



Position Description – Strategic Policy and Insights Team Leader

This position reports to: Head of Strategy

Career Level: 20

Position purpose:

As a member of the Strategy Team, the Strategic Policy and Insights Team Leader will be responsible and accountable for:

- Lead the integration of the Council's Strategic Framework and direction, and support development of the Long Term Plan to guide organisational priorities.
- Overseeing the delivery of high-quality strategic and policy advice, ensuring robust analysis, evidence-based recommendations, and well-coordinated policy development across priority areas including climate resilience, infrastructure planning, and long-term community wellbeing.
- Leading and managing strategy, bylaw and policy reviews, ensuring statutory compliance, operational efficiency, and alignment with community expectations and emerging legislative requirements.
- Leading Council-wide data, insights, and research functions, ensuring high-quality evidence informs policy development, strategic planning, and Council decision-making.
- Contribute to Council's response to major government reforms, including coordinating submissions and supporting wider organisational analysis, planning, and engagement to ensure Council is well-positioned to understand and respond to emerging changes.
- Strengthening community centred policy and engagement approaches, ensuring that community voices, local priorities, and diverse perspectives meaningfully shape strategic direction, policy development, and Council initiatives.
- Building a strong team culture and capability, setting clear expectations for technical excellence, supporting staff development, and ensuring consistent delivery of high-quality strategic, policy, and engagement advice.

The functional areas of responsibility include;

Strategic Leadership & Policy Direction

Lead the development, integration and review of Council's Strategic Framework and Direction, ensuring high-quality strategic and policy advice grounded in strong evidence, robust analysis, and coordinated policy development across key areas such as climate resilience, infrastructure planning, and long-term community wellbeing.

Provide leadership in embedding and integrating existing strategies across the Council to enhance organisational understanding and cohesion.

Regulatory Stewardship

Lead and oversee strategy, bylaw, and policy reviews to ensure statutory compliance, operational efficiency, and alignment with legislative and community expectations.

Data, Insights and Research Leadership

Guide Council-wide data, insights, and research functions to ensure high-quality evidence informs strategic planning, policy development, and organisational decision making.

Be a good
human

Be brave – think
differently

Better
together

Make it happen
for Selwyn

Selwyn
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Government Reform Coordination

Coordinate the Council's responses to major government reforms by leading the development of submissions, providing robust analysis, and offering strategic advice to senior leaders. This includes monitoring emerging policy changes, assessing their implications for the organisation, and facilitating cross-Council engagement to ensure decision-makers are well-positioned to understand risks, opportunities, and required actions.

Community Centered Policy and Engagement

Strengthen community focused policy and engagement approaches so local priorities, diverse perspectives, and lived experiences meaningfully shape Council strategies, policies, and initiatives.

Direct reports: 3

Indirect reports: Nil

Deliverables

Strategy & Planning

- Drive the strategy of the of the Council to be aspirational and focused on high standards of service which reflect the demographics (as appropriate to role)
- Deliver an annual plan, budget and (where appropriate) capital budget on time and in alignment with strategy and overall business plans
- Contribute strategic and detailed information to the development of Council's LTP
- Provide functional input for each of the teams that report to this role into the strategies and plans of other functions
- Monitor the activities and plans of other business units for relevance and impact to own business unit – plan and take action accordingly
- Achieve and maintain a high level of understanding of Selwyn District initiatives, developments, trends and issues
- Manage risk through careful planning and sound judgement
- Provide expert evidence-based advice and direction to governance and leadership on matters relating to designated area(s)

Goal & Performance Achievement

- Set performance objectives with all staff which are aligned with the strategy and goals of the organisation and team
- Review staff performance and development, providing regular feedback and coaching. Remedy performance discrepancies
- Recruit capable people who are a fit with the culture and values
- Ensure that staff are sufficiently trained and adequately resourced to complete their work
- Ensure a high level of achievement of plans and KPIs within business unit
- Manage and control operating expenses and take prompt action to remedy negative budget variances
- Develop and maintain a high level of digital literacy within the team
- Optimise the use of technology within service area
- Evaluate programmes in functional area, ensuring continuous improvement with the customer at the core
- Balance prudent expenditure whilst also ensuring fit for purpose activities and programmes

Culture

- Develop a motivated, positive, empowered, psychologically safe, continuously developing team
- Achieve year on year improvements in staff engagement
- Role model and ensure full commitment to Council's safety culture
- Be seen by all direct reports as fair and honest with high standards
- Operate an effective two-way communication channel and feedback loop – keep people in the know, positively
- Be seen as a visible and positively influential leader throughout the organisation (as appropriate to role)

Reporting & Compliance

- Prepare timely and informative monthly reports (and other reports as required)
- Maintain currency of knowledge with regard to relevant legislation, LG protocols, policies and procedures and ensure compliance by self and others
- Routinely capture data that informs future service planning and delivery by team/organisation
- Attend and be prepared for all management and council meetings

Relationships & Representation

- Achieve productive and positive internal relationships across the organisation
- Represent the Council carefully and positively in the media (as required for role), in-line with media policy and training
- Engage proactively and constructively with Council, Councillors and community boards (as required for role)
- Provide an appropriate level of positive visibility in the community
- Represent the team/unit/group positively and proactively

Requirements for all staff

- Selwyn District Council honours Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We are committed to working with our Treaty partner to deliver on our obligations under Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Take all reasonable and practical steps to ensure the health and safety of yourself and others. Comply with any reasonable health and safety instruction, policy or procedure and ensure that all hazards, risks and incidents are reported using Vault.
- Actively participate in Performance Appraisals and complete a learning plan in conjunction with your manager.
- Maintain a strict sense of professional ethics, maintaining confidentiality and privacy as per the Privacy Act and abiding by Council Policies.
- Be responsible for meeting the provisions of the Public Records Act 2005 (PRA) and the Local Government Official Information and Meetings Act 1987 (LGOIMA) in respect of Council information, and for following related Selwyn District Council policies and processes.

Emergency Management requirements for all Council Staff

Selwyn District Council has a legislative responsibility to respond to an adverse event occurring within our communities. As such, any staff member may be required to assist the Emergency Management Team respond to such an event. Family circumstances and BAU roles will be taken into account. Required assistance may include:

- Coordination of emergency services and lifeline providers within the community during a civil defence emergency or adverse event.
- Respond to civil defence emergencies or adverse events wherever possible and if it is safe to do so.
- Participate in any required Civil Defence exercises to ensure that essential services are maintained.

Authorities

- Authorised to commit the Council to a course of action by signing external correspondence within approved delegation levels. For courses of action which will exceed the delegation levels, this must be done in conjunction with your manager.
- Comply with all other relevant sections of the Delegations and Policies manuals and their amendments.

Skills and Experience

Essential

- Senior experience (10+ years) in leading similarly sized team area in a large multidisciplinary and complex organisation.
- Strategic – demonstrates a broad-based view of issues and perceptive of their longer term and wider implications.
- Strong understanding of digital ways of working, with experience of using technology to achieve effective outcomes and driving organisational innovation and change, high level of digital literacy
- Proven ability in leading teams to achieve organisational goals/objectives within a values-based framework
- Ability to communicate clearly and appropriately for a range of audiences and adapt style accordingly
- Strong ability to set direction, prioritise work, and create a collaborative, inclusive team culture.
- Strong critical-thinking skills, with the ability to synthesise complex information and provide clear, strategic advice to senior leaders and elected members.
- Ability to translate analytical findings into meaningful insights that support decision-making.
- Ability to influence and negotiate with a wide range of stakeholders, including senior leaders, external partners, iwi and community groups
- Understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and commitment to applying bicultural practice in policy and insights work.

Desirable

- Experience working in local or central government, with a strong understanding of public-sector processes, statutory frameworks and political context.
- Experience with data visualisation, insights platforms, or analytical tools that support evidence-based policy.

Key Relationships

External

Te Taumutu Rūnanga
Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga
Council customers
Selwyn residents
External contractors
Territorial and Regional Authorities
Government Agencies (incl MfE, MBIE, Work safe NZ, Ministry of Justice, Police, ACC)
Greater Christchurch Partnership
Non-government agencies
Unions – Public Service Association

Internal

Chief Executive
Executive Leadership Team
Council staff
Mayor
Elected Councillors
Elected Community Board Members

Committees/groups

Committees of Council
Business organisations and networks
Special interest groups and committees

Leadership Competencies



Eats problems for breakfast. Removes obstacles promptly to enable the team to get on with their work. Thinks methodically, and makes sound, informed decisions.



Does Change Well. Embraces change and creates a culture whereby people are open to and involved in change. Carefully plans for and addresses the associated people impacts.



Builds Togetherness. Shows genuine interest in people and builds trusting relationships with team members and peers. Creates a positive, collaborative, inclusive climate where all people feel part of the team and the organisation.



Rocks the messaging. Ensures people are kept informed. Puts care into ensuring messages and instructions are relevant, interesting, and easily understood.



Tackles the tough stuff. Deals effectively with performance and disciplinary situations. Has the difficult conversations. Takes ownership.



Delivers the goods. Thinks ahead and plans the work of the team accordingly. Ensures work is done well and to time.



Brings out the best. Appreciates that high performance is a journey not a destination. Puts effort into unlocking people's potential.



Sets the tone. Aware of the role of the leader in creating calm and confidence in the team. Monitors own emotions and takes action to stay positive.

Education, Qualifications, Memberships

Essential

- Relevant tertiary qualifications in related discipline (e.g., public policy, political science, economics, and social science).

Desirable

- Postgraduate study in a relevant field and/or recognised project management qualification is an advantage.

The information contained in this position description is intended to describe the general nature and level of work being performed. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of all responsibilities, duties and skills required of the position and incumbent. From time to time it may be necessary to consider changes to the position description in response to the changing nature of our work environment.