

WHERE
CAREERS
THRIVE

When potential
is unlocked,
talent *thrives*



West
Northamptonshire
Council

Job description and person specification

Principal Engineer - Highways Development Management - Adoptions

Highways and Transport Service, Place Directorate

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'.



West
Northamptonshire
Council

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.

Purpose and impact:

To lead, in conjunction with the Development Liaison Manager, the delivery, co-ordination, and management of all highways development management functions. This includes providing expert technical and engineering advice on planning applications, highway adoption processes, and highway works agreements (including Section 38 and Section 278) to councillors, internal Council services, and developers.

The post holder will manage and develop a team of engineers and technicians to ensure the Council's statutory responsibilities are met, high-quality advice is provided, and sustainable transport and development outcomes are achieved.

They will play a key role in securing funding from developers through legal agreements, contributing to the delivery of the Council's transport, planning, and growth strategies. A substantial proportion of the Highways and Waste service area's budget is derived from income generated by the Development Management function, and the post holder will be responsible for protecting and maximising these income streams to support the long-term financial sustainability of the service.

Accountable to:

This role is accountable to the Development Liaison Manager and responsible for the direct line management of 4 Highways Development Management Officers. The role sits within the Highways and Transport Service, part of the Place Directorate in West Northamptonshire Council.

Responsibilities:

1. Manage S278/S38 Applications & APC
 - Lead the review, technical vetting, and management of Section 278 and Section 38 highway agreements, Advance Payment Code (APC) processes, and associated adoption procedures.
 - Oversee the work of an adoptions engineer and a team of three technicians to ensure timely, compliant, and high-quality service delivery.
2. Provide Expert Technical Advice
 - Deliver professional highways, transport, and engineering advice to councillors, internal Council teams (including planning, flood management, and highway maintenance), and external partners.
 - Advise on the transport and highway implications of development proposals, including public and private sector road adoptions, both within the development plan and for individual sites.
 - Act as the Council's expert witness at planning inquiries when required.
3. Assess and Advise on Planning Applications

- Review and assess planning applications, Transport Assessments, Transport Statements, and detailed technical submissions.
 - Provide clear, evidence-based highway and engineering recommendations and prepare professional reports for planners, developers, councillors, elected members, the public, and other stakeholders.
4. Lead and Develop Technical Teams
 - Manage, mentor, and support engineers and technicians to deliver the Council's statutory planning-related highway functions.
 - Foster a culture of professional excellence, continuous improvement, and collaborative working.
 - Liaise with developers, statutory undertakers, consultants, and internal Council services to facilitate development, deliver highway works, and ensure successful road adoption.
 5. Secure Development Funding
 - Work with planning teams and external partners to negotiate and secure funding through legal agreements under planning and highway legislation (e.g., Section 106, Section 278).
 - Achieve outcomes that align with and support the Council's transport, planning, and sustainability objectives.
 6. Ensure Statutory and Legal Compliance
 - Ensure that the Council's legal obligations under the Highways Act 1980 (as amended) and other relevant legislation are fully met.
 - Maintain high professional standards in decision-making and service delivery to protect the Council's legal and financial interests.
 7. 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.
 8. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours.
 9. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs and ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons.

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
Leadership & Team Management – Proven ability to lead, motivate, and develop a team of engineers and technicians, allocating work effectively and ensuring high-quality, timely delivery.	E	I
Mentoring & Staff Development – Skilled in coaching, supporting, and guiding less experienced staff to build technical capability and professional confidence.	E	I
Technical Decision-Making – Ability to assess complex engineering and planning issues, provide clear technical direction, and make sound, evidence-based decisions.	E	I
Project & Workload Management – Competent in prioritising tasks, managing competing deadlines, and balancing strategic and operational responsibilities.	E	I
Stakeholder Communication – Excellent interpersonal and communication skills to engage effectively with colleagues, developers, elected members, and the public, both in writing and in person.	E	I
Negotiation & Influence – Strong negotiation skills to secure positive outcomes in discussions with developers, consultants, and partner organisations.	E	I
Problem-Solving & Innovation – Able to identify challenges, propose practical solutions, and apply innovative thinking to achieve sustainable transport and development outcomes.	E	I
Political Awareness – Sensitivity to the political and organisational context in which the Council operates, with the ability to adapt communication and approach accordingly.	E	I
Flexibility & Mobility – Willing and able to attend evening meetings and travel to multiple locations as required.	E	I
Adaptability & Resilience – Capable of managing changing priorities, handling contentious issues professionally, and maintaining focus under pressure.	E	I
This is applicable to all roles in WNC that are required to use IT equipment: Demonstrate effective use of Office 365 (incl. Teams, OneDrive, etc.) or willingness to undertake training during the probation period.	E	A/T/I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Highways Legislation – Comprehensive understanding of the Highways Act 1980 (including Sections 38 and 278), the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (including Section 106), and related regulations.	E	A/I/P

Development Management Processes – In-depth knowledge of planning application procedures, the development plan process, and how highway considerations integrate with spatial planning.	E	A/I/P
Technical Standards & Codes – Familiarity with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (DMRB), Manual for Streets, Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD), and other relevant national/local design guidance.	D	A/I/P
Highway Adoption & Agreements – Expert understanding of the technical vetting process, road safety audits, and procedures for adoption of new roads.	E	A/I/P
Transport Assessments & Modelling – Ability to review, interpret, and critique Transport Assessments, Travel Plans, and traffic modelling data.	E	A/I/P
Sustainable Transport & Policy – Knowledge of sustainable transport principles, active travel design, and emerging transport policies in line with national and local objectives.	E	A/I/P
Masterplanning & Urban Design – Understanding of master planning principles for new developments, including integration of transport infrastructure.	E	A/I/P
Political & Organisational Context – Awareness of Central and Local Government policy directions, political sensitivities, and corporate priorities relating to transport and development.	E	A/I/P
Funding & Legal Agreements – Knowledge of mechanisms for securing developer contributions and infrastructure funding through planning and highway agreements.	E	A/I/P

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Proven experience in highways development management, including the assessment and negotiation of Section 278, Section 38, and related highway agreements.	E	A/I
Strong understanding of the links between land use planning and transport, including statutory planning processes and the integration of transport considerations into development proposals.	E	A/I
Background in highway engineering and/or planning policy, with familiarity with the development plan process and associated technical standards.	E	A/I
Demonstrated ability to lead, manage, and develop a diverse technical workforce, fostering high performance, professional growth, and positive working relationships.	E	A/I
Experience in preparing and presenting detailed technical reports and evidence at committees, public meetings, and planning inquiries.	E	A/I
Experience of playing a lead role with a diverse workforce, with demonstrable ability to motivate and inspire others to achieve high performance outcomes and positive working relationships and an open and flexible management style.	E	A/I

Education, training and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
HNC or degree in Civil Engineering, or relevant discipline, or extensive relevant experience.	E	A
Degree or postgraduate qualification in engineering or significant relevant and practical experience in this area.	D	A
Relevant professional membership, or working towards membership e.g. Chartered or Incorporated Engineer	D	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.

Day-to-day in the role:

Hours:	37	Primary work base:	Northampton
Job family band:	RT9	Worker type:	Part-flexible
Salary range:	£46,878-£50,071	Budget responsibility:	N/A
People management responsibility:	3		

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). The post holder should be able to attend occasional evening meetings. The role will require site visits to be undertaken.

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.

