

Job Description

Job title	Principal Policy Officer
Directorate	BUSINESS : Business Support
Division	Finance and Business Improvement
Range	MPR 7
Reports to	Head of Policy and Partnerships

Main purpose of the job:

Working within the Council’s new Policy and Partnerships Team to provide high quality analysis, advice, and recommendations across a range of cross-cutting service, sector, and corporate policy areas to support the development of effective policy and strategy.

Leading on appropriate consultation and governance processes to support the Council’s decision-making requirements.

Leading on the design and delivery of complex and/or sensitive policy projects including those that are time pressured and high risk.

Developing and maintaining relationships, both internally and externally, to support partnership activity and ensure the effective delivery of Medway Council’s strategic and policy objectives.

Representing the Council at key partnership and stakeholder meetings and deputising for the head of policy and partnerships as required.

On a pro-active basis, both as part of an agreed work programme and working independently, provide analysis and commentary in relation to national policy and legislative and regulatory issues. This work will inform recommendations to senior officers, the Cabinet and the Council on any necessary actions to deliver an effective organisational response to changes in the Council’s operating environment. This may include treading new ground in the context of local government reorganisation and the postholder must demonstrate a confidence and resilience in leading the authority accordingly.

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the [One Medway Council Plan](#) and embeds our [values and behaviours](#).

Accountabilities and outcomes:

This role is required to cover all parts of the policy and partnership function, which is broadly split across “Policy and Strategy” and “Partnerships”

Policy and Strategy

Lead the development of strategy and policy informed through research, data analysis and undertaking consultation with stakeholders including the public and partners, and sign-off through formal governance processes.

Develop specialist knowledge and expertise as defined by the Head of Policy and Partnerships and maintain a high level of understanding of the Council's existing policy framework and decision-making structure, to provide expert advice and guidance to support and inform professionals, senior officers and Members and maintain a high degree of professional credibility with front line services and partners.

Lead the delivery of key activity aligned to strategy or policy objectives including the delivery of standalone projects, and funding opportunities where appropriate as directed by the Head of Policy and Partnerships.

Supervise the work of the policy officers, providing advice and guidance where appropriate.

Undertake analysis of the Council's overall performance in delivering its key strategies, including where Medway Council contributes to partnership strategies, and support key aspects of evaluation and reporting both internally and externally.

Provide general support by working collaboratively across the Policy and Partnerships Team as and when required.

Support the planning, development, and oversight of the Council Plan.

Support the development of funding bids and external investment opportunities.

Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and stay up to date with live policy as it develops.

Partnerships

Develop and maintain effective working relationships across Medway Council and with external partners, including the Voluntary and Community Sector and NHS to support the delivery of partnership activity and strategy objectives.

Represent the council at external meetings, working groups and strategic forums.

Deputise for the Head of Policy and Partnerships at external meetings, working groups and strategic forums, where appropriate.

Identify opportunities for collaboration and joint initiatives to deliver positive outcomes for Medway residents.

Maintain a strong awareness of the external environment through establishing and maintaining a network of internal and external contacts, including links with other local authorities, external agencies and regional partners, in order to share information and good practice and raise the profile of the Council, facilitating a wider research base for the development of strategy and policy.

Support partnerships governance arrangements, ensuring effective communication and coordination.

At manager discretion, other activities may be assigned that fit the job description.

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.

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 into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Head of Policy and Partnerships

The post holder will have line management responsibility.

The post holder will be required 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

All criteria at level A should be considered essential requirements.

Qualifications

Level A

- Degree level qualification (Level 5) required

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Not applicable

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Not applicable

Knowledge

Level A

- Comprehensive knowledge of relevant policy, strategy and procedure within a public sector organisation, including roles of teams, officers and members.
- Knowledge of complex public policy issues
- In-depth Developed knowledge of national and local government policies and agendas.
- Developed understanding and awareness of policies and priorities of relevant partnership agencies.
- Developed understanding of decision-making structure in a public sector setting.
- Understanding of advanced data protection, GDPR, freedom of information, and transparency requirements.
- Understands the implications of information disclosure and has the knowledge to ensure compliance with data protection, governance, and transparency requirements in a public sector setting.
- Awareness of and work within national legislation and relevant policies and procedures relating to Health and Safety.
- Can demonstrate a commitment to continuous professional development in relevant areas such as governance, public policy, or strategic planning.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Demonstrates knowledge of emerging trends and legislative changes affecting local authorities which would impact the council.
- Developed political understanding and sensitivity to changes in the political landscape
- Expert knowledge of relevant policy, strategy, and procedure within Medway Council to inform strategic advice and guidance on complex policy issues.
- Completion of a relevant project management course and can demonstrate improved knowledge.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Advanced understanding of policies and agendas of partnership agencies.
- Advanced knowledge of best practices in policy development and implementation.

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- Proven ability to influence and shape policy at a regional or national level based on highly developed knowledge in the relevant areas.

Experience

Level A

- Significant experience in policy development, research, or partnership working within a public sector environment.
- Proven track record in managing and delivering successful policy projects.
- Experience in leading cross-functional teams and coordinating stakeholder engagement.
- Experience of analysing complex information and present findings and recommendations to influence outcomes.
- Extensive experience in policy development and partnership working.
- Background in relevant business, or policy area, ideally withing a public sector setting.
- Experience of working in more than one professional or service area or equivalent.
- Experience in undertaking complex research and project work and analysing information to provide evidence-based insight and recommendations.
- Experience of producing written pieces of work in a range of formats and for a variety of audiences.
- Experience of working with a range of different stakeholders.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Experience of influencing policy decisions at a strategic level.
- Demonstrated ability to lead high-profile policy initiatives with minimal supervision.
- Experience in leading cross-functional teams and coordinating stakeholder engagement.
- Can show the contribution to the development of colleagues to build capability, enhance performance, and support career development. Fosters a culture of continuous learning and knowledge sharing across teams.
- Demonstrates a strong commitment to promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of policy development and service delivery.
- Successfully delivering findings/recommendations/briefings to senior officers, elected members, partners and the public.
- Experience in conducting qualitative and quantitative research.
- Experience in consultation processes and collaborative policy development.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Deputising for Head of Policy and Partnerships as required.
- Demonstrates experience of successfully delivering on project objectives
- Experience of positively engaging with elected members, senior officers, partners, and the public.
- Extensive experience in supporting democratic processes and decision-making.
- Supporting service improvement through policy innovation at a developed level.
- Recognised as a subject matter expert in the context of the role.

Skills

Level A

- Highly developed numeracy, research and analytical skills, including the ability to synthesise complex information from multiple sources into clear, insightful briefings and reports, with attention to detail.
- Developed political understanding, astuteness and demonstrates sensitivity to changes in the political, service and equalities agendas.
- Ability to strategically apply knowledge gained from broader experience in other roles.
- Ability to take responsibility and lead high profile projects, driving them forward with minimal supervision.
- Ability to prioritise a range of projects within tight deadlines and organise a varied workload effectively.
- Ability to advise and assist in briefing Members, managers and others on complex policy and strategy clearly, patiently, and succinctly and advise on the need for policy changes.
- Highly developed communication skills with the ability to present written information in a variety of formats to a range of audiences.
- Excellent oral communication and presentation skills and ability to interact effectively with senior officers and Members.
- Ability to work collaboratively with a range of partners and external stakeholders, building effective working relationships.
- Excellent numeracy and analytical skills.
- Ability to work well with others and contribute positively as part of a team.
- Ability to work flexibly and adapt to changing priorities.
- Ability to use initiative when circumstances demand and show motivation to achieve the team's objectives.
- Commitment to and promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of work.
- ICT literate, including Microsoft 365 applications.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Developed strategic thinking and problem-solving abilities.
- Developed management skills to support team members.
- Effectively plans and allocates resources to meet deadlines and deliver high quality outcomes.
- Ability to build and maintain effective and collaborative working relationships with stakeholders.
- Experience in effectively using policy analysis tools and software to provide robust and accurate data.
- Advanced analytical skills with the ability to interpret complex information and provide clear recommendations.
- The ability to use sound judgment and discretion in handling politically sensitive and commercially confidential information.
- The ability to maintain trust and credibility by managing sensitive issues with tact, integrity, and professionalism, particularly in high-profile or complex policy environments
- Proven ability to advise senior leaders and elected members on complex policy issues.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Proven ability to interpret complex data and present findings clearly to a wide range of audiences.
- Highly developed interpersonal skills to positively engage with elected members, senior officers, partners, and the public.
- Demonstrable skills in translating political and strategic objectives into actionable policy for the council.

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- Has the ability to identify emerging issues and opportunities and reframe into actionable and practical outcomes.
- Skilled in managing competing priorities from a variety of areas and working to tight deadlines to deliver within deadlines.
- Ability to challenge existing practices and propose creative solutions.