



Position Description – Strategic Planning and Design Team Lead

This position reports to: Head of Strategy **Career Level:** 22

Position purpose:

As a member of the Strategy Team the Strategic Planning and Design Team Leader will be responsible and accountable for:

- Leading a multidisciplinary team delivering coordinated strategic planning, urban design, open space, and transport inputs for planning and infrastructure programmes.
- Overseeing the integration of strategic planning, urban design, transport, and open space advice to support infrastructure planning, priority Council projects, and organisational objectives.
- Managing the preparation of regional and local spatial plans, master plans, and major site planning work that set the district's long term growth direction.
- Overseeing and validate updates to the growth model and related analytical tools, ensuring outputs are technically robust and directly inform planning, infrastructure, and investment decisions.
- Leading feasibility assessments, demand studies, and related analytical work to inform spatial planning, infrastructure investment, and major project decisions.
- Leading the implementation of the spatial directions in Waikirikiri Ki Tua Future Selwyn working closely with the Strategic Policy and Insights team.
- Building a strong team culture and strengthen team capability by setting clear technical expectations, supporting staff development, and ensuring consistent delivery of high quality planning and design advice.
- Supporting place based planning and placemaking by coordinating practical community engagement that ensures local needs and priorities inform planning and design work.

The functional areas of responsibility include;

People Leadership

- Demonstrates strong people leadership through effective coaching, mentoring, and development of a high performing, multidisciplinary team.
- Provide clear direction to a multidisciplinary team to ensure coordinated and consistent strategic planning, transport, open space and design outputs.
- Leads and grows the Councils approach to spatial planning, urban design and placemaking.
- Lead the embedding of spatial directions and plans across the organisation to improve cohesion and understanding.
- Build team capability and a positive culture through feedback, and clear technical expectations.

Programme Management

- Owns, develops and delivers a portfolio of work related to design and strategic planning.
- Provide strategic oversight of project scoping, scheduling, resourcing, and delivery to ensure planning and design programmes meet organisational priorities and are delivered to agreed time, cost, and quality standards.
- Manage project risks, reporting, and coordination across internal teams and external partners.

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Technical and Delivery

- Oversee spatial, master planning, open space, transport, growth modelling, and analytical work that informs long-term infrastructure and investment decisions.
- Provide specialist open space, reserves and strategic planning advice, including regulatory input into major development proposals and guidance that supports high-quality open space outcomes across the District.
- Deliver transport and infrastructure planning advice, ensuring an integrated approach to transport operations and future planning while working closely with regional and national partners.
- Lead strategic feasibility assessments, demand analysis, and option testing to support evidence-based planning and major project decision-making.
- Support place-based planning and placemaking through practical community engagement that ensures local needs shape planning and design work.
- Build and maintain strong internal and external relationships including with iwi, stakeholders, partners, and technical specialists to ensure planning and design work is well-coordinated, transparent, and aligned with wider organisational and community priorities.

Direct reports: 6

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)

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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.

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Skills and Experience

Essential

- Senior experience (10+ years) in leading similarly sized teams in a large organisation, with a high level of practical implementation
- People and leadership experience including leading multidisciplinary teams
- Strategic – demonstrates a broad-based view of issues and preceptive of their longer term and wider implications
- Ability to communicate clearly and appropriately for a range of audiences and adapt style accordingly
- Strong analytical skills, including the ability to assess risks, opportunities and long-term implications for the organisation and community
- 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
- Strong problem-solving skills and the ability to navigate ambiguity
- Knowledge of relevant legislation affecting councils operations
- Proven track record of building and maintaining effective relationships with key internal and external stakeholders
- Good understanding of Te Tiriti O Waitangi and knowledge of Tangata Whenua values and protocols

Desirable

- Experience working in a local/central government environment
- Proven ability to lead and deliver complex, cross-organisational projects on time and to a high standard
- Demonstrated ability to bring together a wide range of disciplines to co-create new approaches, frameworks, or ways of working that strengthen organisational capability and deliver improved outcomes

Key relationships

External	Internal	Committees/groups
Te Taumutu Rūnanga	Chief Executive	Committees of Council
Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga	Executive Leadership Team	Business organisations and networks
Council customers	Council staff	Special interest groups and committees
Selwyn residents	Mayor	
External contractors	Elected Councillors	
Territorial and Regional Authorities	Elected Community Board Members	
Government Agencies (incl MfE, MBIE, Work safe NZ, Ministry of Justice, Police, ACC)		
Greater Christchurch Partnership		
Non-government agencies		
Unions – Public Service Association		

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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	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Relevant tertiary qualification in related discipline such as planning, urban design, urban development, architecture, transport and public policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">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.