WHERE CAREERS THRIVE

When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

West Northamptonshire Council

Head of Housing Assurance and Improvement

Housing, Communities and Opportunities

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's 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:

Provide strategic leadership for a significant housing assurance and improvement service area, with responsibility for shaping long-term direction, developing and delivering housing strategies, and translating corporate priorities, resident needs, statutory duties and market intelligence into clear strategic objectives, investment priorities and delivery plans. Accountable for service planning, performance, governance, regulatory assurance, risk management, budget oversight and delivery of major cross-council priorities for the Council, residents, tenants and communities across West Northamptonshire.

Set the strategic direction for housing assurance, governance, performance, improvement and transformation across commissioned, contracted and directly delivered services. Ensure that housing and communities services are appropriately governed, legally compliant and delivered in line with statutory duties, regulatory requirements and best practice. Provide authoritative strategic advice, challenge and assurance to the Corporate Director, senior leadership, Cabinet Members and governance bodies, with large-scale budget accountability across the housing portfolio and responsibility for aligning commissioning, investment, delivery and financial control with agreed strategic outcomes and budgets.

Accountable to:

This role is accountable to the Corporate Director of Housing and Communities. It sits within Housing and Communities Directorate in West Northamptonshire Council.

Responsibilities:

The post holder will lead the development, implementation and review of the Council's strategic approach to housing assurance, governance, performance and service improvement. The role will convert evidence, resident insight, statutory requirements, financial analysis and national policy into long-term priorities and deliverable plans. Key responsibilities include strategic stewardship of the Housing Revenue Account, regulatory and statutory compliance, housing strategy and policy development, commissioning and contract management, tenant and resident voice, data governance, safeguarding, risk assurance, service transformation and the transition of Council housing services back to direct delivery.

1. Act as the organisational custodian of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan, setting its strategic direction and leading its development, implementation and review to ensure that long-term investment, asset, service and financial priorities are sustainable and aligned with Council objectives. The plan has an annual revenue budget of circa £71m and capital budget of circa £82m.
2. Lead governance, assurance and compliance arrangements across housing services, providing clear evidence of compliance to Cabinet, senior boards, audit, scrutiny and relevant external regulatory bodies.
3. Ensure housing and communities related services are legally compliant and delivered in line with statutory duties, regulatory requirements and best practice.
4. Lead the development, implementation and review of the Council's housing strategies, policies and associated frameworks, translating corporate priorities, resident needs, statutory duties, market intelligence and national policy into clear long-term outcomes, investment priorities and delivery plans.
5. Oversee regulatory, statutory, contractual and grant-related reporting, ensuring data is accurate, timely and quality assured.
6. Lead procurement, negotiation, renewal and management of major housing contracts and reviews of contracted services.

7. Embed tenant and resident voice in governance, assurance, service design and performance improvement, supporting compliance with consumer standards and wider resident engagement commitments.
8. Drive continuous improvement, transformation and change programmes across housing services, ensuring delivery of Tenant Satisfaction Measure improvements, Housing Ombudsman learning and customer experience enhancements.
9. Act as the Council's accountable lead for compliance with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, ensuring learning from complaints is embedded across housing service delivery.
10. Exercise delegated authority to take strategic, operational and assurance decisions within the service area, determine priorities and commit resources within approved budgets and governance arrangements, ensuring decisions are evidence-based, legally compliant, financially robust and aligned with Council strategy.
11. Ensure safeguarding responsibilities are understood, embedded and complied with across relevant housing services, working with internal and external partners to protect residents and manage risk.
12. Lead housing data governance, ensuring data is accurate, secure and effectively used to inform decision-making, assurance and service improvement.
13. Use Microsoft 365 and council systems effectively to work efficiently, collaborate with others and manage information safely, including storing, sharing and handling data securely in line with council policies.
14. Co-ordinating activities across the Directorate in relation to the control framework, including risk management, internal audit and policy development.
15. Lead, develop and empower staff, promoting high performance, equality, diversity, inclusion and effective use of digital systems across the service.
16. Provide authoritative strategic advice to the Corporate Director, Cabinet Members, senior leadership and governance bodies on housing need, policy, investment, regulation, risk and emerging opportunities, shaping corporate decisions and the Council's long-term housing direction. Represent the Council regionally and nationally, influencing partners and policy and promoting the Council's interests, reputation and strategic housing priorities.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies the 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 role.

Skills and abilities:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Ability to analyse complex evidence, anticipate future demand and translate data, resident insight, financial information and policy developments into clear housing strategies, strategic options and deliverable plans.	E	A, I
Political sensitivity and a demonstrable ability to recognise, influence and manage the communications, reputational and service consequences of complex and sensitive issues.	E	A, I
Experience of the Regulator of Social Housing's inspection regime, leading and co-ordinating organisational preparedness for inspection and contact with the Regulator, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures and associated consumer standards.	E	A, I
Highly effective verbal and written communicator, with the ability to adapt style and content for a wide range of audiences, including senior officers, Members, tenants, residents, partners, regulators and public-facing settings.	E	A, I
Working knowledge of Microsoft 365, including Outlook, Teams, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, CoPilot, OneDrive and SharePoint, with the ability and willingness to use these tools confidently and effectively in day-to-day work.	E	A, I
Ability to develop and maintain effective relationships with a wide range of customers, tenants, stakeholders, partners, Members and regulators, building confidence, credibility and a strong personal and organisational profile.	E	A, I
Ability to lead risk management, assurance planning, audit responses and performance improvement in a politically sensitive statutory service.	E	A, I, P
Able to handle information responsibly, store records securely, share data appropriately and follow council policies and procedures on data protection, records management and information security.	E	A

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Extensive knowledge and understanding of relevant legislation, policy, procedures and practices in respect of housing.	E	A
Knowledge and understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the public sector and specifically the local government environment and its impact on service provision, staff and relationships with key stakeholders.	E	A, I
Strong knowledge of strategic planning, housing strategy development, business planning, service planning, performance management and improvement methodologies, including how to align long-term outcomes, investment decisions, resources and delivery plans.	E	A, I
Strong knowledge of the national and local housing policy environment and the strategic, financial and regulatory context for local authority housing, including housing governance, HRA governance, regulatory compliance, commissioning, contract management and risk assurance.	E	A, I

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Experience of leading high-profile, demand-led services in periods of pressure, complexity and increased public, political or regulatory scrutiny, including crisis management.	E	A, I
Track record of leadership and development of high performing teams.	E	A, I
Substantial experience of leading complex organisational change and service transformation, overcoming resistance and securing sustainable improvement across services, partners and stakeholders.	E	A, I
Substantial experience of leading the development, approval, implementation and review of complex housing or related public-service strategies, using evidence and engagement to set long-term direction, influence corporate decisions and translate strategic priorities into business plans, investment programmes, performance frameworks and measurable outcomes.	E	A, I
Experience of robustly managing and controlling large budgets, particularly those involving the housing function.	E	A, I
Experience of chairing, leading and influencing senior governance forums, boards and multi-agency groups.	E	A, I
Experience of working with Members, Cabinet, scrutiny, senior boards, external auditors, regulators and partners to provide assurance, manage risk and secure service improvement.	E	A, I

Education, training and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Honours degree or higher in a relevant subject area, or equivalent professional experience.	E	A
Currently hold, or be willing to work towards, Chartered Institute of Housing Chartered Membership. This applies to candidates with a CIH-recognised qualification at Level 5 or above, or members who have completed an experiential route accredited by CIH.	E	A, I
Management or leadership qualification, or equivalent senior leadership experience, for example MBA, MPA, MSc or ILM/CMI Level 7.	E	A

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.

Additional pre-employment checks specific to this role include:
Any role-specific checks will be confirmed in line with Council policy and the requirements of the post.
Standard DBS – Adult and Child check.

Day-to-day in the role:

Job family & salary band:	Band 11	**Worker type:**	Part-flexible
People management responsibility:	Significant line management and matrix leadership responsibility across housing assurance, improvement and related programme activity.	**Budget responsibility:**	Large-scale, multi-million-pound budget oversight and accountability, including the Housing Revenue Account, with revenue budget accountability of circa £71m and capital budget accountability of circa £82m, alongside commissioned and contracted housing services.

Current pay scales and other benefits are published on the Jobs and Careers section of West Northamptonshire Council's internet.

Working conditions & how we work:
This role has been identified as a part-flexible worker type. This means the post holder will be able to work from Council work locations and remotely, including from home, in line with service requirements and Council policy.

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, thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness.
E Empower	We believe in people, 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."

Should you require this document in another format or language, please contact: Careers@westnorthants.gov.uk

WHERE CAREERS THRIVE

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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.

West Northamptonshire Council