



Position Description – Senior Adaptation Advisor

This position reports to: Strategic Policy and Insights Leader **Career Level:** 18

Position purpose:

As a member of the Strategic Policy and Insights Team the Senior Adaptation Advisor is responsible and accountable for:

- Leading Council's climate change adaptation work programme, including district-wide climate risk assessment, adaptation planning, and implementation of Council's climate resilience and sustainability policy settings.
- Providing expert technical and strategic advice on adaptation to elected members, the Executive Leadership Team, staff and the community, translating climate science and hazard information into practical options for decision-making.
- Leading community-based adaptation planning for at-risk parts of the district, including coastal, lowland and flood-prone communities, using adaptive pathways planning and nationally accepted good practice.
- Embedding adaptation into Council's planning and investment cycles, including the Long-Term Plan, Infrastructure Strategy, District Plan, asset management plans and business cases.
- Building and maintaining enduring relationships with mana whenua values and mātauranga Māori inform adaptation decisions.
- Representing Council in regional and national adaptation forums, and building the relationships that make effective adaptation possible across organisational boundaries.

The functional areas of responsibility include;

- Climate risk and hazard assessment – periodic climate risk assessments covering Council assets, services and communities; interpretation of national climate projections, flood modelling and coastal hazard information
- Adaptation planning – community adaptation plans, adaptive pathways, options and trade-off assessment, implementation and monitoring
- Policy and strategy – adaptation policy advice and input to the District Plan, Long-Term Plan, Infrastructure Strategy and Council's climate resilience and sustainability policy settings
- Partnerships and engagement – mana whenua, community, regional and central government relationships, including the Canterbury Climate Partnership, Greater Christchurch Partnership, and Canterbury Mayoral Forum
- Knowledge and capability – building adaptation literacy across Council and maintaining an evidence base that supports sound decision-making

Direct reports: Nil

Indirect reports: Nil

Deliverables

Strategy & Planning

- Lead the development and delivery of Council's climate change adaptation work programme, aligned to Council's strategic priorities and policy settings
- Complete and maintain periodic climate risk assessments covering Council assets, services and district communities, and keep them current as new national projections and hazard information become available
- Lead adaptation planning for priority locations in the district, applying adaptive pathways planning and nationally accepted good practice
- Ensure adaptation is reflected in the Long-Term Plan, Annual Plan, Infrastructure Strategy, asset management plans and District Plan work programmes

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- Provide expert, evidence-based advice to governance and leadership on adaptation options, costs, trade-offs and timing
- Monitor central government direction on adaptation, including national framework and legislative change, and advise Council on what it means for the district
- Achieve and maintain a high level of understanding of Selwyn District initiatives, developments, trends and issues
- Manage risk through careful planning and sound judgement, including being explicit about uncertainty in climate projections and how it affects decisions

Technical Advice & Delivery

- Deliver agreed adaptation projects and milestones to time, budget and quality
- Translate climate science, hazard modelling and economic analysis into clear advice that non-technical audiences can act on
- Prepare high-quality reports, papers, business cases and briefings for Council, committees, community boards and the Executive Leadership Team
- Present at public meetings, Council meetings, internal and external steering groups, and to senior leadership
- Commission and manage external technical work, including scoping, procurement, contract management and quality assurance of consultant deliverables
- Support other teams to build adaptation into their own planning, projects and decisions, and act as the subject matter expert they can draw on
- Generate insights from data across a range of systems and platforms, including spatial and hazard information, and make good use of Council's digital tools
- Balance prudent expenditure whilst also ensuring fit for purpose activities and programmes

Culture

- Contribute to a motivated, positive, psychologically safe and continuously improving team
- Role model and demonstrate full commitment to Council's safety culture
- Share knowledge generously and build adaptation capability across the organisation
- Work openly and collaboratively with colleagues across Council, and be seen as approachable, fair and constructive
- Bring curiosity to an emergent field of practice, actively developing your own expertise and testing established thinking where the evidence supports it

Reporting & Compliance

- Prepare timely and informative reports on the adaptation work programme, including progress, risks and emerging issues
- Maintain currency of knowledge with regard to relevant legislation, local government protocols, policies and procedures and ensure compliance by self and others
- Routinely capture data and evidence that informs future adaptation planning and service delivery
- Attend and be prepared for Council, committee and management meetings as required

Relationships & Representation

- Build and maintain enduring relationships with mana whenua as kaitiaki in adaptation decisions
- Achieve productive and positive internal relationships across the organisation, particularly with asset management, planning, emergency management and community teams
- Represent Council in regional and national adaptation forums, including the Canterbury Climate Partnership, Greater Christchurch Partnership, Canterbury Mayoral Forum, and neighbouring authorities
- Engage proactively and constructively with communities affected by climate hazards, including facilitating workshops and public meetings on sensitive subject matter
- Engage proactively and constructively with Council, Councillors and community boards as required
- Represent the Council carefully and positively in the media as required for the role, in line with media policy and training

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.

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- 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	Desirable
• A relevant tertiary qualification in climate change, environmental science, planning, geography, environmental policy or a similar field, or equivalent experience • At least five years' experience in climate change adaptation, natural hazards, resource management or public policy, with a track record of delivering complex pieces of work • Sound understanding of climate science and climate risk, and of relevant international, central and local government policy settings • Working knowledge of adaptive planning techniques, including adaptive pathways planning, and of risk, options and trade-off assessment methods • Proven written and oral communication skills, including the ability to communicate technical material clearly to senior management, elected members and the public • Experience establishing and maintaining stakeholder relationships, and facilitating engagement on contested or sensitive issues • Ability to work with a high level of autonomy, exercise sound judgement, and manage competing priorities • Curiosity and a willingness to keep developing expertise, research and influence in an emergent field of practice	• Experience working in a local/central government environment • Project management experience • Knowledge of te ao Māori and mātauranga Māori, and experience working with iwi and rūnanga • Experience in community engagement on natural hazards, and familiarity with the issues that arise in adaptation planning for affected communities • Understanding of asset management, infrastructure planning and long-term plan processes • High level of digital literacy, including working with spatial data (GIS) and hazard information

Key relationships

External	Internal	Committees/groups
Te Taumutu Rūnanga	Head of Strategy	Committees of Council
Te Ngāi Tūāhuriri Rūnanga	Strategic Policy and Insights Leader and team	Community Boards
Council customers	Environment Leader and team	Business organisations and networks
Selwyn residents	Strategic Planning and Design Leader and team	Special interest groups and committees
Territorial and Regional Authorities	Strategic Policy and Insights Team	Regional and national adaptation practitioner networks
Government Agencies (incl MfE, MBIE, Work safe NZ, Ministry of Justice, Police, ACC)	Executive Leadership Team	
Non-government agencies	Asset management and infrastructure teams	
Technical consultants and contractors	Emergency management	
Research providers	Communications and engagement	
Canterbury Mayoral Forum	Mayor	
Canterbury Climate Partnership	Elected Councillors	
Greater Christchurch Partnership	Elected Community Board Members	

Education, Qualifications, Memberships

Essential	Desirable
Relevant tertiary qualification in a related discipline e.g. Bachelor of Environmental Science, Bachelor of Resource and Environmental Planning, Bachelor of Climate Change or a related discipline	Tertiary qualification in climate adaptation, natural hazards, planning or equivalent

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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.

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.