**Role Profile – Assistant Director / Head of Service**

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| **Role Title** | Head of Public Affairs and Strategy |
| **Reference Number** |  |
| **Service** | Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships |
| **Function** | Resources |
| **Reports to** | Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships |
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**Role Purpose**

Lead the public affairs, policy and strategy, and executive support function, ensuring your teams deliver the strategic and operational priorities of the service and play a key role in business planning and continuous and innovative improvements.

Accountable for delivery, effectiveness, corporate support and community outcomes, the role is critical to the achievement of change and performance. The focus is on driving performance by translating strategy into successful service delivery that delivers excellence for the residents of Oxfordshire.

Responsible for driving OCC’s [Delivering the Future Together (DTFT)](https://jobs.oxfordshire.gov.uk/work-us-0) values, being a role model within and throughout the organisation as organisational leaders, to deliver excellent services to Oxfordshire’s residents. Delivering the Future Together, is our ambitious transformation programme enabling the organisation, to be an employer, partner, and place shaper of choice. Lead on OCC’s value of [‘daring to do it differently’](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/working-us/TheOCCValuesandbehaviours.pdf), as the organisation continues to strive to do better.

**Corporate Accountabilities**

* Work with other senior leaders to drive forward continuous and innovative improvements and ensure delivery of its priorities and value to residents.
* Work with other senior leaders to shape and develop a high performing and inclusive organisation, delivering an excellent service for the residents and communities through an ambitious, integrated, and successful service/function(s).
* Work corporately to remove barriers and enable employees to be entrepreneurial and innovative, and work with stakeholders across departmental and organisational boundaries to co-design inclusive and joined-up services that are efficient, effective, and meet the requirements of residents and communities.
* Contribute to developing the workforce plans for the service, ensuring effective initiatives are implemented in alignment with the service priorities and our people and cultural strategy.
* Lead a team of high performing colleagues, ensuring managers create a positive and inclusive working environment that creates a culture of trust, collaboration, and ambition where all belong, thrive and perform at their best to deliver excellent services to our residents.
* Lead and model continuous improvement in the Council through considerable change and transformation across services, while ensuring continuity in performance, financial sustainability, and compliance of any statutory and wider operational obligations.
* Align the work of the function with wider service delivery priorities and business plans and contributing to delivery of Oxfordshire’s strategic plan to ensure delivery of high-quality services to our residents.
* Identify developments in the sector and beyond, creating innovative new approaches that illustrate an understanding of the ‘system wide picture’, anticipating future issues and positively challenging current thinking.
* Develop trusted and effective relationships with a range of stakeholders including business, government agencies, community, local authorities, and community planning partners at both local and national level.
* Act as a leader, creating an environment in which the County Council can jointly design, commission (if required), and deliver outcomes with partners, by unlocking barriers and monitoring the success of these partnerships.
* Support the Cabinet and Members in translating their political objectives and priorities into coherent initiatives to enable the delivery of services across Oxfordshire, working within the appropriate governance structures.
* Manage the service budget effectively, ensuring financial sustainability.
* Deputise for the Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships as required.

**Portfolio Accountabilities**

* Work with the Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships to develop and implement the council’s public affairs and advocacy strategy and ensure the needs of Oxfordshire are high on the national political agenda, with the aim of influencing and securing policy change.
* Provide timely policy and public affairs advice to senior leaders across the council to enable informed decision-making and the development of the council’s policy positions in key areas.
* Lead the development of the council’s strategic plan and devise cross-cutting strategies to help deliver it.
* Oversee a policy unit which acts as a central hub of expertise and advice to ensure consistency and best practice across the council in drafting policy; and manage a council-wide community of practice for policy.
* Oversee the development and implementation of an Equality and Inclusion framework and accompanying policies which meet the council’s public sector equality duty obligations.
* Manage the effective flow of business between the council management team (CMT), the strategic leadership team (SLT) and various political leadership groups.
* Manage strong and effective relationships with key local partners, including the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and the civilian military partnership (CMP).
* Ensure the council is properly represented in its discussions with other local authorities, central government and other partnerships; and represent the council on national and regional networks, such as the County Councils Network (CCN) and South East Strategic Leaders (SESL).
* Manage an effective executive support function for the strategic leadership team (SLT) and Cabinet.

**Knowledge / skills / experience required**

* Seasoned professional in area of expertise, with a breadth of understanding of all areas that the role covers.
* In-depth understanding of regulations/legislation and best practice within their area of specialism and the wider sector. Understanding of national and local government developments, policy, and emerging trends.
* Experience of leading a service within a complex and diverse organisation and delivering against constant change and transformation and inspiring the workforce to improve.
* Significant experience of leading diverse and multifaceted teams at a senior level, bringing activities together to achieve an aligned objective.
* Experience of working with key stakeholders including other public bodies.
* Excellent commercial acumen and financial management skills.
* Ability to use deep personal understanding of the agendas or motivations of others to keep them positively engaged, building behind the scenes support for ideas and initiatives.
* Ability to recognise and make use of alliances/relationships to gain support for the County Council’s Strategic Plan and its implementation.
* Excellent knowledge of the impact of underlying demographic, social or political drivers, and understands the formal and informal politics at the regional and national level and what this means for the County Council.
* Evidence of cultivating a high-performance, cost-effective culture, which delivers outstanding outcomes, through a variety of mechanisms, including structure, working methods, contracts, etc.

**Dimensions of role**

* The role will lead a complex and highly visible service for the County Council, leading on delivery of the vision and plan for the service.
* Significant financial oversight as part of the role, typically managing an annual budget in the order of £1 million.
* In conjunction with the Director of Public Affairs, Policy and Partnerships and the wider team, planning will be over a multi-year horizon.

**Working arrangements**

* The role is politically restricted.
* Able to travel across the county and work from various office locations within the county.
* Contractual base as detailed on contract, but able to work on a flexible basis in line with our Agile Working Policy.

**Leading through our values and behaviours**

Providing clear and visible leadership by putting our values front and centre of every behaviour, decision, and action.

* Always learning.
* Be kind and care.
* Equality and Integrity in all that we do.
* Taking responsibility.
* Daring to do it differently.

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| **Date** | 10 July 2024 |
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