

Job Description

Job title	Chief Strategy Officer (Children's Reforms and Transformation)
Directorate	Children and Adults
Division	Management Team
Range	SSMR
Reports to	Director of People (Statutory DCAS) and Deputy Chief Executive

Main purpose of the job:

The Chief Strategy Officer (CSO) will lead strategic transformation across Medway's People Services, with a primary focus on the Families First Partnership Programme (FFPP) and wider system reform. This role will also provide strategic oversight for potential Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), ensuring alignment with national policy, local priorities, and community needs.

The CSO will lead the strategic design and delivery of a major reform programme across Children's Social Care, Education, SEND, and wider council transformation. The programme's purpose is to facilitate change and improvements for children, young people and families by managing the implementation of Children Services system change as described in the Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill; through designing, coordinating, overseeing, and executing of a multiagency delivery plan, including delivering the authority's response to the national statutory guidance for Families First into a developed model by April 2027.

The role will ensure that Children Services are set up as a single integrated system that supports the wellbeing of and protects all children from significant harm, inside and outside of the home.

This will require working closely with key partnerships including Health, Police and the voluntary and community sector. The role includes budget oversight of any grant money, oversight of the progress of the delivery plan and monitoring and evaluation.

Take cognisance of Local Government reorganisation across the Medway and Kent footprint and ensure children's transformation fits with "any new unitary authority."

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the One Medway Council Plan and embeds our values and behaviours.

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Accountabilities and Outcomes:

- Lead the design and delivery of the transformation programme to achieve whole-system, multi-agency service improvement.
- Oversee programme governance, risk management, and performance reporting to ensure effective delivery and accountability.
- Set the strategic direction for local government reorganisation planning and implementation across Children's and Adults services to ensure service continuity and improvement.
- Ensure meaningful engagement with children, families, communities, and partner agencies to inform strategic priorities and service design.
- Lead strategic planning cycles to align service objectives with the Council's corporate priorities and long-term vision.
- Act as the primary liaison with national and regional bodies to influence policy and secure support for local strategic initiatives.
- Represent the Council at regional and national forums to advocate for system reform and transformation in local government services.
- Lead horizon scanning and policy analysis to anticipate emerging challenges and shape proactive strategic responses.
- Drive the use of data and intelligence to support evidence-based decision-making and service innovation.
- Promote digital transformation and integrated systems to enable collaborative working and improved service delivery.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

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To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand in the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Director of People and Deputy Chief Executive

The post holder will not be required to line manage others but will be required to direct, coordinate or train other employees.

The post holder will need to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Person specification

Qualifications

- Educated to Master's degree level or equivalent (Level 7) in a relevant area, for example in Public Policy and Management or Advanced Leadership for Professional Practice (Social Work).
- Qualification in project and programme management e.g., Prince 2 Practitioner, Managing Successful Programmes (MSP).

Knowledge

- Highly developed understanding of National policy frameworks relevant to children's services and local government transformation (e.g. Children Wellbeing and Schools Bill).
- In depth knowledge of legislation relevant to the role, including employment law, safeguarding, equality and diversity, and other statutory frameworks that impact service delivery and employee relations.

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- Comprehensive understanding of programme governance, risk management, performance frameworks, and strategic planning cycles.
- An understanding of the structures and functions of national and regional bodies (DfE, DHSC, ICBs, Ofsted) and voluntary sector organisations.
- Applied knowledge of data analytics, intelligence-led decision-making, and digital transformation strategies.
- Working knowledge of strategic planning methodologies, market benchmarking, and external comparators.
- Demonstrates advanced knowledge of stakeholder engagement strategies and partnership working models.
- Extensive insight into resource planning, budgeting, and performance management in public services.
- Demonstrates a comprehensive subject matter knowledge of change management frameworks and council-wide transformation initiatives.
- Strategic level understanding of performance management, staff development frameworks, and team dynamics.
- Highly developed and applied understanding of children's services, early help, safeguarding, and/or SEND.
- An applied understanding of how to champion a culture of innovation, co-production, and continuous improvement across services.
- Developed understanding of risk management techniques
- Awareness of Medway's local context and community needs in relation to the scope of the role.
- Developed knowledge of and understanding of budgetary and financial procedures within a local government context, including budget setting, monitoring, and financial reporting.
- Awareness of leadership principles rooted in equality, integrity, inclusion, and organisational development.

Experience

- Extensive experience of working at a senior level in local government or a related public sector environment with excellent political awareness.
- Proven track record in leading strategic design and delivery of large-scale transformation programmes. Incorporating whole-system transformation principles and multi-agency service design.

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- Established experience working with senior stakeholders, such as elected members and senior leaders to shape and implement strategic direction.
- Demonstrated history of managing complex programmes with multiple stakeholders, ensuring alignment with corporate priorities
- Experience of successfully delivering transformation initiatives on time, within budget, and with measurable impact.
- Broad experience of representing organisations at regional and national forums to influence policy and secure support.
- Extensive experience of building strategic relationships with statutory partners, national bodies, and community organisations.
- Demonstrable experience of leading innovative initiatives to improve service delivery.
- Shows an expertise in leading teams through transformation, promoting a culture of improvement and innovation.
- Long standing experience of building productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders to support service delivery.
- Substantial history of leading and embedding change aligned with wider organisational strategies and supporting staff through transition.
- Established expertise in setting objectives and development plans for individuals and teams, and building inclusive, high-performing teams
- A depth of experience of working with high levels of autonomy and initiative in a senior position.

Skills

- The ability to think strategically and plan over the long term with the ability to align vision to operational delivery - making informed decisions to overcome barriers and drive sustainable change.
- Extensive research and planning skills, the ability to use horizon scanning, policy analysis and other relevant sources to identify emerging trends in public service reform and the impact this may have on Council services.
- Advanced written skills, the ability to write, for example, strategic plans/committee papers/public facing documents which are clear and accessible to a variety of audiences.
- Highly developed presentation skills, the ability to present e.g., progress reports, recommendations for change etc in a clear and accessible format to audiences of any level.
- Proven skill to translate policy into actionable strategies and service models.
- Well versed in the use of data analysis, the ability to interpret complex data to drive evidence-based decisions and service improvements through strategic planning and service design.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills to be able to engage, work collaboratively and influence diverse stakeholders.
- Demonstrable skills to motivate and inspire teams and stakeholders to embrace innovation and continuous improvement.

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- Accomplished financial management skills to ensure efficiency and impact of significant and complex budgets including external funding with set criteria
- Excellent communication, negotiation, consultation and influencing skills to clearly articulate and progress complex strategies, policies, and transformation plans to a wide range of audiences—including elected members, senior leaders, frontline staff, and external partners.
- The ability to represent Medway at regional and national forums as an expert on system reform and local government transformation in relation to the role.