

Northumberland County Council
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Policy Officer		Service: Member Services/Policy		Office Use JE ref: 4524
Band: 7		Workplace: County Hall, Morpeth		
Responsible to: Head of Member Services and Elections/Head of Policy and Performance		Date: October 2024	Manager Lever:	
Job Purpose: To be responsible for developing and implementing the strategic policy and statutory requirements associated with delivering the objectives of Council's Corporate Strategy and Plan				
Resources	Staff	Provide coaching and supervision to management graduates and junior staff		
	Finance	None		
	Physical	Design, maintain and operate policy and systems		
	Clients	Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, council policies and procedures.		
Duties and key result areas:				
• To develop and maintain assurance of both the Council's corporate strategy and policy frameworks.. • Horizon scanning to understand changes to policy at national, regional and local level to ensure the strategy and policy frameworks support the delivery of the Council vision and Corporate Plan (3-5 year), • Using knowledge to interpret policy to be able to provide professional advice to and develop working relationships with elected members, Corporate Directors and Heads of Service on strategic policy matters and to influence decisions across all council services. • High level of initiative and autonomy to lead the development of an effective and efficient policy development guidance and governance processes and implement ways of working that meet these requirements to meet statutory duties. • To actively promote and represent the interests of Northumberland and the County Council in relation to service activities and policies at a local, regional and national level as appropriate, particularly through participation in pilot programmes, showcasing good practice, and contributing to exchange networks • Understand and uphold the Constitution, Scheme of delegation and Contract Procedure Rules of the Council and ensure they are considered in creation of new strategies and policies, lead on the yearly review of the Constitution • Contribute to effective governance and assurance processes, ensuring reviews and audits are applied in all activity as set down in the Constitution and Council policies and procedures to safeguard the Council's financial and statutory duties. • Proactively manage the interface between Elected Members and Officers, maintaining and developing essential Member / Officer development and understanding of Council policies, • Working with Elected members in a political environment with professional impartiality and upholding standards of local government. • To lead the response to a wide range of ad hoc information requests from residents, service areas and senior management, showing emotional resilience during lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention with high pressure to meet deadlines accurately including Freedom of Information requests. • • Development, delivery (including presentations) and monitoring of Elected members induction and training promoting continuous learning and development, horizon scanning to ensure elected Members are aware of key changes and developments relevant to their work. • To undertake functions in the event of local or national elections, supporting the Returning Officer to ensure the democratic nature of such activities is undertaken efficiently and in compliance with all statutory requirements. • Contribute to the successful implementation of the Planning, Performance and Accountability Framework, to ensure best value is achieved and the link between strategic corporate decisions and the work of all our staff is understood and communicated, including advice across all services on annual service planning. • Develop and maintain a system of continuous monitoring and assurance to fulfil the Best Value Duty under the Local Government Act 1999.				

- To lead on Policy Conferences for the organisation, cross party meetings to discuss policy implications and develop future policy.
 - Coordinate the schedule and development of Portfolio reports to Council, ensuring that progress and impact is reported timely, understandable and transparent information is provided to Elected Members.
 - To develop and maintain effective and constructive relationships with relevant contacts within partner organisations, in order to promote effective collaboration within a particular theme or in relation to a specific issue
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- The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this job description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements

Physical requirements:	Sedentary office work with occasional need to stand, walk and lift.
Transport requirements:	Will involve travel to meeting venues, area offices or training venues throughout the County and further a field on occasion.
Working patterns:	Normal office hours but flexi-hours may apply if colleagues provide cover. Some attendance at evening meetings.
Working conditions:	Mainly indoors

Northumberland County Council
PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Policy Officer	Director/Service/Sector: Chief Executive / Members Services/Policy	Ref: 4524
Essential	Desirable	Assess by
Qualifications and Knowledge		
Degree, higher degree, professional qualifications or equivalent and/or NVQ Level 5 or equivalent standard in a relevant subject; plus recent and relevant post qualification training, additional qualifications and experience in a relevant context. Evidence of having undertaken strategic policy development in relation to cross-cutting issues and challenges In-depth knowledge of professional theory, practice and procedures. Knowledge of current inter/national laws, regulations, policies, procedures, trends, and developments. Experience of working within a political environment. Commercially aware and understands the relationship between costs, quality, customer care and corporate performance assessment. Evidence of continuing professional development. Understanding of the key issues, priorities and pressures relating to local government and central government, their roles, structures, and relationships.	Evidence of recent and relevant management training. Relevant management degree or post-graduate diploma e.g. MBA, DMS. Understands the diverse functions of a large complex public sector organisation and the relevant professional issues.	A I I I A I A I
Experience		
Recent and relevant post qualification experience in a relevant context. A breadth of work experience in selecting and applying the full range of professional methods, tools and techniques in a wide range of work situations. Experience in engaging effectively with others and building productive partnerships. Relevant experience in designing and drafting policies, procedures and other technical documents. Experience in managing projects to successfully achieve set objectives.	Experience in a particular relevant specialist area. Supervising staff and their productivity.	A A R I/A I/A
Skills and competencies		
Intellectually agile and innovative, capable of translating ideas into policy and practice. Able to disseminate acquired knowledge. Ability to develop policy based on sound reasoning and logic, draw appropriate conclusions, and present these to an audience. Advanced IT knowledge and skills and able to effectively use ICT to achieve work objectives, understanding of a range of ICT software Experience in project/task management. Forward planning and development of procedures	Experience in project management & monitoring and evidence of the application of these techniques, as appropriate. Budgeting and financial management skills. Experience of mentoring and supervising staff. Advanced skills in Microsoft Office	I I I A A/I A/I

Ability to work independently and take the initiative Excellent writing skills, with the ability to accurately summarise and convey sometimes complex information in a non-technical way with clear conclusions where appropriate. Excellent oral and influencing skills, with the ability to present complex ideas in a clear and comprehensible way to a non-technical audience and speak confidently in public. Able to manage a complex workload, delivering under pressure and prioritising competing demands to meet deadlines. Prepares written, verbal and other media to best professional standards. Effectively expresses views using appropriate means depending upon the audience. Numerate and skilled at analysing/reasoning with complex business related statistics. Persistence in applying a methodical approach to problem solving. Negotiation skills and able to persuade others to an alternative point of view. Ability to lead the organisation into new ways of working Change management skills and an ability to challenge and facilitate Operates as an effective advocate for the Directorate both within and externally. Maintains a professional demeanour in stressful and difficult situations. Political awareness and sensitivity to ensure credibility with politicians, senior managers, key stakeholders and staff. A team player, willing to work flexibly and collaboratively to meet changing priorities. Self-motivated, self-supporting and highly resilient.		R R R A A A A A R I I R R R R R
Physical, mental, emotional and environmental demands		
Normally works from a seated position with some need to walk, bend or carry items. To be able to meet the physical requirements of the post and be able to work under considerable pressure caused by significant workloads and rigid deadlines To be able to provide strategic and operational leadership during prolonged periods of uncertainty via thorough risk assessment skills and planning Need to maintain general awareness with frequent lengthy periods of enhanced concentration, sometimes in busy open plan offices. Presenting at meetings when also working across more than one electronic device, and therefore requiring considerable manual dexterity and composure. Need to work immediately to Directors on specific projects, and Elected members Some contact with public/clients in dispute with the County Council. Some exposure to working outdoors.		R R R I I I I I
Motivation		
A strong corporate orientation and a commitment to tackling issues in a non-departmental manner. Dependable, reliable and keeps good time.		I I I I

Self reliant, able to exercise discretion and possessing the ability to manage time effectively. Models and encourages high standards of honesty, integrity, openness, and respect for others. Helps managers create a positive work culture in which diverse, individual contributions and perspectives are valued. Proactive and achievement orientated Works with little direct supervision. Personality, conduct and credibility that engages and commands the confidence of colleagues, Council Members and other stakeholders and external partners Committed to personal and professional development.		
Other		
Able to meet the transport requirements of the post		

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits