

# Slough Borough Council

## Job Description

Job Description Reference: RH&E 3-0

Date: July 2023

Post Pay Level: SML 13

DBS requirement:

**Job Title: Chief Planning Officer**

**Responsible to: Executive Director, Regeneration, Housing & Environment**

**Responsible for: Planning**

As the council's Chief Planning Officer and a member of the Executive Director's Management Team, this post is directly responsible for:

Number of reports:

Direct reports: 2

Indirect reports: 50

**Total Managed: 52**

### Financial Responsibilities:

Revenue budget of 2.344m

Capital budget of 0

### Location

Though hybrid working is supported, the post holder must be able and willing to be in Slough Borough Council offices or other office sites 5 days a week if required.

### Main purpose of Job

The Chief Planning Officer will be the council's principal advisor in all matters relating to planning. The post holder will be responsible for the strategic direction and development on planning policy, development management, planning enforcement, building control, land charges, flood risk authority, ecology and highway development and transport polices; ensuring the council discharges its statutory and legal requirements while delivering excellent customer focussed services. The role requires a strategic leader with a strong emphasis in driving value, improving service standards, achieving efficiencies, realising savings, identifying income opportunities, and assisting the Executive Director in setting strategic objectives. The successful candidate will play a vital role in supporting the council's priorities of enhancing service

delivery to the community, customers, and internal operations.

### **General Accountabilities:**

- **Strategy development**

Help to define the direction of the council to drive forward the public service reform agenda and ensure delivery of its priorities and value to residents. Translate vision into a strategic vision for the future development of the service to enable the council to meet its future challenges, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. There is scope and need for significant transformation of both the service and the portfolio (i.e., assets).

- **Corporate leadership**

As a senior leader working as part of a wider leadership team across the council, work together take collective responsibility and drive forward a range of cross-council initiatives which are required to ensure changes are embedded in a sustainable way throughout the organisation. Provide corporate leadership that encourages our staff to recognise their contribution to the strategic objectives the council has set.

- **Service leadership and management**

Lead the integrated delivery, improvement, management and performance of the service, commissioning and directing activity within the council and externally as required, and ensuring overall objectives are translated into effective plans and that the service is efficient and locally responsive. Provide inspirational and professional leadership to staff, strengthening skills and competence and fostering a strong culture of standards, performance and accountability.

- **Resources / Financial management**

Ensure tight budgetary control and prioritise use of resources and assets to support the delivery of the council's corporate vision and help ensure that the council receives value for money from its expenditure. Drive and/or support the development of outcome-based commissioning models to better ensure strong price competition and transfer of risks through contracts with third parties. Champion and drive the development of commercial opportunities where appropriate.

- **Partners and stakeholders**

Actively engage, communicate and influence within the council, across partners and with the wider local and central government community, to champion the council's approach to unified public services. Foster the bringing together of local services and decisions across agencies to reduce demand and help communities more independently support themselves.

- **Business change**

Lead, develop, implement and review change management programmes to deliver continual improvement. Assist the Executive Director, and the Regeneration, Housing & Environment leadership team in developing a single council-wide corporate culture to engender a strong and shared approach to delivering services and provide better support for staff to deliver savings.

- **Compliance**

Ensure that all activities within the service comply with the council's Constitution, Standing Orders, financial regulations, health and safety and safeguarding responsibilities and that effective systems operate within the service to manage performance and risk.

- **Equality and diversity**

Uphold and promote the aims of the council's equality and diversity policies to ensure non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work, and that diversity is embedded in everything, from workforce planning and policy development to service delivery.

**Specific Responsibilities:**

1. To lead an effective Planning Service, taking accountabilities for all aspects of the council's planning policy, development management, planning enforcement, building control, land charges, flood risk authority, ecology and highway development and transport polices within the service. In doing this, the postholder will ensure delivery of the highest quality service that can be provided to customers with the resources available.
2. Lead the design and implementation of the council's planning policy, developing requirements to meet national, regional, local and council specific priorities as well as national government policies and guidance.
3. Lead adviser and expert to the council and its committees on planning and related matters, including development management, planning policy, urban design, conservation, planning enforcement, and transport planning.
4. Lead the planning function in delivering and discharging the council's responsibilities and services in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).
5. Ensure compliance with relevant legislation, policies, and regulations governing the area of planning, keeping up to date with changes and best practices. Undertaking any statutory duties as required, including responsibility for public consultation, hearings and inquiries.
6. Promote the council's planning policy with both internal and external partners including chairing or participating in any relevant internal or external stakeholder groups.
7. Establishing effective monitoring and quality assurance procedures for planning services and enforcement activities, ensuring all planning and enforcement services deliver best value for money; ensuring industry standards are met, services and expenditure are effectively managed and there is demonstrated continuous improvement.
8. Set the strategic direction for planning services, taking lead on providing high quality professional expert advice on all related matters including at public

meetings and forums.

9. Represent the council in hearings and inquiries as lead adviser and expert, ensuring stakeholders are equipped with knowledge and information to support decision making and oversight of such hearing and inquiries.
10. To take decisions of significant impact, including financial delegation of up to £100k. Such decisions will be informed by collaboration and engagement with other colleagues and made within the boundaries council's Constitution and financial framework, but the postholder is ultimately accountable for making such decisions.
11. To undertake any other duties commensurate with level of responsibility of the post.

### Person Specification – Chief Planning Officer

Qualifications	Essential / Desirable
A relevant bachelor's degree or higher qualification in town planning, transport planning, engineering, geography, regeneration or environmental science.	E
Chartered Town Planner and member of the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)	E
Professional Health and Safety qualification (e.g., NEBOSH etc)	D
Evidence of continuous professional development which reflects commitment to effective management in a large organisation.	E
Experience	
Significant experience in a leadership role with responsibility for a planning function with demonstrated experience in representing an organisation with external bodies and developers with credibility, clarity and tenacity.	E
Strong knowledge and understanding of regulations and processes in development management, planning policy, urban design, conservation, planning enforcement and transport planning.	E
Strong experience of managing or holding statutory responsibilities in a planning function, monitoring and discharging such responsibilities.	E
Strong experience in public consultation, hearing and inquiries representation.	E
Strong experience in setting and delivering net zero targets and other sustainability initiatives in a planning function	E
Demonstrated track record of successfully driving service improvements, operational efficiencies, and cost savings in a complex organisational environment.	E
Demonstrated track record of leading a customer-focused, high-performance culture, including workforce planning, objective setting, performance management, motivating and inspiring a diverse group of staff with different backgrounds and career goals.	E

Strong experience in identifying and pursuing income generation opportunities, with a focus on diversifying revenue streams.	E
Demonstrated knowledge in quality and performance standards in planning services	E
Experience of working in a political environment such as local or central government.	D
Can demonstrate political acumen and aptitude to adapt to a political environment.	E
<b>Skills and abilities</b>	
Ability to lead, advise and show strong judgement in respect of development proposals in particular projects which are high profile, controversial and high value.	E
Excellent written and verbal communication skills, able to translate complex technical concepts into simple, clear insight and advice for a diverse range of audiences.	E
Ability to work collaboratively, working across departmental and organisational boundaries to develop shared solutions to deliver wider borough goals.	E
Excellent negotiation skills and evidence of having successfully applied these internally (in building excellent stakeholder relationships) and externally (in driving value through supplier relationships).	E
Judgement and proportionality, able to manage competing priorities, quickly identify key factors and direct attention and resources appropriately.	E
Excellent problem-solving skills, able to analyse complex scenarios and synthesise multiple strands of work into solutions that can be simply and clearly articulated to senior stakeholders including members.	E
Expertise in financial planning, budgeting, and resource allocation to ensure sustainable and efficient use of resources and maximising value for money. This includes identifying funding opportunities, managing budgets, and optimising financial strategies for regeneration, housing, and environmental projects.	E
The highest personal integrity and loyalty, supportive to colleagues, with a drive to deliver corporately on the Council's vision and values.	E
<b>Knowledge and understanding</b>	
Leadership with the ability to promote the long-term goals and direction of the organisation. This includes developing a clear and inspiring strategic plan for the planning function and the ability to lead town planners and other professionals with strong credibility.	E
Good understanding of assessing potential risks and uncertainties associated with planning services. This includes developing risk management strategies and contingency plans to minimise negative impacts and ensure successful outcomes.	E
A mindset that encourages innovation, creativity, and continuous improvement. This includes being open to new ideas and emerging trends in planning practices and legislative and policy developments, and adapting strategies accordingly to stay ahead of the curve.	D

Expert knowledge and understanding of statutory responsibilities associated with planning activities and services ensuring statutory compliance duties are appropriately discharged.	E
An understanding of, and a personal commitment to, the vision, aims, values and priorities of Slough Borough Council.	E