

Post Specification

Date	23rd July 2026
Post Group Number	8093
Post Title	Strategic HR Business Partner
Job Family	OS
Job Family Role Profile	18
Final Grade	Grade 18

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile

Service Area description

The Human Resources and Organisational Development service incorporates the Human Resources (HR) and Organisational Development (OD) Operational Service, OD, Training, Wellbeing, Workforce Planning, Employee Relations and HR Business Partnering Services.

It delivers professional and enabling HR/OD services that are aligned to the strategic priorities of the Council's Strategic Plan. The service provides comprehensive support to employees, managers, Trades Unions and strategic partners to support the full employee lifecycle: attraction, recruitment, onboarding, development, retention and exit/leaving.

Purpose of this post

- Reporting to the Assistant Director (AD) of HR/OD and working to the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), this role is a leadership role ensuring delivery of the Corporate and Service-specific HR/OD Strategies within defined areas of the Council (*which will be agreed between the post holders and AD for HR/OD on appointment; the three posts will cover the Council between them*)
- As a member of the HR/OD Management Team, provide leadership and vision within the HR/OD service to ensure delivery of a quality and high performing HR/OD service to internal and external customers
- To work collaboratively with the HR/OD Management Team to ensure the Council's Target Operating Model is embedded through matrix management across the HR/OD service
- To make a significant contribution to the effective leadership of HR/OD service and, to a more limited extent, other Council services, at a strategic level
- To provide direct leadership and management/matrix management to roles across the HR/OD service e.g. roles across the HR/OD service who support specific Directorates, etc.

Job Context

- Shapes the Directorate Management Team and senior management thinking by acting as a change agent who draws in a cross-cutting perspective

- Plays an active role in customer service design solutions and tests them against what's needed e.g. designing new service models, which can span more than one organisation
- Works with the Workforce Planning & Employee Relations Manager to use insights to build local people plans and strategies which build capacity and capability with less money e.g. numbers and type of roles; talent requirements over several years; innovative employment models and solutions
- Supports the Director to develop required local culture, aligned to the corporate values
- Acts as a trusted advisor to the Director; sharing team and personal feedback with them
- Uses analytical tools, experiences and management information to understand their Directors' world i.e. is part of the business as well as part of HR/OD
- Identifies and manages stakeholders for organisational transformation on issues wider than people change
- Educates and coaches managers on change management, where required
- Champions the HR/OD service and strategies, driving discipline to support the HR/OD Operating Model e.g. access routes, quality performance management and feedback loop into HR/OD, tests new approaches on the ground, etc.
- Works with the other HR Strategic Business Partners to provide line management/matrix management to relevant roles across the HR/OD service, in a way which maximises teamwork and multiskilling across HR/OD, for the benefit of the customer
- Proactively supports Directors on difficult people issues, pulling in other HR/OD capability and capacity e.g. senior exits, capability, etc.
- Instigates and designs solutions with close teamwork with the rest of the HR/OD service to deliver a fully integrated approach across all tiers of the Target Operating Model
- Responsible for particularly complex or sizeable change programmes, which may span more than one Directorate/organisation
- Works with the HR/OD Management Team to prioritise HR/OD resources across the full service, using customer insights to direct activity to where it will have the maximum impact
- Coaches colleagues through matrix working on specific activities
- Champions specific short and long term programmes as defined by the HR/OD Strategy

Key job specific accountabilities

Strategic Management

1. To actively support and champion specified elements of the Council's and Directorate(s)' strategic direction e.g. transformation of services through new organisational models
2. To lead the development of a clear HR/OD strategy and plan for Directorate Management Teams which span more than one area and, in some cases, more than one organisation
3. Work with the AD for HR/OD and the other HR Strategic Business Partners to hold a cross-council view of people priorities and ensure efficient join-up of work where possible

4. To work with the HR/OD Management Team to design and deliver the People Strategy
5. To contribute to the development of the HR/OD strategy, policies, plans and processes across the full spectrum of the HR/OD services, using insights from their customers on what is impactful
6. To lead and be responsible for the development and implementation of approaches for embedding cultural change including organisational development, within their service customer base
7. To promote a learning culture with a focused approach to learning and development which is flexible and responsive to the changing requirements of the Public Sector and the assessed needs of individuals and teams
8. Lead and/or sponsor council-wide organisational change, as required
9. Line manage/matrix manage, support and guide people across the HR/OD Service, acting as an escalation route where appropriate

Service Delivery

1. To act as the lead HR/OD person for the Directorates they partner; defining the parameters of how different staff groups access wider HR/OD service provision in partnership with the AD for HR/OD
2. Work closely with the OD, Training & Wellbeing Manager to ensure that the training needs of Directorates are met and appropriate OD solution are in place to support service priorities and transformation and that health and wellbeing is prioritised
3. To anticipate and plan for future HR service developments, taking account of best practice, agreed performance measures and all relevant legislation and Council/Government regulations
4. To contribute to the development and implementation of standards, frameworks, policies and protocols for HR/OD, using customer insights into what is impactful and the reasons behind this
5. To take account of national and locally agreed performance standards reflected in the statutory and local performance plans in the planning and delivery of the service
6. To adapt to changing priorities within the Council, the Cumberland System and the wider public sector e.g. flexible to support different customers as current services evolve over time
7. To develop and implement robust quality systems that support delivery and service improvement
8. To challenge and support Council leaders to adopt sound people approaches which enable the council to transform and deliver savings targets
9. Attends monthly case reviews with the Advice Team to collaboratively resolve complex cases

Continuous Improvement

1. To initiate improvements that develop HR/OD services and customer satisfaction

2. To monitor and assess Directorate and HR/OD service performance to identify necessary responses to performance issues, demonstrating collective ownership of HR/OD performance
3. To drive and support further improvement across the HR/OD service for the benefit of customers
4. Ensure robust systems are in place within the Business Partnering Service to manage and monitor service risk and internal audit systems in order to drive improvement

Responsibility for People

1. To support the Directors to ensure that all their people have clarity regarding the Council's vision, priorities and objectives to enable individual accountability and recognition on the role they play in the success of the organisation
2. To be responsible for a HR Business and Change Partner, including all line management responsibilities
3. Ensure that development plans are in place for their teams to grow capabilities required for current and future work, as informed by the Council's priorities/objectives, and as identified within relevant strategies and plans
4. To define resource and capability requirements for specific programmes and projects so that capacity from the wider HR/OD team can be allocated to deliver transformation
5. To provide leadership and performance management of both directly managed and matrix teams, role modelling the leadership behaviours as defined by our Council Values and the local context
6. To design structures and appropriate workstyles in line with our Target Operating Model, that create flexibility across the organisation
7. To lead, engage and develop staff and actively manage performance within the HR/OD service

Responsibility for Finance & Physical Resources

1. As financial targets change, work with the Workforce Planning & Employee Relations Manager to develop and then lead people cost reduction and income generation strategies for Directors to ensure overall budget targets are achieved
2. Work with the HR/OD Operations Manager to constantly examine the application of new technologies, processes and service improvements, to bring a positive impact to customer satisfaction, whilst achieving business targets and reducing the service delivery and HR/OD costs

Relationships & Customer Contact

1. To be accountable for the relationship with the relevant Director to ensure their service needs are understood and translated into HR/OD delivery and improvements, in line with the target operating model
2. To manage and develop the wider networks and partnerships needed to ensure the corporate and Council Service HR/OD Strategies and plans are implemented against agreed performance measures

3. Build and maintain positive relationships with trade unions, ensuring open communication and consultation
4. To grow and shape relationships across the Council (particularly within their nominated areas of the Council and partner organisations) to enable and ensure the delivery of seamless end to end HR/OD services
5. To work closely with the other members of the HR/OD service, particularly members of the HR/OD Management Team to improve the offer to the customer, make best use of resources and skills, deliver agreed outcomes and embed the Target Operating Model
6. Build strong and reciprocal relationships with similar roles within other services across the Council, particularly those in the Business Change and Transformation Directorate in order to present 'one voice/face' from the Directorate

Please note annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process

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Key facts and figures of the post

Budget Responsibilities	No direct budget management, but the role holder will have high authorisation levels and will be required to act on behalf of the AD for HR/OD as and when required
Staff Management Responsibilities	- To manage one HR Business and Change Partner, matrix manage people across the HR/OD Service and matrix manage people when delivering change/transformation - This role has a major impact on people throughout the Council; both internally and externally as direct service delivery will be provided to other staff and/or members of the public - The role holder will have high authorisation levels for making business decisions that affect people and will be required to act on behalf of the AD for HR/OD as and when required
Other	Direct contact with members of the public, including young people, parents and carers, etc.

Essential Criteria - Qualifications, knowledge, experience and expertise

Education & Qualifications

- Degree or equivalent professional qualification or evidence of professional development
- Full professional qualification in relevant field (CIPD) or equivalent experience

Specialist Knowledge & Skills

- Knowledge of legislation and statutory requirements/guidance relevant to HR/OD
- Ability to lead the planning, delivery and continuous review of HR/OD services to achieve maximum benefit for the Council
- Ability to respond quickly to changing operating environments and adapt and develop services accordingly including the prioritisation of resources
- In-depth understanding and awareness of local government and the issues that affect and influence how it operates
- Knowledge of the service and customer profile of the Council Services the HR Strategic Business Partner supports

- In-depth knowledge of how to lead and shape organisational culture
- Ability to challenge existing practices in a constructive way to encourage others to embrace new disciplines and challenges
- Ability to take a strategic view when developing plans and strategies
- Ability to work with colleagues and stakeholders across a range of services and organisations

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

- Ability to effectively lead and motivate large numbers of staff in different teams in order to deliver consistently high performing services and achieve required levels of staff satisfaction levels
- Ability to effect cultural and behaviour change through effective leadership skills including the ability to successfully mediate and resolve conflict
- Excellent communication skills, verbal, written and presentational to convey varied and complex information and ideas to a wide range of audiences at different levels including staff, colleagues, senior management and external stakeholders
- Act as an ambassador for the Council at all times including demonstrating gravitas in negotiating and influencing skills in order to articulate, represent and defend the position of own service area or the Council as a whole
- Ability to initiate, influence & maintain effective partnership working with a range of stakeholders, other agencies and organisations to ensure maximum value for the organisation
- Ability to navigate organisational politics and dynamics between Service groups and individuals which drive decisions and delivery
- Ability to educate top management on change and people techniques which inspire and challenge them to change

Relevant Experience

- Demonstrable experience of HR Business Partnering at a senior level
- Proven experience of successful service and structure re-design, delivery and improvement and a successful track record of delivering financial and performance targets
- Experience of successful change management including the challenge of business cases, costed options appraisals and benefits tracking to ensure activities deliver maximum benefit
- Experience of designing and implementing engagement strategies which span diverse groups of people
- Significant experience of working with Trade Unions in a complex environment, on a range of complex issues
- Experience of successfully leading change management/transformation at a Directorate level

- Experience of writing HR/OD strategies
- Significant experience of delivering quality improvement within a local authority
- Management experience in a large, complex and democratically accountable or similarly complex organisation

Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS Checks

- This post does not require a DBS check.

Job working circumstances

Emotional Demands	• High levels of personal resilience and emotional intelligence will be required, given that managing a wide range of relationships in different political environments is imperative to this role • Will be under pressure to work to extremely tight deadlines on a frequent basis in order to react to the changing business environment • Conflicting priorities and managing tight timeframes for implementing change may prove stressful for direct reports and the role holder will need to manage this and effectively lead and motivate numbers of staff in order to ensure the service is delivered effectively and that business targets and objectives are consistently met • Will be required to be involved in challenging negotiations where there is pressure on the role holder to achieve a successful outcome for the organisation. There will be a requirement to challenge both internally and externally and manage any conflict that arises as a result • Has a significantly high level of visibility within the organisation and is expected to be an exemplary role model to others within the organisation in terms of required behaviours and approaches
Physical Demands	• Normal office demands (agile working) but there will be a requirement to travel to different operational sites and meetings as required, potentially outside of the Cumberland area
Working Conditions	• Will use significant analytical, judgmental, creative and developmental skills to analyse and interpret very varied and highly complex information or situations and to produce solutions or strategies over the long term, e.g. service remodelling to meet changing business requirements and responding to new service requests • Requirement to keep up to date with professional/legal developments and market trends relating to own service area and the organisation as a whole and interpret the effects on the organisation including shaping and ensuring delivery of any required changes as a result • Will undertake long term planning and strategic planning to shape the delivery of own service area and the organisation as a whole e.g. planning a range of major change projects over the course of several months • This role will require high levels of mental agility in order to fully understand the needs of the business to create creative and innovative solutions within own service area and the organisation as a whole • The job requires high levels of awareness and prolonged periods of concentration requiring mental attention, e.g. developing strategic plans and client propositions as well as reviewing large amounts of complex data • Concentration may be made difficult as the role holder will be expected to habitually switch between tasks during the course of the working day and it is likely there will be frequent interruptions from other staff, colleagues, internal and external suppliers and stakeholders • There is a general requirement to manage many different requirements at the same time which calls for high levels of prioritisation, time management and

planning skills to ensure that all business needs are met in accordance with agreed timescales and operational service/performance levels.

- There will be very high levels of work-related pressure from the need to meet tight deadlines and/or respond to conflicting operational and business demands
- The role holder will be expected to have delegated authority to act on behalf of the AD for HR/OD as and when required, representing them both internally and externally

Other Factors