

**WHERE
CAREERS
THRIVE**

**When potential
is unlocked,
talent *thrives***



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Service Director –Education and Partnerships

Childrens Services

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our vision at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is: 'to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive'.

We truly stand by this and work hard every day to make this a reality, and at WNC it is about our people. People who thrive with ambition, bring new ideas, demand better ways of working, care about every detail, and who never shy away from a challenge.

Our culture is a gateway for new experiences. A place to forge new opportunities. To empower you in your career and unite you with like-minded people. When potential is unlocked, talent thrives.



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Purpose and impact:

As a member of the Council's Senior Management Team, the Service Director is responsible for the development and implementation of strategy and significant responsibility relating to several services, ensuring they operate in line with the council's values (THRIVE) and that resources and assets are maximised to achieve priorities within agreed budgets.

The Service Director for Education and Partnerships leads the development and delivery of the education strategy for West Northamptonshire, ensuring high-quality, inclusive, and ambitious education for all children and young people. The role drives improvements in educational standards, school performance, participation, and lifelong learning so that every young person can achieve their potential.

They strengthen the education system across West Northamptonshire through effective partnerships with schools, academy trusts, early years providers, post-16 settings, and wider agencies, ensuring sufficiency of school places, strong governance, and a coherent local education offer that supports the council's wider objectives for children, families and communities.

The role will work with partners—including health providers, education providers, Northamptonshire Children's Trust and the Virtual School—to explore and shape effective models of service delivery that achieve high-quality outcomes, demonstrate measurable impact, and ensure the best use of public resources through value-for-money principles.

This role makes a key contribution to the delivery of the One West Northamptonshire Plan, which brings partners together around a shared mission to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive by 2030. By leading the strategic development and improvement of education and partnerships across the area, the role directly supports Priority 5: Best Place to Grow Up, ensuring children and young people receive high-quality education and early support that helps them thrive. Through strong partnership working, evidence led improvement and preventative approaches, the role advances the Plan's wider principles of collaboration, early intervention, and inclusive growth across the local education system.

Accountable to:

This role is accountable to the Director – Children's Services (DCS) and has direct line management responsibility for up to 6 colleagues and overall responsibility for c. 100 FTE.

The role sits within Children's Services at West Northamptonshire Council.

Role Specific Responsibilities:

1. Undertake a full and proactive management role as part of the council's wider senior management team, collaborating effectively with colleagues across the council to drive service improvement and change through people, systems, and data, to achieve West Northamptonshire Council's priorities.

2. Provide strategic leadership to develop and deliver long term commissioning, service and financial strategies for education across West Northamptonshire working closely with the Director of SEND and Inclusion and Director of Strategic Commissioning to set direction for school improvement, educational quality, alternative provision and system-wide partnership to raise standards and outcomes for all children and young people, including vulnerable learners.
3. Drive continuous improvement, innovation and decommissioning of activity that does not add value, while ensuring strong performance management and regulatory compliance.
4. Act as a place shaper and market developer, through wider sector collaboration representing the Council at regional and national level, to build and strengthen trusted strategic partnerships across education, health, social care and the wider system, promoting shared accountability, inclusive practice and improved outcomes for children and communities.
5. Lead and develop skilled, high-performing teams, fostering a culture of accountability, collaboration and innovation, championing diversity, and creativity, while operating corporately across the Council and role-modelling West Northants values and behaviours.
6. Lead the development and implementation of a traded services model, identifying opportunities to generate income, maximise expertise and deliver financially sustainable, high-quality services aligned to strategic priorities.
7. Responsibility for all case management systems and securing effective data and robust information analysis to proactively monitor school performance, identify trends, target resources, and deliver timely and targeted intervention to sustain standards and performance at levels of quality acceptable to all regulatory bodies such as Ofsted and CQC.
8. Ensure serious safeguarding incidents and learning from all audits and notifiable incidents are captured, analysed, and translated into improved practice, service redesign, and workforce development.
9. Advice to elected members in respect of a range of issues across the service grouping, working collaboratively to agree the strategy and approach to the delivery of services including reporting on service performance.
10. Provide strategic leadership for education place planning and sufficiency by overseeing the school organisation and capital programme, ensuring accurate forecasting, planning, and delivery of school places to meet demographic need and support community growth, ensuring capital investment delivers value, sustainability, and educational benefit.
11. Lead the Council's statutory education functions, including admissions, attendance, fair access, children missing education, NEET, and elective home education, ensuring high levels of compliance and robust safeguarding practice.
12. Manage medium-term financial planning and operational budgets, with focussed oversight of the DSG Schools Block, school organisation, and place planning budgets securing best value for money, maximise income and commercial opportunities, and ensure financial sustainability through robust business planning, contract management and budget control that align with strategic priorities.

13. To maximise personal productivity, minimise duplication and errors; and manage our information efficiently and securely to reduce risk, through effective use of Office 365 and our internal IT systems and applications.
14. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours.
15. Any other duties commensurate with the level of seniority and at the discretion of the line manager.

Service Director Standard Responsibilities:

1. Culture & Wellbeing

Responsible for the establishment and maintenance of a positive organisational culture, incorporating safety into all activities, fostering a culture that prioritises the wellbeing of all colleagues in the service.

2. Compliance

Ensure that all activities within the service comply with the council's Constitution, finance and contract procurement rules and safeguarding responsibilities, and that effective systems operate within the service to manage performance and risk.

3. Resources/Financial Management

Ensure spending is contained within the allocated budget, exercising strong budgetary control and prioritising use of resources and assets to support the delivery of the council's corporate vision, upholding your responsibility to deliver value for money.

4. Governance

Ensure Compliance with the Council's governance framework in particular the documents set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance, supporting the Council in preparing its Annual Governance Statement in relation to the service area.

5. Health & Safety

Responsible for ensuring compliance across the service(s) with corporate health, safety and wellbeing strategy, policies, and procedures; relevant legislation and regulations; overseeing the assessment of risk and implementing preventative measures to safeguard colleagues and service users.

6. Partnerships

Act as the Council's voice in local and national agendas, forming strong relationships and partnerships that drive forward joined up thinking, better uses of resources and more joined up thinking.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and

circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

Person specification:

The requirements for the role are outlined below and will be part of the selection process. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured by:

(**A**) Application Form, (**T**) Test, (**I**) Interview, (**P**) Presentation, (**D**) Documentation.

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills experience and qualifications required for this job.

Skills and abilities:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Proven strategic leadership skills, able to set vision and direction for education services and influence system-wide improvement.	E	A/T/I
Strong ability to build effective partnerships with schools, MATs, providers, elected members, and external agencies.	E	A/T/I
Excellent communication skills, able to provide clear information, advice, and challenge to a broad range of stakeholders.	E	A/T/I
Strong political awareness and ability to operate effectively in a complex political environment.	E	A/T/I
Ability to analyse complex data and evidence to inform decision-making and strategic planning.	E	A/T/I
Strong commissioning, contract management, and performance monitoring skills.	E	A/T/I/P/D
Demonstrated ability to motivate, inspire, and manage teams through change, promoting resilience and adaptability.	E	A/T/I
Effective use of Office 365 and digital tools.	E	A/T/I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
In-depth understanding of education, schools systems and statutory responsibilities at a strategic level.	E	A/T/I
Strong knowledge of school improvement, education standards, leadership, and governance.	E	A/T/I
Knowledge of education place planning, capital strategy, and sufficiency planning.	E	A/T/I
Understanding of Alternative Provision commissioning and quality assurance.	E	A/T/I
Knowledge of admissions, attendance, CME, EHE and other education statutory duties.	E	A/T/I

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Senior leadership experience in education or children's services within a local authority or equivalent system leadership role.	E	A/T/I
Experience of leading school improvement, education standards, or quality assurance functions.	E	A/T/I
Experience of managing complex budgets, including DSG I.	E	A/T/I/P/D
Experience of engaging with Ofsted, DfE, Regional Directors, and external regulators.	E	A/T/I
Experience of managing diverse teams and delivering change in a multi-agency environment.	E	A/T/I/P/D

Education, training, and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Degree or equivalent in a relevant field	E	A/D
Postgraduate qualification in Education or a relevant field.	D	A/D
Post graduate management qualification	E	A/D

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance, and verification of certificates.

Day-to-day in the role:

Hours:	37	Primary work base:	Northampton
Job family band:	Strategic Management 13	Worker type:	Part-flexible
Salary range:	£99,947 to £106,218	Budget responsibility:	General fund £1.8million DSG £150.5million Capital £3.1million
People management responsibility:	Yes, 6 direct reports, overall service 100 FTE		

Working conditions & how we work:

This role has been identified as a part-flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to work from other work locations and when not working from an office you will be working remotely for up to 3 days a week (including from home).

Our organisational values and behaviours

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things and we want all colleagues to THRIVE, both personally and professionally. Our values and our behaviours framework underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users, and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

T Trust	We are honest, fair, transparent, and accountable. We can be trusted to do what we say we will.
H High Performing	we get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.
R Respect	we respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional, and supportive environment.
I Innovate	we encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.
V Value	We continually strive for best practice and ways of improving existing procedures, practices and systems and thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness
E Empower	we believe in people, will listen, learn, and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.

“Valuing colleagues as individuals and encompassing our different perspectives to deliver our collective ambitions. One West inclusive culture”

When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

Choose a career that offers you a true sense of achievement, fills you with pride and challenges you in a positive way, everyday.

The benefits of a career at WNC include:

- **People** are at the centre of everything we do. Without our people, we wouldn't be able to deliver services to the people in our community.
 - **Ambition** runs through everything we do at West Northants Council, we nurture and develop our people's ambition and willingness to succeed, to continually improve the service we provide to the community.
 - **Care** is at the heart of West Northants Council, we care in so many ways; seen and unseen, helping our colleagues and community to thrive.
 - **Flexibility** is key, we know work-life balance is critical to wellbeing, so we work hard to make sure our benefits package promotes and improves wellbeing; from annual leave, sick pay, family leave and flexible working, financial security offered by a local government pension scheme and life assurance, and discount schemes which make a difference to your day-to-day life, through to employee helplines offering free legal, health, financial and wellbeing advice and support.
- We want you to have balance and be happy.

