be made aware of this. Any promotion or move into an alternative role will be subject to open competition in the usual way.

The Council is committed to investing in the development of high potential employees and so to this end, development strategies must be carefully targeted and must be tailored to the specific needs of the individual.

What are the most effective development experiences?

When considering the development experiences required by each individual, the following questions may help you, as their manager, focus on their specific needs:

On the job development

- What stretch assignments are available in the workplace?
- What opportunities are there in the next 3-6 months to:
 - Take on a leadership role?
 - Take on a strategic planning role?
 - Take on a project management role?
 - Share their knowledge/skills with others?
 - Take an analytical role?
 - Lead change?
 - Broaden their perspective outside of their current Service area?
- What rotation/secondments opportunities are there?

Informal development

- What opportunities are there to learn from others in the workplace with complementary skill sets?
- What personal attributes could benefit from formal coaching?
- What job shadowing opportunities are available/appropriate?
- What networking opportunities are available?
- What experience/exposure could be gained e.g. from attending relevant forums, strategy meetings, committees, partnership working etc?

Formal development

- What specialist development is required through formal development e.g. bespoke management development programmes, specialist training etc?
- Formalised feedback processes also provide powerful guidance



Key links to Council policies and practices

Talent management brings together a number of important Council policies and practices. In order to be successful, any talent management approach really needs to focus on co-coordinating and integrating the following:

- Recruitment – ensuring the right people are attracted to the Council
- Retention – developing and implementing practices that reward and support employees
- Employee development – ensuring continuous informal and formal learning and development
- Leadership and “high potential employee” development – specific development programmes for existing and future leaders
- Performance management – specific processes that nurture and support performance, including feedback/measurement
- Workforce planning – planning for business and general changes, including addressing the ageing workforce and current/future skills shortages
- Culture – developing a positive, progressive and high performance “way of operating” within the Council

For further information or practical support in managing your talent, contact the People Development Team on 01443 424159 or 01443 424082.



Manager checklist

Action	Completed
1. Identify your high performing employees	
2. Identify your high potential employees	
3. Map these employees against high potential/high performance matrix	
4. Identify your primary candidates to be considered for accelerated development opportunities	
5. Nominate these individuals to your SMT/GMT/CMT via your Chief Officer	
6. Create tailored development plans to address specific needs of each successfully nominated individual	
7. Conduct regular performance reviews with successfully nominated individuals to monitor and assess progress against development objectives	
8. Review your high potential/high performing matrix on a regular basis to identify any changes in performance/assessment of potential	