



Position Description – Principal Strategy Planner

This position reports to: Strategic Planning and Design Team Leader

Career Level: 20

Position purpose:

As a senior member of the Strategic Planning and Design Team, the Principal Strategy Planner provides technical leadership in spatial planning to help shape long-term spatial outcomes for the district and region. This includes developing high-quality spatial analysis and planning advice that supports Council's long-term planning and investment decisions. The Principal Strategy Planner provides advice to elected members, the executive leadership team, iwi, central government agencies, and key delivery partners. The role helps translate complex legislative, policy, and technical settings into clear, implementable spatial strategies that guide growth, investment, and place-making over the long term.

The key areas of responsibility include;

Spatial Planning and Technical Input

- Provide technical input into regional and Greater Christchurch spatial planning, that is robust and legally defensible.
- Play a key role in developing, reviewing and implementing the Regional Spatial Plan, and non-statutory spatial planning for Waitaha Canterbury and Greater Christchurch.
- Represent Council in spatial planning matters, ensuring Council's evidence, spatial direction, growth and other priorities are accurately reflected.
- Provide strategic spatial planning oversight into Council projects with a spatial planning component to ensure alignment with broader spatial objectives and frameworks.
- Provide specialist technical spatial planning input into master plans, structure plans, and major site planning projects, and infrastructure plans.
- Develop and refine spatial planning frameworks, growth scenarios, place-assessments, and supporting evidence bases.

Growth Modelling, Analysis and Scenario Testing

- Maintain, improve and administer the district's growth model, including assumptions, datasets, and analytical processes.
- Produce and interpret modelling outputs to inform infrastructure planning, land-use decisions, and long-term investment priorities.
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- Undertake feasibility assessments, demand studies, and scenario analysis for growth areas and major projects.
- Assess development capacity, infrastructure constraints, and long-term growth implications using robust analytical methods.
- Interpret climate risk, natural hazard risk and other spatial constraints to inform the consideration of scenarios and options for future urban development and infrastructure.

Technical Review, Advice & Collaboration

- Review spatial planning, modelling, and analytical work prepared by internal teams or external consultants to ensure accuracy and consistency.
- Provide clear, evidence-based technical advice to support planning, infrastructure, and investment decisions.
- Participate in technical working groups and regional planning processes as a subject-matter specialist.
- Prepare technical reports, briefing material, and spatial analysis to support senior staff and elected members.
- Assist in developing shared tools, templates, and workflows that improve team efficiency and transparency.
- Actively contribute to a collaborative team culture by sharing work, insights, and technical knowledge.

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- Provide leadership on aligning spatial planning with Māori outcomes, Te Tiriti o Waitangi obligations, and partnership approaches with mana whenua.

Direct reports: Nil

Indirect reports: Nil

Deliverables

Big Picture

- Have awareness of strategies, contribute to plans and KPIs for self, team and other teams as required
- Stay up to date with legislation and practices as appropriate to role
- Understand the intent/ethos of local government and the services provided by other parts of the Council
- Stay informed of organisational activities and decisions through being attentive to communications
- Show understanding and commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi (The Treaty of Waitangi) principles, know how these Principles are relevant to your work

Performance

- Achieve performance goals and expectations and follow leadership instruction on time and to a high standard consistently
- Report on progress to plan, and against own KPIs
- Take an active role in own goal setting, learning and development
- Correctly and appropriately use technology as required for role, including new technologies
- Contribute to the sustainability efforts and financial position of the Council through the responsible use of resources and equipment
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- Set a positive example for punctuality, attendance and work ethic

People & Culture

- Act in ways that align with and promote Council values
- Be a positive and constructive team member
- Collaborate on cross team/discipline projects and teams as required
- Constructively and successfully adapt to changes
- Take positive actions to keep self and others physically and psychologically safe and well
- Attend, be prepared for and engage constructively in all meetings
- Deliver exceptional customer service consistently (make every interaction count)
- Build effective, sustainable relationships at all levels
- Have consistently positive interactions externally and with Community Boards and Elected Members (as required for role)

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.

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- 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	Desirable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive experience (10+ years) in spatial planning, strategic planning, and/or urban planning • Strong working knowledge of New Zealand planning legislation and emerging spatial planning requirements, and the ability to apply these in technical work • Proficiency with GIS and spatial analysis tools • Ability to interpret growth modelling outputs and apply them to planning work • Strong analytical skills, including scenario testing and feasibility assessment • Strong understanding of best-practice integrated land-use, transport, and infrastructure planning • Ability to produce clear, accurate, and robust technical reports, grounded in sound analysis and evidence • 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 • Ability to communicate clearly and appropriately for a range of audiences and adapt style accordingly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience working in a local/central government environment • Experience in contributing to spatial planning processes and the development of spatial plans • Experience preparing technical evidence for strategic planning or infrastructure programmes. • Experience and involvement in housing and development capacity assessment for tier 1 urban environments under the National Policy Statement for Urban Development 2020

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

Individual Contributor Competencies



Eats problems for breakfast. When faced with a new situation or setback, uses initiative and takes appropriate action.



Does Change Well. Is open-minded about change and prepared to adapt. Moves forward positively and constructively.



Builds Togetherness. Is equally open and friendly with all people, and respectful of individual differences. Works effectively in teams.



Rocks the messaging. Keeps those who need to know 'in the know'. Communicates clearly and appropriately.



Tackles the tough stuff. Prepared to constructively share an opinion and get involved in conversations on challenging matters. Takes ownership of mistakes.



Delivers the goods. Reliable, conscientious, disciplined and organised. Delivers to a manageable high standard consistently.



Brings out the best. Enjoys learning and improving their skills to be the best they can be. Embraces opportunities to identify and address development needs. Recognises and celebrates the achievements of others.



Sets the tone. Can keep functioning and stay calm when under pressure. Is a positive influence in the team.

Education, Qualifications, Memberships

Essential	Desirable
A tertiary qualification in planning, or a closely related field	Postgraduate study in planning, or a related discipline, or eligibility for membership with NZPI or a similar professional body

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.

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