

Strategic Lead – Commercial Improvement & Assurance

Job Description

Directorate:	Place		
Service:	Highways & Transport	Team:	Commercial Delivery
Location:	Various		
Salary range:	£68,525 - £74,531	Grade:	13
Reports to:	Head of Service - HW Commercial Delivery	Staff responsible for:	TBC

Job purpose and scope

The postholder provides senior leadership for commercial improvement and assurance across Highways, supporting the Head of Commercial to strengthen commercial governance, commercial accountability, financial discipline, improve service efficiency and secure value for money from people, assets, contracts and investment. The role brings together commercial discipline, programme assurance and continuous improvement to ensure services and projects are well controlled, evidence-led, compliant and focused on sustainable outcomes.

Working across service and organisational boundaries, the postholder leads complex improvement and commercial workstreams, applying proportionate gateway controls, performance analysis, benchmarking and business case scrutiny throughout the project and service lifecycle. The role provides constructive challenge and practical support to operational, technical, finance and procurement colleagues, helping translate strategic commercial priorities into consistent standards, improved delivery models and measurable benefits.

The postholder advises senior leaders, elected members and governance forums, develops productive relationships with partners, suppliers and contractors, and supports the Head of Commercial in building commercial capability, managing risk and maintaining clear oversight of cost, performance, affordability and benefits across highways services, programmes and schemes.

Performance Indicators

- Delivery of agreed commercial improvement and assurance activity to required timescales, budgets and quality standards
- Demonstrable efficiency savings, value for money and measurable service or project improvements
- Effective and proportionate application of commercial governance, gateway controls, risk management and assurance
- Improved accuracy, transparency and reliability of cost, risk, performance and benefits information
- Evidence that data, benchmarking and insight are used to inform investment, service planning and improvement decisions
- Improvement in cost predictability, commercial performance and benefits realisation across programmes and services
- Positive stakeholder feedback from senior leaders, elected members, operational teams, partners and suppliers
- Compliance with statutory duties, funding conditions, contractual requirements, corporate policies and agreed standards
- Ensure agreed contract KPI's are delivered and suppliers are accountable under the contract terms
- Leading Lancashire Framework



Leading Lancashire – Our Leadership Framework



Leading Lancashire Our Leadership Framework

Our Vision and Values We are driven by a simple yet powerful vision – “Here at Lancashire County Council, we are helping to make Lancashire the best place to live, work, visit, and prosper.”

This vision is at the centre of everything we do. Embedded in our identity are our values: *Supportive, Innovative, Respectful, and Collaborative*, our guiding principles that enable everyone to thrive.



Four Spheres of Leadership

The Leading Lancashire framework is a dynamic approach, encapsulating four key spheres:

Responsibilities, Capabilities, Behaviours, and Results.

These spheres form the bedrock of our leadership ethos, providing clarity and direction for all leaders. Responsibilities guide our actions, Capabilities cultivate our potential, Behaviours shape our interactions, and Results measure our impact. Together, these spheres ensure leaders deliver their best for themselves, their teams, LCC, and the people of Lancashire.



The Lancashire Mindset

Woven through the Leading Lancashire framework we introduce The Lancashire Mindset; Growth, Ownership, Optimism and Positive Impact. Adopting this mindset across the entire organisation not only brings our values to life but also emphasises the collective commitment to delivering the best for the people of Lancashire.

The Lancashire Mindset not only shapes our approach to leadership but also serves as a guiding force for a culture rooted in growth, ownership, optimism, and the commitment to making a meaningful positive impact.



Levels of Leadership

The Leading Lancashire framework provides an opportunity to define and clarify the focus and purpose of the various leadership levels within the organisation.

VISIONARY (Long-Term Direction):

Level 1 & 2 Leadership – Executive Directors and Directors
Senior leaders at this level, are Visionary Leaders. They have the privilege of shaping the long-term vision for the organisation, providing strategic and visionary direction that will guide the future success of Lancashire County Council.

SHAPING (Medium to Long-Term Strategy):

Level 3 Leadership – Heads of Service
Heads of Service at this level are Shaping Leaders. They are empowered to shape strategies with a broad mid to long-term view, setting clear strategic initiatives that provide direction to the management population, contributing to the organisation's success in the medium to long term.

OPERATIONAL (Short-Term to Immediate Effectiveness):

Level 4 Leadership – Management Roles
Leaders at this level, found in various management roles, are Operational Leaders. They focus on immediate operational effectiveness, ensuring their teams deliver in the short term, meeting objectives and driving success on a daily-to-monthly basis.

These refined terms more explicitly convey the visionary, shaping, and operational aspects of leadership at each level within the Leading Lancashire framework.

Accountabilities/Responsibilities

The accountabilities outlined are intended to provide a clear overview of the scope and level of work expected within the role, however this is not an exhaustive list and flexibility is appreciated. We expect that all our teams will undertake other reasonable duties in support of service delivery, including tasks aligned to lower graded roles when required, to contribute to team effectiveness and organisational priorities

- Lead, manage and develop staff, or provide technical and professional leadership to others, including responsibility for supporting performance, capability, wellbeing, professional development and promoting a high-performing, accountable culture in line with council policies and procedures
- Support the Head of Commercial in translating commercial strategy into coordinated delivery plans, standards, controls and improvement priorities across Highways, embedding financial discipline and clear commercial accountability throughout service and project delivery
- Lead defined commercial improvement, assurance and transformation programmes across services, programmes and schemes, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and agreed outcomes

- Lead service diagnostics, commercial reviews and performance analysis, developing robust business cases, options appraisals and improvement plans that clearly set out costs, benefits, risks, dependencies and measurable outcomes to improve efficiency, productivity, customer outcomes, cost certainty and use of people and assets
- Own, embed and continuously improve proportionate programme and project gateway arrangements, ensuring proposals are supported by appropriate commercial, financial, risk and performance evidence before recommendations are made to decision makers
- Provide rigorous scrutiny and constructive challenge of cost estimates, forecasts, financial models, risk allowances, procurement strategies, contractual arrangements and underlying assumptions
- Provide commercial assurance across the project lifecycle, from pipeline development and investment appraisal through procurement, delivery, change control, completion and benefits realisation
- Lead the identification, assessment and management of commercial, financial and delivery risks within assigned portfolios, ensuring effective controls, mitigation and escalation arrangements are in place
- Ensure cost, risk, performance and benefits information is accurate, timely, transparent and decision-ready for senior leaders, boards and governance forums
- Use data, benchmarking, market insight and lessons learned to drive continuous improvement, improve cost predictability and inform future service and delivery models
- Work with operational leaders to redesign services, processes and structures where required, ensuring changes are practical, sustainable and supported by clear implementation and benefits plans
- Work collaboratively with finance, engineering, procurement, legal, asset management and delivery teams to align commercial, technical, financial and operational outcomes
- Provide high-quality commercial and improvement advice, reports and recommendations to senior leaders, elected members and governance forums, escalating significant issues where necessary
- Lead the commercial and contract management of complex or high-value projects and contracts within an agreed remit, ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, funding and contractual obligations
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with partners, suppliers, contractors and external agencies, using constructive challenge and collaboration to improve delivery and secure value
- Build commercial and continuous improvement capability across services through guidance, coaching, workshops, tools and consistent application of agreed methodologies and standards
- Manage assigned programme resources, budgets and external support, including commissioning and overseeing approved specialist or consultancy support, ensuring transparent, efficient and effective use of resources, clear outputs, effective contract management and transfer of knowledge into the council
- Apply expert technical and forensic quantity surveying skills to both pre-contract and post-contract activities, ensuring robust cost planning, control, valuation and change management
- Contribute to cross-directorate and partnership initiatives that improve service integration, customer experience, operational resilience and wider infrastructure outcomes

- Ensure services and projects operate in line with relevant statutory duties, highways requirements, health and safety obligations, corporate policies and governance standards
- Ensure knowledge of, and compliance with, Lancashire County Council policies, guidance and procedures, including attending meetings and undertaking any other duties required to deliver the organisation's objectives

Other Responsibilities

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in the way we deliver services to the community and in our employment arrangements. We expect all employees to understand and promote this policy in their work.

Health and Safety

All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others when carrying out their duties and must help us to apply our general statement of health and safety policy.

Customer Focus

We put our customers' needs and expectations at the heart of all that we do. We expect our employees to have a full understanding of those needs and expectations so that we can provide high quality, appropriate services at all times.

Safeguarding Commitment

We are committed to protecting and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Skills Pledge

We are committed to developing the skills of our workforce. All employees will be supported to work towards a level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy if they do not have one already.

Value and Behaviours

We expect all our employees to display the LCC values and behaviours at all times and actively promote them in others

Our Values



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Person Specification

All the following requirements are essential unless otherwise indicated by *

Your ability to meet the job requirements will initially be assessed by the information provided on your application but further assessment will be undertaken at interview and, in some cases, by using other types of assessment(s).

Qualifications

- Relevant degree level qualification or equivalent experience - ideally in commercial management, finance, engineering, business, project or programme management
- Professional qualification in procurement, project, programme or change management (e.g. PRINCE2, APM, Lean or equivalent) or demonstrable equivalent experience
- Membership of a relevant professional body (e.g. CIHT, CILT or similar) or willingness to work towards

Experience

- Significant experience of leading commercial improvement, assurance, transformation or complex programme delivery within highways, infrastructure, capital programmes or a comparable operational environment
- Experience applying commercial governance, project lifecycle and gateway controls, including the scrutiny of business cases, cost estimates, forecasts, commercial models, procurement approaches and contractual arrangements to support robust, evidence-based decision-making
- Experience developing and implementing service, operational and commercial improvements using performance, cost, risk and benchmarking data to drive efficiency and value for money
- Experience managing commercial, financial, operational and programme risks within a regulated, statutory or complex delivery environment
- Experience working collaboratively across multi-disciplinary teams and providing clear advice, assurance and constructive challenge to senior leaders, governance forums, operational services, finance, engineering, procurement, legal teams, contractors and delivery partners

Essential knowledge, skills & abilities

- Strong knowledge of commercial governance, value for money, financial control, risk management and assurance within complex programmes, projects or operational services
- Knowledge of continuous improvement, service redesign and change management methodologies, with experience applying them to deliver measurable organisational benefits
- Understanding of end-to-end project and programme delivery, including investment appraisal, gateway reviews, procurement, contract management, change control and benefits realisation
- Ability to lead complex workstreams, programmes and teams, including planning, governance, resource coordination, performance management and capability development
- Highly developed analytical skills, with the ability to interpret complex commercial, financial, operational and performance information and translate findings into clear recommendations
- Resilient and lead by example demonstrating high professional standards and values
- Ability to provide balanced, evidence-based challenge and assurance, considering risk, affordability, value for money, service outcomes and organisational priorities
- Strong financial and commercial awareness, including budget management, delivery of efficiencies and improving cost predictability and value
- Excellent communication, report writing, presentation, influencing and negotiation skills, with the ability to engage senior leaders, elected members and external stakeholders
- Ability to build effective collaborative relationships across organisational boundaries, delivering shared outcomes while maintaining appropriate professional challenge

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- Experience of applying digital, data and systems-based solutions to improve governance, service delivery and operational performance, together with an understanding of the Highways environment, relevant legislation, statutory duties, infrastructure investment frameworks, and commitment to the Council's mission, aims and objectives
- Demonstrate a commitment to a Mixed Economy service ambition
- Ensure compliance with CDM Regulations by promoting safe planning, design and execution of construction activities throughout the project lifecycle

Other essential requirements

- Evidence of continual professional development
- This is an essential car user post
- You will be required to provide a car for use in connection with the duties of this post and must be insured for business use. In certain circumstances consideration may be given to applicants who, as a consequence of a disability, are unable to drive