

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Head of Highways Operations		
Directorate	Infrastructure & Transport		
Reporting to	Service Director – Infrastructure and Transport		
Grade	5		
Evaluation ref:	LGR0062	Job ref:	Family
Role purpose			
<p>The Head of Highway Operations plays a crucial role in fulfilling the Councils' statutory duties and compliance as Highway Authority, particularly those related to transportation, asset management, budget management, and public safety. Some key areas where the role responsibilities contribute to the Councils' overall aims and objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Efficient and safe transportation: The Head of Highway Operations is responsible for ensuring the efficient movement of people, goods, and services on the highway and non-highway network. The role leads and directs the planning, construction, and maintenance of highway infrastructure to provide safe and reliable transportation routes. By managing operations effectively, the role contributes to enhancing safety, connectivity, reducing congestion, and facilitating economic growth. 2. Infrastructure and asset management: Highways are a significant component of the county's infrastructure network. The Head of Highway Operations leads and directs the management and maintenance of highways, bridges and structures, highway lighting and electrical assets, public rights of way, and other related assets. The role involves strategic planning, budget management (approx. £55m annual expenditure), asset management, contract management, and resource allocation to ensure the safety and serviceability of the infrastructure. By maintaining and improving the highway network, the role fulfils the Councils' purpose of providing reliable and well-maintained transportation infrastructure. 3. Safety and compliance: The Head of Highway Operations places significant emphasis on promoting highway safety and ensuring compliance with relevant regulations. By prioritising safety and compliance, the role contributes to the Councils' statutory responsibilities of safeguarding the well-being of road users. 4. Stakeholder engagement: The Head of Highway Operations often interacts with various stakeholders, including government agencies, local communities, and transportation associations. The role is required to collaborate with stakeholders to address concerns, gather feedback, and incorporate community needs into planning and decision-making processes. By fostering positive relationships and engaging stakeholders, the role contributes to the Councils' priorities of building strong partnerships and ensuring the highways serve the needs of the community. 			

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Responsibilities

Lead and direct the highways operational budgets (2pprox.. annual £55m capital and revenue) to ensure they are deployed to achieve value for money, are well monitored and controlled and resources allocated accordingly.

One of the critical responsibilities of the Head of Highway Operations is to ensure the safety of highway users. By implementing safety measures, undertaking maintenance activities on roads, bridges and other highway and non-highway assets, conducting regular inspections, and responding promptly to incidents or emergencies, the role contributes to reducing accidents, injuries, and fatalities on the highways. This aligns with the Councils' purpose of prioritising public safety and minimising risks associated with transportation.

The role also includes leading, directing and testing winter service and emergency response plans which are crucial to minimise disruptions and protect public safety.

Deliver effective leadership and management of all staff employed across the service motivating and providing development opportunities for employees to ensure the delivery of current and future service commitments.

Responsible for the day-to-day management and delivery of innovative, customer and community focused, cost-effective services highway operations which support the overall aims of the Council. These include:-

- All statutory and regulatory responsibilities in Councils' capacity as Highway Authority
- Bridges and structures
- Public rights of way
- Highway lighting and non-highway electrical assets
- Asset management
- Highway and non-highway maintenance
- Winter service and emergency works
- Contract procurement and contract management
- Highway and non-highway commissioning (including the highways contract with a value exceeding £300m)

Lead and manage the direction of all highway related services to ensure Somersets highway network is well maintained, safe and managed effectively and ensure infrastructure and transport contributes to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies, including through driving behaviour change and modal shift.

Lead, direct and oversee the preparation of contract specifications, design standards and guidelines for developers, consultants and contractors with a contract portfolio exceeding £300m over the contract(s) lifetime; including contract exit plans and mobilisation.

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Lead and direct complex contract management issues such as high value compensation events, mediation, adjudication, and arbitration.

Ensure the delivery of contract obligations for all service areas ensuring developers and contractors work to agreed regulations and standards.

Establish performance indicators and monitoring systems to assess the effectiveness of implemented policies.

Ensure effective measures are in place to monitor and evaluate demand and supplier performance against contract requirements and to initiate and manage actions for service improvement and intervention where appropriate.

Ensure effective processes and channels are in place for feedback from users, communities, partners, and providers, encouraging co-production wherever possible.

Ensure the effectiveness of service performance in terms of achieving the purpose and outcomes as defined and contributing to wider council priorities.

Evaluate changes in legislation, policy and needs against the existing strategy.

Identify and deliver the need/opportunity to modify strategic priorities and targets, including but not limited to tackling the climate and ecological emergencies.

Drive the delivery of all strategies for future highway services, ensuring cost effective and quality assured contracts and partnerships are in place to deliver effective and seamless services.

Ensure the Highways and Transport services are managed in a sustainable, safe, and cost-effective manner.

Lead an integrated strategy that will deliver services designed to provide the best opportunity for Somerset to achieve its environmental and economic goals.

Lead the development and delivery of performance standards and targets with multi agency partners to support the achievement of the Councils ambitions for Somerset residents.

Develop effective relationships with government departments, regional and local agencies and partners, communities and the voluntary and third sector to influence policy and practise to the benefit of our communities.

Clearly articulate and understand the problem and identify the specific issues or challenges that need to be addressed from a service perspective.

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Collect relevant data and information related to the problem, determine the desired outcomes or objectives, and establish measurable goals to assess progress and success.

Through collaboration, consider both short-term and long-term solutions and evaluate their feasibility, effectiveness, and potential impact.

Consider the potential benefits, costs, and risks associated with each option and prioritise the solutions based on their potential impact and alignment with the Councils' goals and objectives.

Develop policies that govern the operation, maintenance, and improvement of highways.

Integrate sustainability principles and practice into highway operations policies. Promote environmentally friendly practices such as the use of green infrastructure, energy-efficient lighting, and the reduction of carbon emissions.

Regularly review and evaluate policies to identify areas for improvement. Seek feedback from stakeholders, monitor emerging trends, and update policies to adapt to changing circumstances, technological advancements, and transportation demands.

Ensure positive interaction with various stakeholders, including government agencies, contractors, transportation authorities, and the general public. Collaboration and effective communication are necessary to address concerns, gather feedback, and coordinate activities related to highway operations. Building relationships and partnerships with relevant stakeholders helps ensure a coordinated and holistic approach to managing the highway network.

Impact

Responsible for 9 direct reports of whom represent distinct and complex service areas.

Staffing group of approx. 120 technical, professional, and administrative staff.

Direct responsibility and accountability for £55m capital and revenue budgets and contract portfolio exceeding £300m, together with commissioning responsibilities resulting from budget allocations.

Lead and direct strategy, commissioning, and service planning ranging up to 10 years in advance considering corporate priorities and longer terms plans.

The role will chair the Highway Operations Board and the Highways Collaborative Board and contribute to the Strategic Partnering Board, C&P Health and Safety Board, Programme Management Office, and so on.

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Develop relationships with stakeholders to foster a collaborative, coordinated and effective approach to strategic highway matters. This will include stakeholders such as, National Highways, other Highway Authorities, Exmoor National Park, Government departments, emergency services, developers, contractors, etc.

Service dimensions:

6710km of Carriageway

2,603km of Footways

630km of Cycleways

6,000km of Public Rights of Way

1380 bridges with a span over 1.5m

154,700 road drains and gullies

44 – 50 winter service actions per year

The total Asset Gross Replacement Cost (GRC) of the highway network in Somerset is approximately £7.5 billion.

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
Extensive and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the national policy context, regulatory environment, financial, legislative, climate change and major issues facing the Highways and Transport sector.	X		
Regulatory and compliance: In depth knowledge with relevant laws, regulations, and industry standards pertaining to highway operations, environmental impact, safety requirements, and permitting processes. This includes staying up-to-date with changes in legislation and ensuring compliance with applicable regulations.	X		
A strong understanding of highway engineering principles, road construction techniques, and traffic management. This includes, but not limited to, knowledge of roads and bridges design standards, pavement maintenance, signage, lighting, drainage systems, and safety protocols.	X		
Keeping up with advancements in technology, industry best practices, and emerging trends in highway operations is essential. A willingness to adapt, learn, and explore innovative solutions can	X		

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contribute to the improvement and efficiency of the highway network.			
Experience			
Significant experience of policy development and delivery of Highways and Transport services in a public sector environment.	X		
Substantial leadership and managerial experience and skills gained at a senior level.	X		
Demonstrable experience of partnership working, including the ability to influence and lead corporate and multi-agency projects and initiatives effectively, as well as working with communities and voluntary sector organisations.	X		
Strong communication, negotiation, and relationship-building skills are necessary to collaborate effectively and address concerns or issues that may arise.	X		
Substantial and demonstrable experience of commissioning services, including procurement and contract management.		X	
Significant experience in securing funding for, commissioning of and overseeing delivery of major maintenance programmes, projects, and services, including accountability on complex funding regimes.		X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
Relevant degree and / or professional qualification (e.g., Chartered Engineer) and / or equivalent experience.	X		
Evidence of work related continuing professional development.	X		
Post-qualification, e.g., MBA, Masters.		X	
Skills			
Proven ability to think innovatively and conceptually		X	

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and deliver against this, including through securing funding and shaping highways and transport services and partnerships to achieve corporate goals.			
Ability to work effectively in a political environment and establish positive relationships with Members and fellow officers, providing clear advice on strategy and policy decisions and complex issues.	X		
Excellent interpersonal, communication and presentation skills, with proven ability to communicate effectively to a wide range of audiences throughout the organisation and wider partners to build and maintain strong relationships.	X		
Strong leadership, team building, and project management skills are necessary to effectively organise and coordinate resources, set goals, and ensure the efficient operation of the highway network.	X		
Developing and implementing long-term plans for highway operations, including maintenance schedules, budgeting, and resource allocation.		X	
The ability to analyse complex problems, data, identify trends, think critically, and make informed and timely decisions to optimise the performance of the highway network.		X	
Promoting a culture of safety and ensuring compliance with safety regulations are key responsibilities.	X		
Working Conditions			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			
Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.			
Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in			

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relation to the Infrastructure & Transport Services teams.

Lead Infrastructure & Transport teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.

Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.

Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.

Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.

Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Infrastructure & Transport service teams.

Ensure that all service place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customer, and communities.

Support the delivery of the Council's key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Infrastructure & Transport service.

Keep abreast of specific statutory or regulatory duties contained within the role to ensure any challenges and opportunities in the delivery of services are responsive, compliant, and well communicated to customers, communities, and business as appropriate.

Support Corporate and Directorate specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.

Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.

Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practice.

Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.



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Date: June 2025