## Job Description

# Head of Technology

**Reference: H205**

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| **Grade:** | 14 |
| **Service:** | Digital & IT |
| **Team**: | Technology |
| **Responsible to**: | Director of Digital & IT |
| **Workplace**: | County Hall, Morpeth |

## Responsible for

Council Services within the portfolio. These may change to reflect need and maximise capacity and resources across the Council.

## Service / Function

Leadership and management of the Council's technology strategy and supporting platforms and applications. This includes taking responsibility for the overall approach to using technology to maximise accessible and modern customer services and effective processes whilst making best use of cloud based solutions which help reduce the impact on the environment and are more sustainable.

## Employees

Lead a team of software engineers, technology architects, infrastructure engineers, cybersecurity experts and support staff who can support and enable colleagues to work in an environment which maximises technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of services. The current staff complement across the service is circa 59 FTE.

## Budget

This postholder has a key role in ensuring the Council makes best use of its budget by using the best available platforms and applications. The post holder is directly accountable for a gross budget of circa £6.5m

## Job Purpose

To lead the design, development and embedding of technology strategies and associated applications and tools which support delivery of the Council's key corporate and partnership priorities in line with the corporate plan – a Council that works for everyone, to benefit the people of Northumberland. These activities play a critical role in ensuring that the Council is using the most effective and efficient IT infrastructure and processes which enable the Council to use the best available information to inform decisions and understand how to make best use of all the

resource at its disposal. All technology services need to be user-centred and so having a good understanding of the breadth and complexity of services covered is essential so that changes can be co- designed and owned from start through to implementation and delivery.

The postholder will provide expert advice on the shape of the technology strategy and supporting programmes and contribute significantly to the shape and content of the technology elements of the Council's transformation programme whilst understanding and addressing the need to keep existing arrangements effective and continuously improving.

The postholder will work closely with colleagues across different services to ensure that the new platforms or applications being designed and delivered are able to consider how they will improve the quality of services as well as reduce inefficiencies and cost. This includes support for options appraisals and business cases as well as contributing to the assessment of potential benefits and benefits realisation and then support delivery of the agreed solutions. As part of this the impact on the environment will be considered to reduce the impact of the technology estate.

To provide a technology strategy which maximises the opportunity to reduce use of more expensive platforms and applications whilst protecting the specific needs of residents and users who cannot make use of some of these tools. The technology strategy will balance the Council's ambitions to achieve best value and contribute to the Council's ambitions around climate change whilst contributing to delivery of the Inequalities Plan. As part of this there may be opportunities to rationalise the number of platforms and applications and so having an in-depth understanding of the functionality of different arrangements and where new features could make improvements both within services as well as across the organisation will be necessary.

To play a full and positive role as a member of the Council's Senior Management Team ensuring the delivery of effective strategic direction, leadership and resource management ( people, finance and other assets) and use of prioritisation to secure the best possible delivery of public services across the locality and maximise the Council's role in finding ways of delivering services which provide best value for money.

Lead by example and foster a culture, both with the Directorate and across the Council, which engages all staff and partners in the development and delivery of services which meet residents' needs and expectations.

## Key functional responsibilities

- Lead the design and build of the Council's Technology Strategy with supporting architecture and activities to help both members and officers make best use of reliable and robust technology to inform the provision of sustainable services which provide best value for money and customer experience. All of this activity needs to make best use of cloud based solutions and be co-designed with appropriate services to ensure they understand and are able to fully utilise new tools.
- Support Members of the Council, the Director, Executive Director, and the Chief Executive in developing the vision and priorities for the County and ensure best advice is provided on the most appropriate response to internal and external pressures for transformational change where technological solutions are key to long term success. This postholder has a particular responsibility to ensure that technology action plans balance support for existing infrastructure whilst making the most of new opportunities. This information is also needed

to create a performance framework which uses robust and up to date information so that resources can be realigned wherever necessary. Having the right corporate architecture will be key both in having the best corporate solutions as well as contributing to the rationalisation of systems which are too narrow in focus and less sustainable.

- Manage well the interface between Elected Members and Officers within the Directorate, maintaining and developing essential Member / Officer partnerships and processes which support and promote a positive and respectful relationship between Members and Officers.
- Champion a coherent multi agency approach to service delivery and provide leadership, and management of the team within the Directorate to ensure the delivery of the Council's priorities and provision of high-quality, cost-effective services based on community needs.
- Where appropriate, participate in and develop the Council's commitment to actively collaborate in major local and regional partnerships to achieve, within the overall strategy, maximum benefit for the Council and its communities. These partnerships will be essential to understand new opportunities which can be used in the organisation to effect positive change.
- Contribute to successful management of the Council's reputation, ensuring that it always acts in the best interests of Northumberland and that its activities are explained to stakeholders in an open and transparent manner.

## Principal accountabilities

- Act as the Council's technical adviser on the digital strategy and programme and support the Director, Executive Director and other colleagues in making sure the Council has all necessary arrangements in place to maximise both existing technology as well as shape future provision in order to provide user/ centred and cost effective solutions which support timely and effective service delivery. Having the right architecture and efficient processes will help the organisation be assured that it is using smart solutions in the right way, at the right time and in a way that best meets different people and communities needs whilst securing significant cost efficiencies.
- Deputise for the Director of Digital and IT when requested.
- Oversee the provision of timely and accurate advice to the Director, Executive Director, Chief Executive, Cabinet, and all Members, to ensure provision of high quality professional advice on matters which will ensure services are customer focused, sustainable and meet necessary standards as set down in legislation and relevant regulations and best practice standards.
- Act as a role model and exemplar in achieving a people-centred, values based and inclusive organisational culture that promotes innovation and creativity, nurtures growth, and focuses on developing and maximising the potential of the workforce to improve services.
- Oversee the most effective utilisation, performance, and deployment of resources (Human, Physical and Financial) that puts at its heart the provision of high quality, value for money services and ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the directorate to deliver successfully against the Council's ambitions and priorities bearing in mind statutory requirements.

- Actively demonstrate commitment and action to develop an inclusive, supportive, and constructive environment where everyone is treated with dignity and respect and diversity is valued in the workplace, in service delivery and communications.
- Support and contribute to the efficient and effective implementation of major programmes of technological change both in relation to the corporate Transformation Programme and other initiatives to ensure that all digital implications are given proper consideration during the assessment of options and subsequent implementation in order to maximise solutions which deliver best value and reduce are sustainable. These solutions may involve making sure that the corporate benefits are assessed alongside service needs in order to build and maintain a programme which is coherent and focuses on overall priorities.
- Oversee the scrutiny and advice on the plans and actions of Central Government and other external agencies to determine their impact on the development of local policies and priorities such as they relate to the application of digital solutions and position the Council as a decisive and influential organisation to maximise all available assets and use modern and innovative solutions. This will involve horizon scanning for national policy changes to use of digital solutions which might affect the Council's plans.
- Ensure the promotion, development, and maintenance of good relationships with the media and public as an individual and across the Directorate and ensure effective communication and engagement strategies are applied to support delivery of services and change activities.
- Ensure equality, diversity and cohesion principles are embedded across all services. Provide leadership around diversity and inclusion, ensuring that the policies and services of the Council reflect the changing needs of all our communities and workforce and that equality of opportunity is ensured and diversity celebrated.
- Represent and negotiate on behalf of the Council at local, regional, and national levels, promoting inter-authority working across the region and demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to change.
- If required play a role within the Council's Corporate Emergency Planning arrangements. ( This includes a requirement to be available in the event of an emergency to perform the duties allocated to the post within the Emergency Plan).
- To undertake functions in the event of local or national elections, supporting the Returning Officer ensure the democratic nature of such activities is undertaken efficiently and in compliance with all statutory requirements.
- Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are be carried out in accordance with Council's Constitution, governance arrangements, policies, and procedures.

## Special Conditions

This position has been identified as a politically restricted post under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989. Therefore, the post holder is restricted from undertaking or participating in any political activity.

## Senior Managers Core Competencies

### Working with partners

- Work collaboratively across services and departments to deliver corporate excellence.
- Work collaboratively with external partners to deliver excellent service.
- Seek opportunities for partnership working at a local, regional, national level.

- Clarify expectations, objectives and working arrangements of partnerships.
- Contribute effectively to multi-partner projects.

## Serving our community

- Promote the Community Plan.
- Seek and act on feedback from the community.
- Influence Service and Corporate plans to reflect community needs.
- Develop, deliver, and improve access to services based on an awareness and understanding of the diverse community.
- Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery

## Working within the political arena

- Understand and actively support the role of Councillors.
- Understand and actively support the democratic process within Northumberland Council.
- Recognise the impact of Government and legislation on Council strategy and services.
- Consult, support, and keep Councillors informed.

## Delivering excellence

- Understand how corporate performance is measured.
- Monitor and evaluate services in relation to objectives and performance indicators.
- Establish a culture that embraces the agreed Vision and Values.
- Be positive ambassadors for the organisation.
- Contribute to strengthening corporate leadership capacity.
- Identify opportunities where organisational performance could be improved.

## Focusing on the future

- Scan the external environment, look ahead, assess strategic options, and develop the Council in the medium and long term.
- Lead the development and implementation of corporate policy at a strategic level.
- Challenge what we do and how we do it.
- Influence relevant national and regional organisations and partners.
- Connect plans, policies, strategies, and services to provide consistent service delivery.
- Generate innovative ideas.
- Translate strategy into action.
- Consider the implications of decisions across the Council and act in the overall interests of Council performance.

## Building shared vision and values

- Scan the internal environment and engage employees in compelling visions of the future.
- Create an environment in which a culture embracing our Vision and Values can thrive.
- Involve all stakeholders in building a vision for the future.
- Have a clear picture of the direction the organisation is taking and communicate it with insight, energy, and vision.

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| • Translate the Council's vision into practical and achievable plans. |

**Strengthening corporate leadership capacity**

- Continuously develop the political leadership and managerial interface.
- Operate with others as a cohesive senior managerial team.
- Create time with staff and other managers for discussion about their development rather than firefighting.
- Coach and mentor staff and other managers.
- Lead, delegate and empower others at a strategic level.
- Identify and develop potential senior managerial successors.

**Promoting and facilitating change**

- Critically evaluate the reasons that prompt change and take appropriate action.
- Proactively steer internal change.
- Proactively manage the exchange of information between the public and the organisation.
- Consider the resource implications of change.
- Anticipate and respond to emotional and morale issues brought about by change.
- Monitor and evaluate the change process to ensure aims are met.

**Person Specification**

# Head of Technology

| Qualifications and Knowledge | |
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- Educated to degree level in Technology, Infrastructure or equivalent and relevant experience.
- Evidence of relevant up to date leadership and management training.
- Evidence of recent relevant Continuous Professional Development.

| Experience, Knowledge and Skills | |
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- Proven achievement of leadership success in developing and implementing a Technology strategy which transforms the way that people access services. This includes leading large scale organisational change in platform design and delivery where the need to challenge thinking is significant.
- Demonstrable ability to understand a complex pattern of need from services in order to ensure there is corporate oversight of existing arrangements as well as new developments so that opportunities to rationalise the number of platforms, applications and systems is realised
- Proven understanding and application of the government's code of practice relating to technology. This should include understanding how use of cloud based technology can reduce the carbon footprint.
- Significant experience in co-designing technological solutions which are owned by people who are not experts but who need to own the shaping of the solutions through to implementation and delivery and make full use of the capability.
- Significant experience in managing and monitoring large budgets and resources to secure best value. This will involve understanding supply markets and being able to negotiate with suppliers to deliver the most effective and cost efficient solutions.
- Significant demonstrable understanding of user experience and service design principles and thorough knowledge of relevant legislation, regulations and professional best practice.
- Expert knowledge of data governance including cybersecurity Health and Safety and risk assessments, and related ethics, agile working
- Demonstrable ability to work alongside colleagues with less technical know-how to help them understand how solutions can help them improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they provide.
- Significant experience in developing tools which collect intelligence about the unity of technology solutions . This covers both qualitative and quantitative data and insight.
- Understanding and experience of using different tools to assess benefits associated with introduction of technology changes and the capturing of those benefits.
- Proven understanding and experience of undertaking options appraisals to assess to deliver the most coherent and sustainable solutions. This includes understanding how to

gather and assess data from various sources and bring it together in a comprehensive and understandable form.
- Significant experience in presenting data to inform decision making based on a rounded understanding of performance and the difference that new solutions can make.
- Track record of introducing systems and processes that reduce bureaucracy and improve the resident and workforce experience.
- Ability to operate sensitively in a political environment, developing relationships with all members gaining respect, trust, and confidence and being accountable for effective delivery within a challenging financial environment.
- Experience of implementing frameworks, tools and approaches to transform services and leading major change that challenges existing ways of working, and different service delivery models which provide better outcomes for citizens through technology advances.
- Evidence of personally leading within an organisational culture that models and embeds the practice of co-design and co-production and collaboration with people inside and outside the organisation.
- Evidence of success in personally leading the development of external relationships and influential partnerships that have delivered tangible benefits and created a collaborative environment.
- Evidence of using strong option appraisal, analytical skills, and innovation to achieve organisational success in an environment of reducing financial resources.
- Ability to develop long term strategic thinking and bring new ideas, approaches, and solutions.
- Highly skilled communicator who communicates with clarity, conviction and enthusiasm and can demonstrate integrity, create rapport, and build trust and confidence to positively influence outcomes.
- Ability to translate complex ideas and information into meaningful and 'user-friendly' information; 'tells the story' to bring people along and ensure all audiences understand the key messages.
- Ability to develop strong relationships with senior leaders from a range of public and private sector organisations.
- Personal and professional integrity and credibility that establishes respect, trust, and confidence.
- Demonstrate personal resilience and ability to thrive in challenging circumstances.
- Model and demonstrate organisational values and leadership behaviours, creating a shared purpose and positive permission culture that enables people to thrive through development, involvement, and well-being.

## Motivation

- Confident leader with a vision for Northumberland with high levels of energy, stamina, and resilience.
- Fully committed to the principles and values underpinning the Council
- Demonstrably strong corporate orientation and a commitment to tackling issues that inhibit organisational progress to high quality service delivery.

- Personality, behaviour, conduct and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of Council Members, senior managers, staff, the public, external partners, and other stakeholders.