

# Top Talent: Regeneration and Growth

The growth and infrastructure agenda remains central to the government's mission, and local authorities across the country are key drivers. Whether it is fully utilising land and assets, working with housing or leisure developers on new schemes, attracting investment, encouraging small business start-ups, or rejuvenating town centres, local government officers are critical to achieving progress and change. As part of our regular series on 'rising stars' in the sector, we celebrate these regeneration and growth officers who have been nominated by their councils for having an impact and creating vibrant, stronger communities.

**Sarah Baldwin**  
Housing Acquisitions Manager  
London Borough of Enfield



Sarah heads the Acquisitions Team which focuses on purchasing properties impacted by transformative regeneration schemes and buildings with safety issues. Sarah's small but high performing team are dedicated to delivering the highest quality customer care, always going above and beyond for those impacted. Many residents, especially older or more vulnerable households, find selling their home can be extremely emotional and stressful. Sarah and her team are experts in supporting homeowners through the process, and they provide bespoke care and support every step of the way. The personal touch and empathy they demonstrate ensures that this process is as smooth as possible for residents.

**Amelia Bell**  
Regeneration and Delivery Manager  
Royal Borough of Greenwich



Amelia is a standout colleague at Greenwich. Her proactive approach to every project ensures that no task goes unnoticed, and her creative thinking consistently pushes boundaries. Amelia is currently leading on the Charlton Riverside masterplan refresh, building up a delivery plan to unlock an opportunity that has struggled to make progress in over a decade. Amelia's ability to take the initiative and drive results is nothing short of impressive. Having previously worked in events she is always one step ahead, anticipating challenges and offering innovative solutions.

**Marlon Bruce**  
Interim Head of Economic Growth and Employment  
London Borough of Croydon



Marlon joined Croydon Council during a period of significant complexity, managing diverse portfolios including employment and skills, adult education, inward investment, business engagement, multiple external funding streams, and leading five South London boroughs through a complex DWP connect to work procurement. In a tight timeframe, he also coordinated and produced the borough's inaugural Growth Plan, setting a clear strategic direction. Marlon then guided his team and partners to launch a high-profile event unveiling Croydon's Town Centre Vision, showcasing his ability to drive ambitious initiatives while ensuring excellence across frontline services and strategic projects.

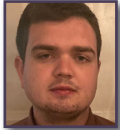
**Zohra Chihab**  
Head of Camden Living Development  
London Borough of Camden



Zohra is passionate about creating great places to live, work and play through high quality design and engagement. She is a chartered architect and development professional with more than 13 years' experience leading projects across London with community at their heart. She currently heads up development for Camden Living – the council's wholly owned housing company – and leads a team bringing forward several major mixed-use developments across

Kings Cross and central London, with projects at feasibility stage, in planning and under construction.

**Joe Coyne**  
Partnerships and Programme Lead  
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham



Joe has worked in the regeneration and development service since 2022. He has taken responsibility for multiple aspects of the programme management of the council's 1,800-home development programme, including the management of programme governance, the ongoing monitoring and appraisal of the programme's viability and funding strategy, and the negotiation of external subsidy. He has also led a review of the development potential of the council's land and asset portfolio to establish a strong pipeline of future sites. By leveraging external funding to alleviate financial pressures, he has also managed and completed a £10.5m acquisition programme of 18 family-sized homes in the borough.

**Claire Evans**  
Senior Programme Officer  
Shropshire Council



Claire works tirelessly to deliver Shrewsbury's Big Town Plan and Movement and Public Space Strategy, developing innovative and progressive solutions to make the town a better place for its residents and visitors. Partnership working is an integral part of her approach alongside an obvious pride for her hometown. Claire is passionate about regeneration projects such as the council's Smithfield Riverside Redevelopment. She is focused on promoting high-quality public engagement and consultation as the building blocks to achieving sustainable economic growth and delivering places that people want to spend time in.

**Vicky Glenonnd**  
Project Manager, Development Team  
Plymouth City Council



Vicky joined Plymouth City Council during lockdown and has proven to be a rising star in her work around the SW Defence and Security Cluster. Plymouth's bedrock employment is in the defence industry, and she has set up and co-ordinated a private sector-led cluster which currently has more than 400 members. Regular knowledge transfer events are sold out with more than 150 people attending and she works with directors of major defence primes, SMEs, academics and research institutions. Vicky has also been instrumental in pulling together the evidence base for the Growth Alliance Plymouth programme, a partnership spanning Plymouth City Council, the MOD and Babcock to drive good economic growth from MOD investment. She has also helped instigate and embed changes in the way the council works – all while studying for a master's degree.

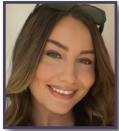
**Tom Goshawk**  
Head of Investment Strategy and Programmes  
East Midlands Combined County Authority (EMCCA)



Tom leads the development and management of the investment portfolio at the EMCCA and is working

to create a comprehensive pipeline of investments across the region to deliver economic growth. Throughout the last decade Tom has worked to design and implement a variety of public funding programmes, building a strong stakeholder network across the East Midlands and helping to deliver large scale growth programmes. Tom leads a strong and enthusiastic team of public servants delivering programmes including the £160m East Midlands Investment Zone and EMCCA Investment Fund. He is passionate about delivering opportunities for local people, allowing them to benefit socially and economically from new investments and projects.

**Chloe Hopwood**  
Development Manager, Regeneration and Economic Growth  
Wakefield Council



Since joining Wakefield Council in 2018, Chloe has established herself as a key leader in the council's regeneration agenda. She has successfully delivered a series of high-profile projects, including schemes to revitalise the high street, and is currently accelerating a multi-million-pound demolition and rebuild scheme in Knottingley. Chloe's resilience and ability to build trusted relationships has helped overcome long-standing barriers to progress. For example, the Knottingley project had stalled for a significant period, but Chloe turned it around through determination, passion, and expert collaboration skills. This has restored momentum and confidence in the project, demonstrating what a real asset Chloe is to Wakefield.

**Hayley Kirkham**  
Head of Rail and Transport Integration  
Cheshire East Council



Hayley has delivered some high-profile and complex projects for Cheshire East Council including negotiations with HS2 and government. She has been recognised for her willingness to take on challenging and complex opportunities and her ability to deliver major cross-cutting programmes at pace. Hayley has a keen interest in unlocking the social and economic benefits of transport interventions and improvements for communities by improving the connectivity to places, jobs and amenities. She recently led a transformation project to insource two wholly owned companies, which included the TUPE transfer of over 500 employees. Always forward looking, Hayley is keen to help realise the potential of devolution for the sub-region.

**Jen Lawie**  
Team Leader – Business Support  
Aberdeen City Council



Jen has been an instrumental figure in spearheading various initiatives aimed at bolstering growth, the economy and regeneration in Aberdeen. One of Jen's notable achievements addressed the issue of empty shops in the city centre by initiating strategic partnerships and fostering a climate conducive to business. These partnerships have facilitated smooth transitions and minimised disruptions during significant city centre developmental projects, thereby enhancing the



overall efficiency and effectiveness of city renovations. Jen has also played a pivotal role in supporting inward trade missions and outward Aberdeen delegations as part of the World Energy City Partnerships. Her ability to inspire and motivate others has created a culture of excellence and innovation within her team.

**Peter Martin**  
Regeneration and Development Surveyor  
Dudley Council



Peter joined Dudley Council in 2018, and with the support of the authority he became a chartered surveyor in 2022. He now leads Dudley's Stalled and Derelict Sites Programme, which aims to accelerate the re-development of privately and publicly owned brownfield land and property which remains long term derelict, untidy or where development has stalled. The programme removes barriers to development to incentivise investment and create conditions for growth. The programme works through a longlist of sites with the aim of increasing the supply of housing lands to market and he is currently progressing five sites which can accommodate up to 105 homes with an estimated GDV of £20m.

**Cleo Newcombe-Jones**  
Regeneration Service Manager  
Bath and North East Somerset Council



Creative and collaborative, Cleo is an urban designer and town planner leading the regeneration service for the city of Bath and the surrounding Somerset towns. Her portfolio includes the Milsom Quarter Masterplan and plans for a new £38m fashion museum, public realm and creative workspace proposals; reimagining of city centre parks including the iconic Parade Gardens; and the Bath High Street Renewal Programmes, Town Centre Masterplans and historic building refurbishments. Her work is award-winning and spans master planning, redevelopment, public realm, green infrastructure, and community development projects.

**Alastair Shankland**  
Service Manager for Strategic Economic Development  
Newport City Council



Alastair leads work and skills, destination management and place marketing teams alongside

the operational delivery of key regional and national programmes such as UKSPF (one of the single biggest allocations in the UK, 2022-2025) and Newport's element of the South East Wales Investment Zone. He is always on the front foot, enthusiastically driving the interaction between place marketing and talent and skills development as key aspects of placemaking. He consistently ensures his teams deliver on projects and contracts that create the conditions for residents, investors and visitors to live, work and enjoy Newport.

**Andrew Sloan**  
Head of Regeneration  
Gateshead Council



Andrew leads the regeneration team that is responsible for turning opportunity into delivery for huge areas of the town centre and riverside. A career covering housing renewal, leisure and commercial development has taught him that successful regeneration can take ten years or more, so needs a multi-faceted approach to show residents and stakeholders that there is focus, prioritisation and progress from day one. He leads on immediate efforts to change perceptions of vacant or neglected sites, through targeted clean-ups, a programme of cultural or meanwhile uses and art projects.

**Rob Strettie**  
Regeneration Manager  
Northumberland County Council



Rob leads the county council's regeneration team and has played a critical role in driving the development and delivery of a significant regeneration programme across Northumberland, a large rural county. His ability to communicate, engage and support residents, partners and colleagues has resulted in true community-led plans being developed. This engagement together with record levels of investment and delivery into towns including Blyth and Ashington, demonstrate the impact Rob is making on residents' lives and the way places in the county look and feel.

**Sarah Travis**  
Business Growth and Investment Officer  
Darlington Borough Council



With a strong public and private sector background, Sarah is dedicated to fostering

business success in Darlington. As a Business Growth and Investment Officer, she works closely with businesses looking to invest, grow and expand, offering expert guidance, local knowledge and strategic support. Her passion for business development drives her commitment to empowering local enterprises, helping them navigate opportunities for sustainable growth. Sarah's expertise and enthusiasm make her a trusted partner for businesses seeking to thrive in Darlington's local economy.

**Amber Trueman**  
Strategic Planning Manager, Place Directorate  
Southampton City Council



Amber leads on developing and implementing effective land-use planning solutions for Southampton. She has led their recent work within the Open Digital Planning community, developing and implementing new digital solutions to improve planning practice. This includes creating a 3D interactive web map with document and engagement software integration, which the council hopes will be one of the first MHCLG/PINS-supported 'Digital Local Plans'. Another recent career highlight for Amber was being invited by MHCLG to join a small sounding group, which is advising on the emerging planning reform legislation.

**Barrie Walford**  
Economic Development Manager  
North West Leicestershire District Council



Barrie manages the Economic Regeneration Service which oversees the delivery of economic development, town centre regeneration and tourism. Barrie moved into local government from retail and hospitality and has a clear passion for economic development. In his time with the council, he has led on various multimillion pound regeneration programmes delivering heritage conservation, town centre regeneration, infrastructure investment, work and skills programmes and business development. None of this would have been possible without Barrie's collaborative approach to working across public, private and voluntary sectors. Barrie is proud of his work in public service and his team will continue to showcase North West Leicestershire as an exceptional location for business, tourism and investment in the heart of the National Forest.

In times of polarised debate, we don't shy away from the difficult issues to find the best people. We're specialists in finding and supporting modern leaders. Whatever your organisation's situation, our people can help.

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