



# Competency Framework



**Expected competencies for all employees**

**Please use in conjunction with the PDR Toolkit.**

**September 2016**

<b>Competency Framework DOCUMENT CONTROL</b>	
<b>Document Title</b>	<b>Competency Framework</b>
<b>Applies to</b>	All staff employed by the Council up to Assistant Director with a permanent or temporary contract.
<b>Document Replaces</b>	Competency Framework dated March 2013 and all previous versions
<b>Approval by</b>	Paul Wildsmith Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources
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<b>UNCONTROLLED IF PRINTED</b>	

## Introduction

1. The Competency Framework and PDR process directly link to achieving Council objectives and helps employees understand what is expected of them and how they can become responsible for their own performance.
2. Competencies describe the behaviour expected for successful performance taking into account skills, knowledge and the motivation we have. A competency affects how an action is performed, not just what is done. For example, an individual may know *how* to send an email, but this does not necessarily mean they are able to communicate effectively. They may have the technical skill to be able to use the software, and knowledge of the English language, but they may not write the email in a way that clearly communicates its purpose i.e. asking for information.
3. The Competency Framework is not just for the purpose of carrying out PDR's, it reflects the day to day behaviours which are expected of all employees and sets out how the Council wants its employees to work. It identifies expectations in behaviour and can be used alongside the Council's Values to complement discussions associated with conduct and is likely to assist with difficult conversations which concern standards of behaviour. A copy of the Council's Values is available on the Intranet and is also attached at **Appendix 1**.
  1. The Council's Values are,
    - a) Customer and Outcome Focussed
    - b) Innovation and Creativity
    - c) Teamwork
    - d) Valuing People
    - e) Openness and Honesty

## The Competency Framework

4. There are three levels of the competency framework,
  - a) Level 1 : Expected Competencies for all employees
  - b) Level 2 : Additional Core Management Competencies for all managers
  - c) Level 3 : Further Senior Manager Competencies for all managers at Senior Head of Service level and above
5. The Core Management Competencies may also be applied to employees who are not managers but the level of work and expectations on the role are at this level. The relevant framework should be agreed between the employee and manager as to which best suits the role and its expectations.
6. Each Competency level has the following themes;
  - a) Leadership
  - b) Efficiency and Resource Management
  - c) Leading Change and Innovation and Creativity
  - d) Communication
  - e) Teamwork
  - f) Developing self and others
7. The expected standard for each competency theme has been set although not all may apply and examples of ineffective behaviours for each theme have also been referenced to assist managers and employees.

8. The following table shows the main headings of the framework.

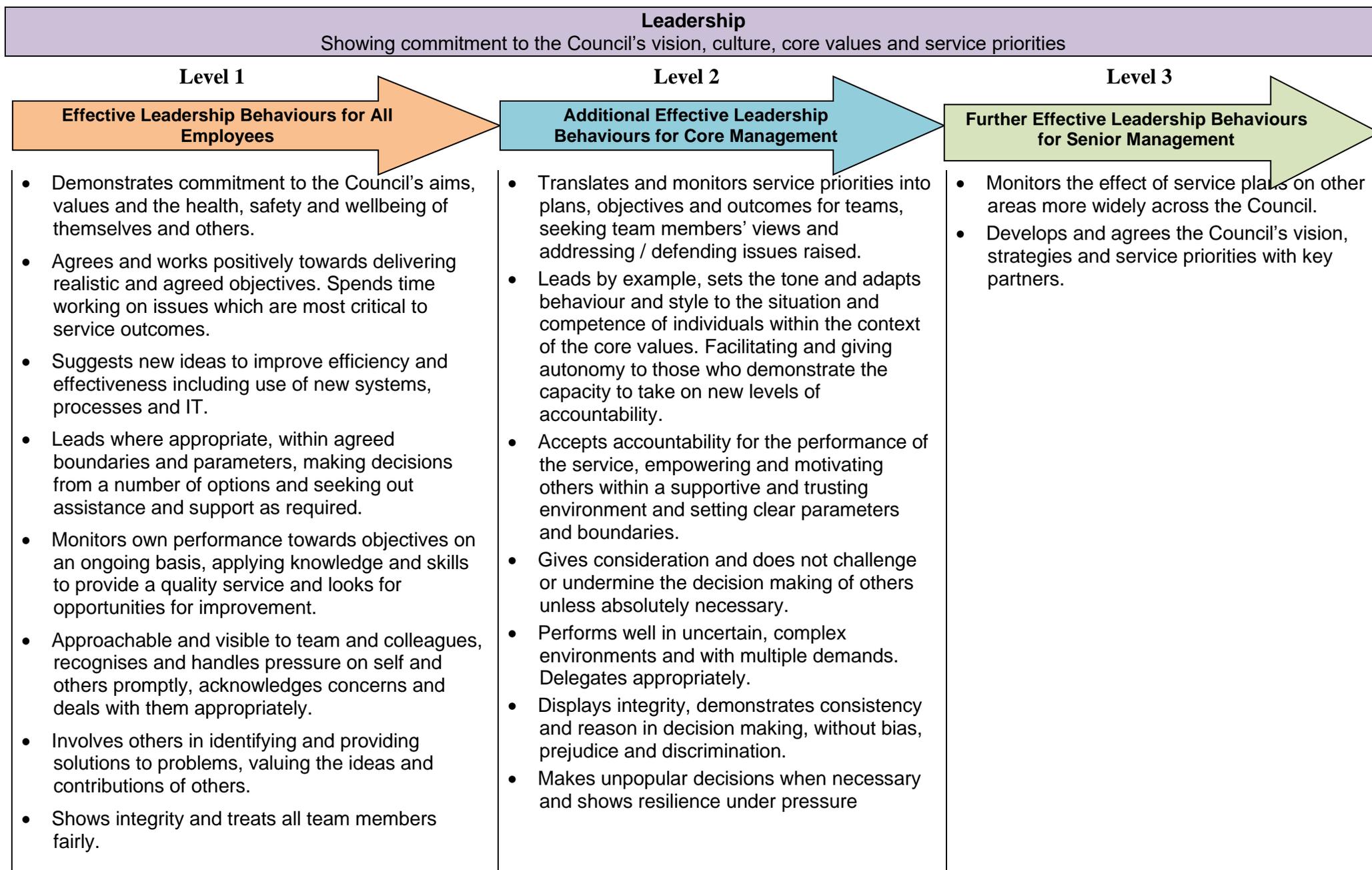
Leadership	Showing commitment to the Council's vision, culture, core values and service priorities
Efficiency and Resource Management	Showing commitment to the Council's Mid-Term Financial Plan, understanding and adhering to the effective use of resources and managing personal workloads in a productive way.
Leading Change, Innovation and Creativity	Responding positively and creating a climate and culture where innovation, efficiency, improvement and continuous change are seen as the norm by effective communication, leading by example and working within the Core Values.
Communication	Positively communicating in line with the Council's vision, aims, values and strategy.
Teamwork	Developing effective relationships, respecting different views, values and opinions and working towards achieving positive outcomes.
Developing Self and Others	Maintaining knowledge and skills to improve service outcomes and sharing knowledge and experience for the benefit of the Council.

### How to Read Competencies

9. It is the skills demonstrated rather than skills possessed which are crucial. An individual may be very able and have all the necessary skills to a high level but if they do not demonstrate those skills in their actual performance then this issue should be addressed.
10. The purpose of the competency assessment is to identify which competencies are most relevant to the employee's role. It is also possible that a service may want to set standard competencies for all their employees to focus on for that year.
11. Employees and managers should jointly assess the competency framework then;
- a) Rate the importance / relevance of the competency to the job, this should be either Low, Medium or High Importance
  - b) Discuss and agree the employees current level of competence and rank it Low, Medium or High
  - c) Discuss how frequently the employee demonstrates these competencies;
    - i. Always – this is how you routinely behave
    - ii. Mostly – you usually demonstrate this behaviour;
    - iii. Sometimes – you don't often demonstrate this behaviour;
    - iv. Rarely – this isn't really something you think of doing
  - d) Identify any gaps and agree development priorities considering the relevance to the job, its priority, how frequently the employee demonstrates these competencies, how gaps can be filled and within what time scale.
12. Generally, you only need to consider and focus on those competences that are considered **high importance to the job**, where the agreed **current level of competence is low or medium and the frequency of demonstrating the behaviour is less than 'Mostly'**. You do not need to focus on all of the competences at once and may agree to prioritise selected competences.
13. **All** employees must demonstrate behaviours at Level 1 of the Competency Framework. Managers should also demonstrate those **additional** behaviours detailed at Level 2 for Core Management and **further** behaviours detailed at Level 3 for Senior Managers at Head of Service level and above. Therefore, at Senior Manager Level, **all** levels of behaviour should be demonstrated.

### Use of Competencies as part of the PDR Meeting

14. The manager arranges the PDR meeting and sends out a copy of the PDR Master Form or PDR Master for Groups Form, and the Competency Framework (available on the intranet).
15. Employees are encouraged to prepare in advance for their PDR looking at the performance and competency development objectives set for the past PDR year and review their progress and achievements. The Competency Framework should be used to review the competencies set.
16. The Competency Framework includes effective and ineffective behaviours for each theme. It is important that all themes are considered to give an overall picture of the employees' performance and competency, particularly if this is an area of focus as detailed in *Paragraph 12* above.
17. Key behaviours within the competences where the manager feels that the employee has not demonstrated or can do more to demonstrate effective behaviours should be noted as part of the relevant objective on the PDR Master form.
18. At the PDR meeting, the manager and employee should agree which competences will be focussed on during the forthcoming PDR year; these will be recorded on the PDR Master form including how gaps and areas of development can be met as part of the relevant objective.
19. Whilst it is important that all behaviours in all themes should be met, 1 or 2 (certainly no more than 3) competences should be selected to focus on and look at in detail using the guidance i.e. high importance to job, low to medium level and frequency as detailed in *Paragraph 12* above.
20. It is useful to have a copy of the Competency Framework available in the PDR meeting to give an insight into how the levels link and when considering development. It will also give insight into the behaviours expected of managers and can be useful for 360 feedback purposes.
21. Performance against objectives and competences should be discussed as part of regular 121s and day to day management. It may be that gaps are closed during the performance year or roles changed and priorities then need to be adjusted accordingly.
22. Positive communications where competencies are effective should also be discussed as part of regular 121's and PDR meetings.
23. Further assistance with PDR and the Competency Framework can be sought from HR.



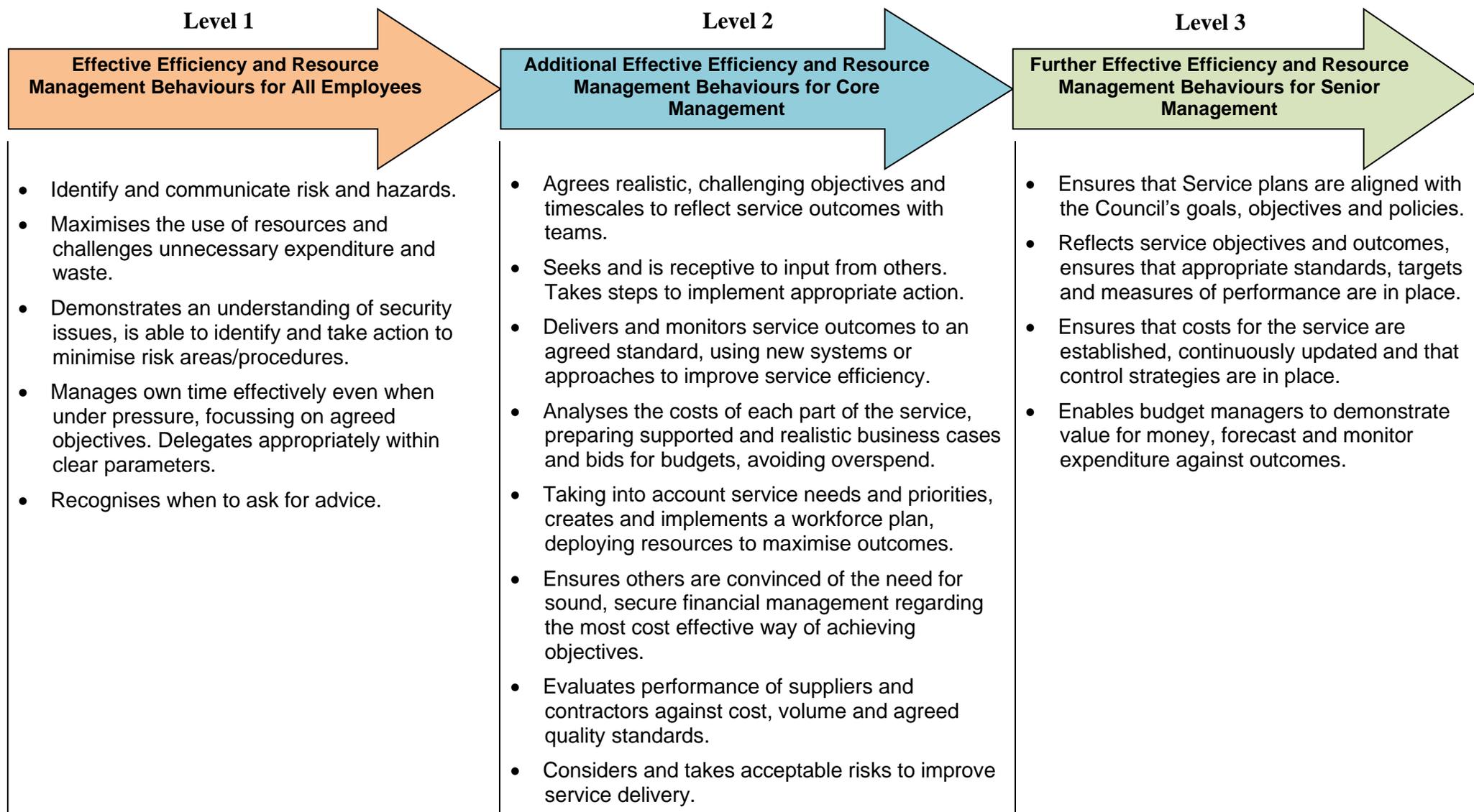


**Ineffective Leadership Behaviour may be:**

- Lack of commitment to the Council, service or team resulting in a negative impact.
- Reluctant to agree to objectives and carry out agreed priorities.
- Lack of clarity about own role and fails to seek clarification.
- Negative attitude to own work and that of others.
- Reluctance to implement and work within agreed boundaries and to new ways of working, e.g. works in a 'silo' on an individual, team or service basis.
- No consideration of wider and longer term impacts.
- No consideration of others, e.g. unapproachable, does not listen to others and demonstrates a blame culture.
- Does not demonstrate sensitivity to and consider the political impact of decisions.
- Avoids giving negative feedback to others to improve and address performance and conduct or service improvement issues.
- Under / over delegation detrimental to others and self.
- Does not lead by example to team / service / others.

**Efficiency and Resource Management**

Showing commitment to the Council's Mid-Term Financial Plan, understanding and adhering to the effective use of resources and managing personal workloads in a productive way.





**Ineffective Efficiency and Resource Management Behaviour may be:**

- Not demonstrating good customer service to both internal and external customers.
- Reluctance to challenge and inform others of waste.
- Does not agree SMART objectives for self and others to improve and perform effectively within agreed standards.
- Shows a disregard for Council policies and procedures and does not lead by example.
- Reluctance to undertake reviews in line with agreed objectives.
- Lack of knowledge about other services which impacts on own role or service, does not proactively seek knowledge or understanding to perform role effectively.
- Reluctance to address difficult situations including conduct, performance and client management where appropriate.
- Empire building and working in 'silo's' which have a negative impact on the team and service.

**Leading Change, Innovation and Creativity**

Responding positively and creating a climate and culture where innovation, efficiency, improvement and continuous change are seen as the norm by effective communication, leading by example and working within the Core Values

**Level 1**

**Effective Leading Change, Innovation and Creativity Behaviours for All Employees**

- Takes a positive, flexible and active role in change, providing support and encouragement to enable others to engage with change.
- Challenges procedures where appropriate, regularly reviews methods of work, considers innovative alternatives and suggests improvements in work practices.
- Ensures effective two-way communication processes are encouraged to maintain regular and open dialogue, especially during periods of change.
- Presents balanced views, drawing reasoned conclusions.
- Analyses and interprets information and makes decisions from a number of options without bias, prejudice or discrimination.
- Enable others to generate change and take agreed risks to achieve aims within agreed parameters.

**Level 2**

**Additional Leading Change, Innovation and Creativity Behaviours for Core Management**

- Anticipates, initiates and implements change by ensuring that robust plans are in place.
- Identifies benefits and costs of different options and assesses the risks associated with them before deciding.
- Develops a strategy to consider and manage risks, identifies levers, drivers and constraints and maximises/minimises them.
- Explains reasoning for decisions, draws out attitudes to change to effectively overcome objections or misgivings.
- Deals effectively with questions, criticisms and objections providing constructive responses.
- Appraises new ideas fairly, producing practical plans for innovative ideas.
- Anticipates, understands and deals with resistance to change, reviews and responds positively to setbacks, developing alternative action, deals flexibly, fairly and confidently with the unexpected.

**Level 3**

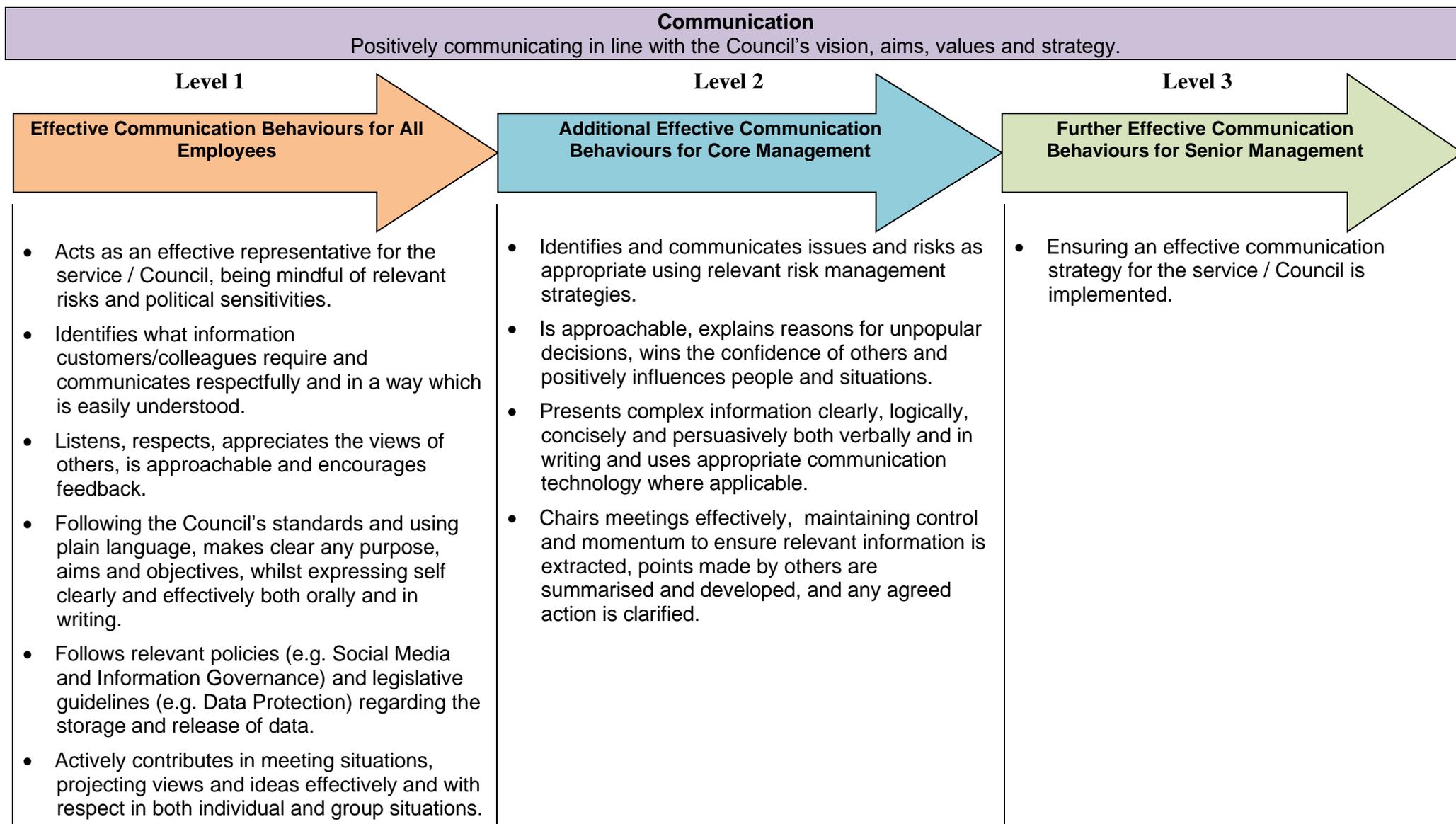
**Further Leading Change, Innovation and Creativity Behaviours for Senior Management**

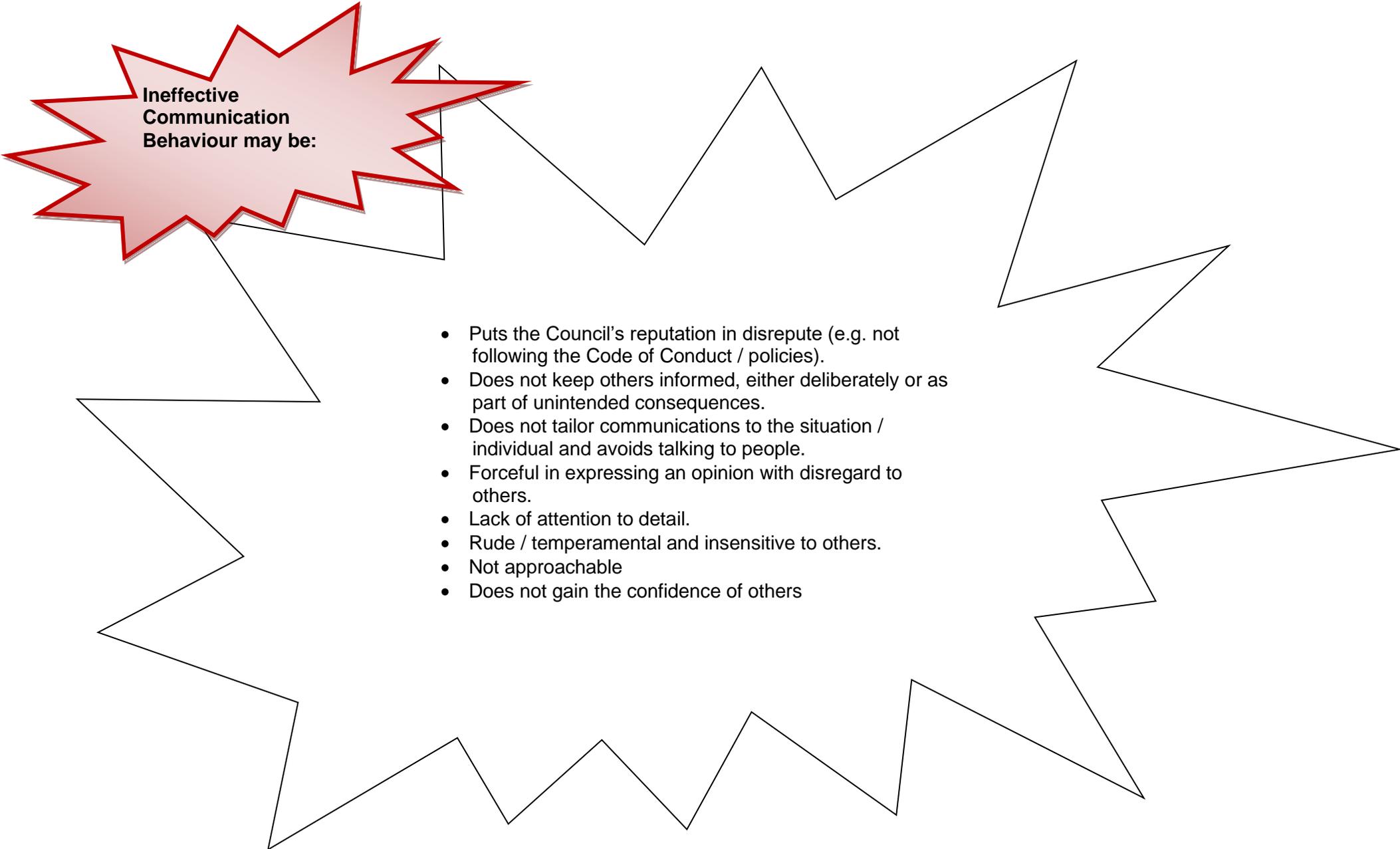
- Leads and manages major change.
- Gives full consideration to employee issues and ensures that Employee Relations procedures are followed.



**Ineffective Leading Change, Innovation and Creativity Behaviour may be:**

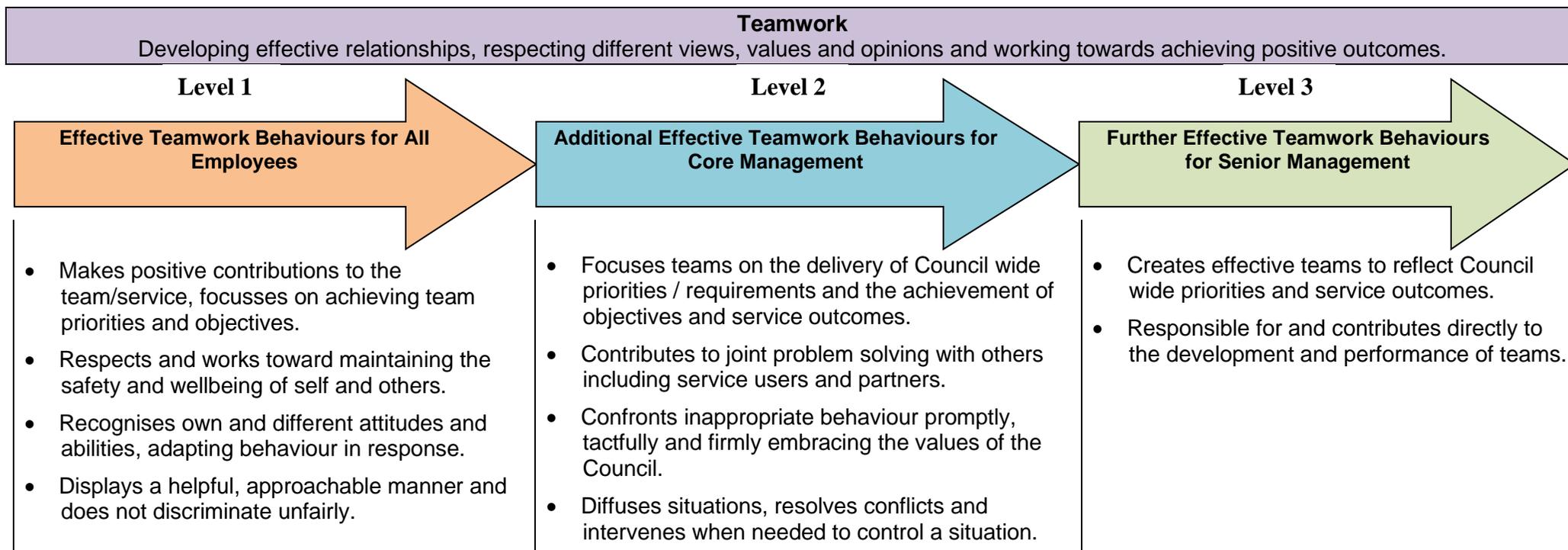
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- Dismissive and negative attitude to change and new ways of working e.g. does not consider future needs or always gives reasons why things cannot be done.
  - Reluctance to address difficult situations including conduct, performance and client management.
  - Unwilling to take risks

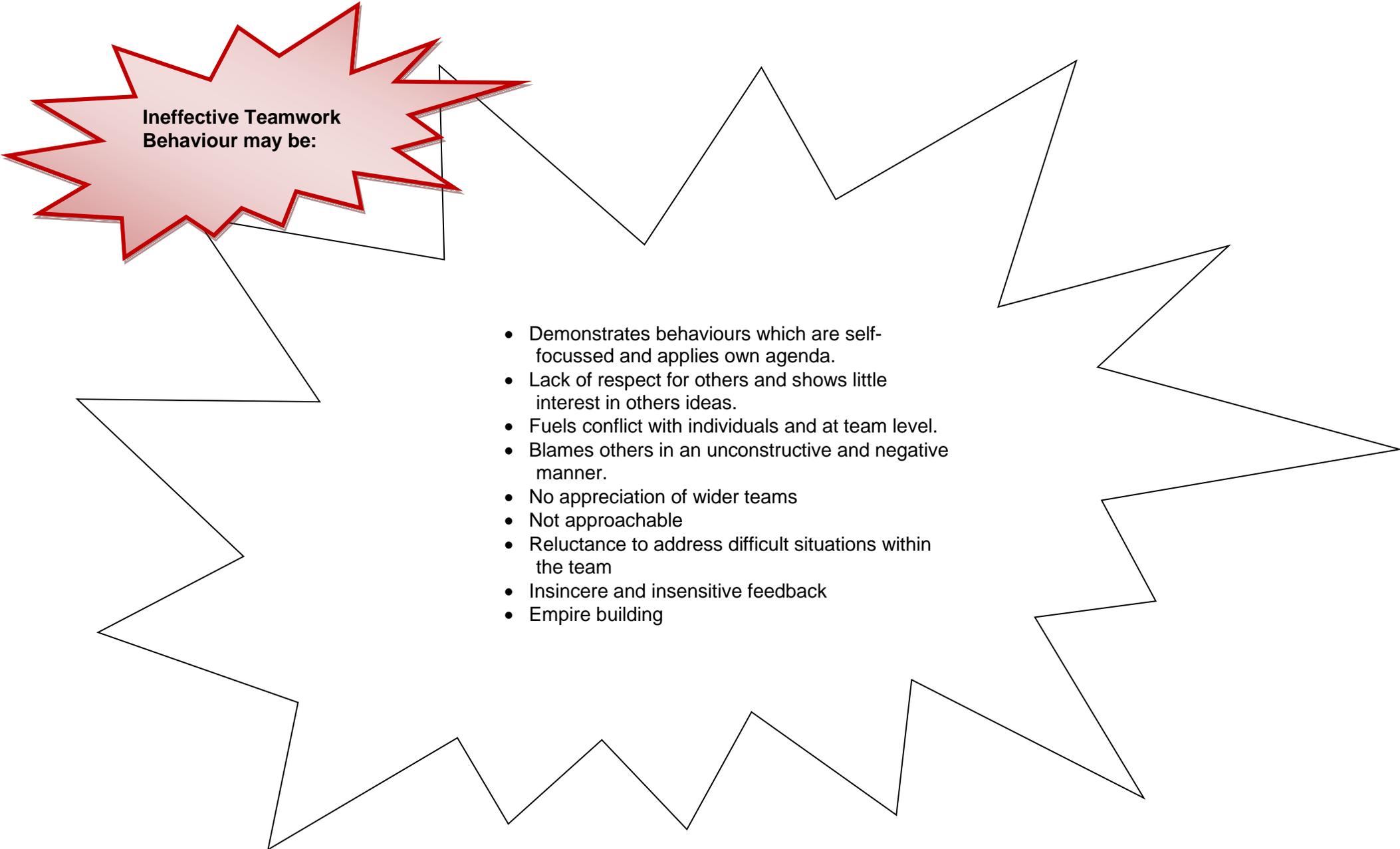




**Ineffective  
Communication  
Behaviour may be:**

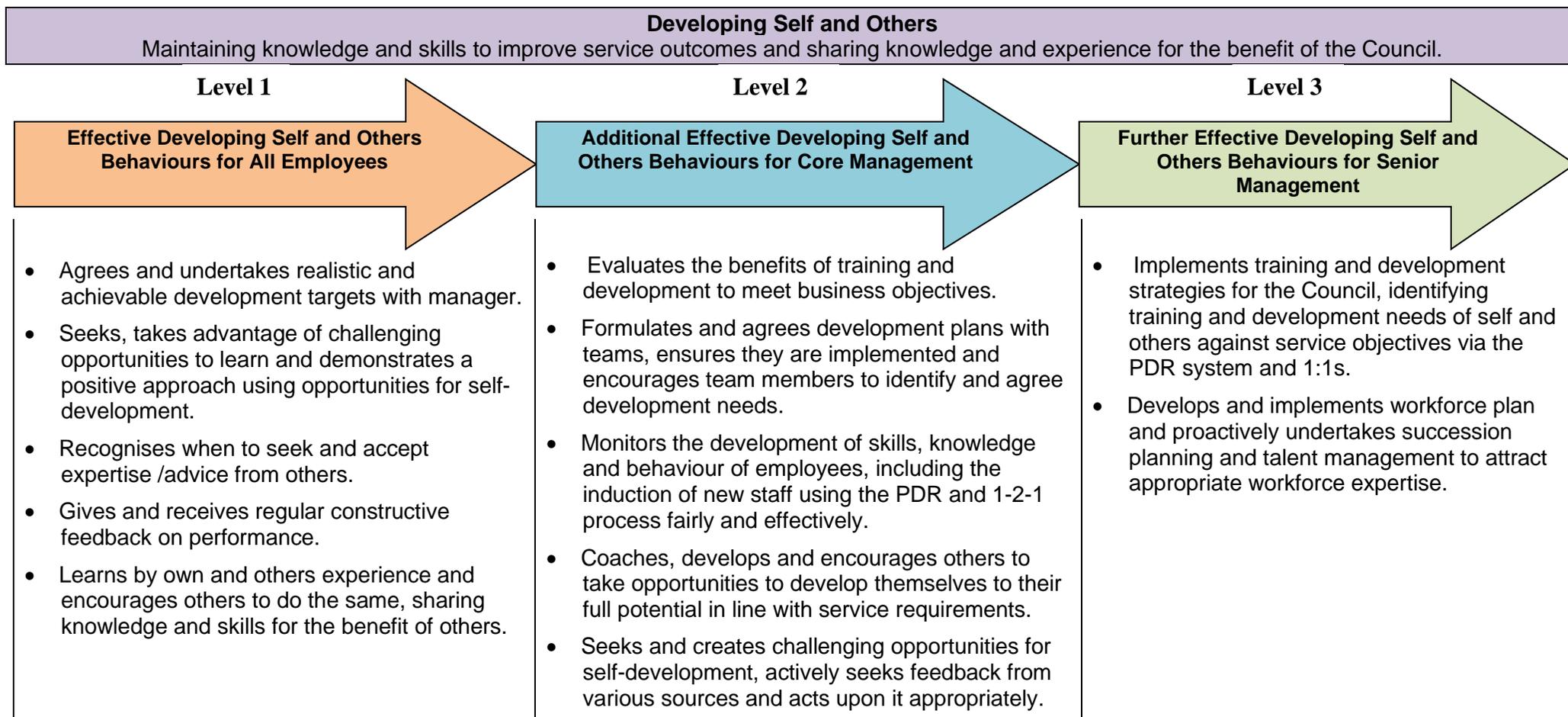
- Puts the Council's reputation in disrepute (e.g. not following the Code of Conduct / policies).
- Does not keep others informed, either deliberately or as part of unintended consequences.
- Does not tailor communications to the situation / individual and avoids talking to people.
- Forceful in expressing an opinion with disregard to others.
- Lack of attention to detail.
- Rude / temperamental and insensitive to others.
- Not approachable
- Does not gain the confidence of others

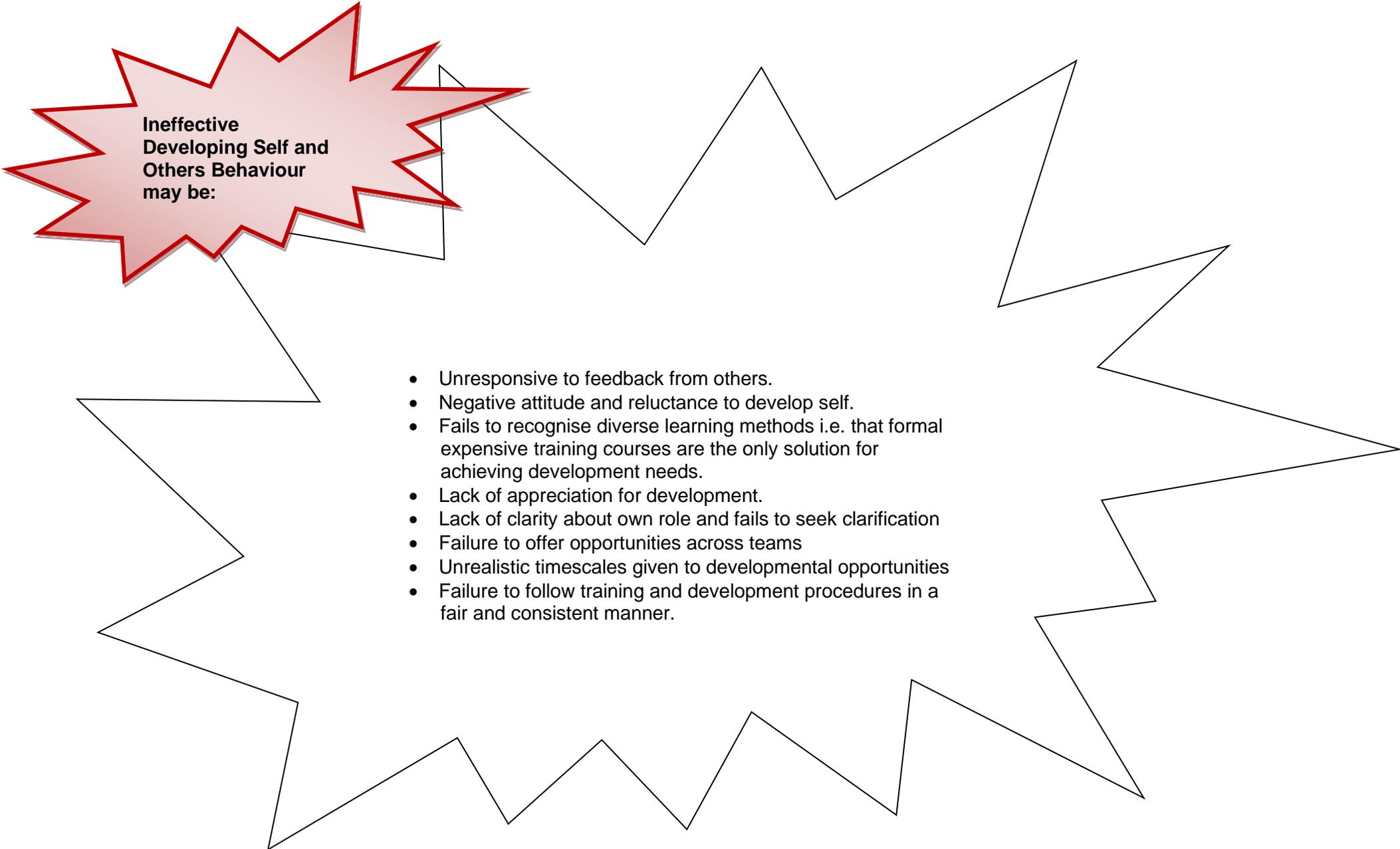




**Ineffective Teamwork Behaviour may be:**

- Demonstrates behaviours which are self-focussed and applies own agenda.
- Lack of respect for others and shows little interest in others ideas.
- Fuels conflict with individuals and at team level.
- Blames others in an unconstructive and negative manner.
- No appreciation of wider teams
- Not approachable
- Reluctance to address difficult situations within the team
- Insincere and insensitive feedback
- Empire building





**Ineffective  
Developing Self and  
Others Behaviour  
may be:**

- Unresponsive to feedback from others.
- Negative attitude and reluctance to develop self.
- Fails to recognise diverse learning methods i.e. that formal expensive training courses are the only solution for achieving development needs.
- Lack of appreciation for development.
- Lack of clarity about own role and fails to seek clarification
- Failure to offer opportunities across teams
- Unrealistic timescales given to developmental opportunities
- Failure to follow training and development procedures in a fair and consistent manner.

# Darlington Borough Council's Values Framework

## What the Council values and what this means for Council employees

The core values below were agreed by Employees, Trade Unions, Heads of Service, Assistant Directors, Chief Officers and Elected Members. These values will be reflected in our competency framework, which forms part of the Council's annual Performance Development Review (PDR) procedure:

- **Customer and Outcome Focused** - we will put our customers first both internal and external and do the best we can for people of Darlington.
- **Innovation and creativity** - we will constantly seek out innovative and smarter ways of working.
- **Teamwork** - we will all work together as a team, alongside our partners and with the people of Darlington.
- **Valuing People** - we will trust, respect and appreciate each other and the people who work with us.
- **Openness and honesty** - we will be clear and honest in the way we work. We will listen and talk to each other and our partners and be prepared for our views and the way we work to be challenged by other people.

What we are here to do is detailed in:	And through these we contribute to:	How we are expected to behave at work is set out in the:
Our personal performance objectives, team targets, service delivery plans and job descriptions.	The delivery of high quality services within the resources available.	Core values, competency frameworks that are part of the Performance Development Review (PDR) process, Code of Conduct and Council policies and procedures.

**We have rights as employees but in return for these, we also have responsibilities to Darlington Borough Council. These are explained in "The Darlington Deal" below:**

<p><b>Responsibilities - All employees are responsible for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing our jobs the best we can to deliver what the Council needs to do.</li> <li>• Using Council money and other resources as effectively as possible and constantly trying to find better ways of working.</li> <li>• Understanding there will be constant change and that we need to be flexible and respond to changing needs.</li> <li>• Giving the maximum performance and attendance possible and doing our best to look after ourselves and others.</li> <li>• Communicating effectively with each other.</li> <li>• Following the Council's values, policies and procedures.</li> <li>• Their own health and safety and that of others.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Rights - in return all employees can expect to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work in a safe, healthy and supportive environment.</li> <li>• Develop their skills to be able to do their jobs the best they can and perform in line with the Council's needs.</li> <li>• Be treated fairly.</li> <li>• Be consulted and listened to - especially about decisions that personally affect them.</li> <li>• Be recognised and appreciated.</li> <li>• Receive a fair package of reward for the work they do.</li> </ul>
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