

Corporate Head of Service - Property Strategy & Sustainable Estate

Directorate: Place

Permanent role, based in Kingston

Grade TBC

Context

The Council owns a large and complex estate, with almost 400 property assets. These assets are key to delivering outstanding services for our residents and supporting the Council's strategy. The Council spends in excess of £10m per annum on its estate.

The portfolio includes investment property for income generation, community assets and an operational estate which supports delivery of education, social care and leisure and cultural services, as well as key democratic and civic functions.

Kingston, like many other Councils, is in the process of transitioning from a 'physical' estate to a 'digital' estate, alongside a major corporate transformation to become a more enterprising borough and drive growth and recovery. Driven by COVID-19 and the rapid transition to more digital ways of working, the needs of our estate base is changing rapidly. Kingston has also committed to becoming carbon neutral and declared a climate emergency, with the estate being a major net contributor to our carbon footprint, it needs to be central to our plan to become more environmentally and socially sustainable.

As a result, Property Services has gone through a service re-design and a number of new Corporate Head of Service posts have been introduced.

The Corporate Head of Property Strategy and Sustainable estate will be responsible for translating our aspirations as a Council into delivery – by building comprehensive asset management plans, working with services to reduce their reliance on the physical estate and helping transform the estate to be far more sustainable – both socially, environmentally and financially.

Why Kingston?

This special place in South West London between the capital and the country has been a Royal Borough longer than anywhere else - it is where the first Kings of England were crowned. Kingston is set to be one of the fastest growing parts of London; and with the arrival of new infrastructure such as Crossrail 2, as well as its award winning Go Cycle scheme is at the forefront of the changing face of our City's transport.

So Kingston is changing with new commercial and residential developments, not just in Kingston Town Centre but in all parts of the Borough; in Surbiton, New Malden, Tolworth and Chessington in the rural south of the Borough. Kingston is a great environment. Kingston itself which has the River, the historic market place and Church, parks and gardens but in all its town centres has something unique to offer.

Kingston's people are well educated, innovative and entrepreneurial; the Borough has been home to great industry and creativity for many years; reflected in assets such as the Rose Theatre, the International Youth Arts Festival, and Kingston University; which boasts the more new graduate business start ups than any other.

The communities of the Borough are in the most part strong, healthy and prosperous. That said, there are people who rely on the Council and other public services to enable them to reach their potential. Like most places, our population is ageing and more people are living longer and so some people need more support to stay independent, safe and well. Kingston is a diverse Borough, not just because of this range of need, but because it is home to people from diverse and interesting cultures and backgrounds. Kingston has a large Sri Lankan Tamil community and is home to more people from Korea than any other part of the UK.

Our Ambition

Kingston is a successful place because throughout its history it has adapted and changed. It has built on its past by embracing the future. The Council wants to continue that journey and has identified the outcomes it wants to strive for with its communities:

- People achieve wellbeing independence and health lives
- People prosper and reach their full potential
- A safe and resilient community where everyone is welcome and which supports the most vulnerable
- A network of engaged communities where everyone has a voice and does their bit
- A borough that embraces growth and attracts investment for a stronger and more diverse economy
- A borough of choice and opportunity that has broken the mould to increase housing and jobs
- A sustainable borough with a diverse transport network and quality environment for all to enjoy
- A borough with an identity rich in history, heritage and creativity which drives its future

Kingston Council has an ambition to change its relationship with its communities; to be an Enabling Council. To do this it needs to reinvent itself and ensure that all its resources are used to best effect; rather than simply cutting costs and making savings - what might be termed "salami slicing". To be successful it needs to transform itself into a high performing networked organisation with a highly constructive culture where people truly flourish and reach their full potential.

Our priorities and values

The Council wants to change its relationship with our communities, our partners and the people we serve. This means:

- Enabling communities to do more for themselves
- Enabling people to be independent and be able to flourish
- Enabling good growth for businesses and our communities to thrive
- Enabling our staff to take decisions and be free of unnecessary bureaucracy
- Enabling us to use our resources and assets – human, physical and financial – to very best effect
- Enabling through services that are ‘publicly designed, not necessarily publicly delivered’

Becoming an enabling council is a key principle that runs through our organisational development and is embedded in everything we do. Underpinning these priorities are the following values:

Innovative:

- Promote a culture that encourages creativity
- Embrace new ideas and ways of working
- Ambitious to push the boundaries to realise potential

Open:

- Respect and recognition - everyone has a voice that is heard and we are all valued
- Collaborative - working together with new and existing partners
- Empowering staff and residents to encourage informed decision-making
- Inspire trust by acting with integrity in all we do

Smart:

- Commercial savvy and acumen to find solutions and best value
- Agile working
- Customer driven, listening and responding to consistently deliver ‘best in class’/excellence

Role purpose

If you join Kingston Council as one of our new Corporate Heads of Service you will play a key role in achieving these ambitions.

The Council is focused on progressing its thinking to deliver the best possible outcomes for its communities. To do this the Council needs Corporate Heads of Service who thrive in a networked organisation and who can work corporately across complex networks and systems and provide strong operational leadership within a strategic context.

Corporate Heads of Service will have three main areas of focus:

- A corporate leadership focus, working as part of a wider organisational network that supports the council’s ongoing transformation

- A functional focus, with leadership responsibility for services, resources and people
- A locality focus, with each ward having a Corporate Head of Service identified as the management point of contact for ward Councillors as part of the Council's Neighbourhoods model.

The role reports to the Assistant Director - Property and is directly responsible for the Property team.

Leadership

- As a member of the Corporate Leadership Group, plays a key role in the collective leadership of the Council, providing the constructive leadership needed to create the conditions for success and working across organisational boundaries
- Provides effective project leadership to ensure that cross-cutting and service-related projects achieve desired outcomes
- Provides inspirational and constructive leadership to the Property Service to ensure high performance within a networked operating model
- Facilitates change and innovation, building a working culture that encourages innovative, smart and collaborative working
- Listens to, and works with colleagues to develop a compelling vision for the service in line with corporate strategy and influences and motivates others to achieve this.

Commissioning and Performance Management

- Commissions services and activities to secure the best outcomes for service users and deliver optimum value for money, in line with the Council's commissioning and contract management frameworks
- Translates internal and external intelligence in order to continually adapt and improve the service in line with demand
- Manages the performance of the service, working with colleagues to define outcomes, set targets and monitor performance, within a culture of continual improvement
- Develops operational plans that align to strategy, ensuring that the resources within the team are used to best effect and impact
- Ensures that the best use is made of the Council's resources to secure the best outcomes for residents within the resources available
- Ensures that the best use is made of financial resources and achieves balanced budgets and income and savings targets, as required.

Customers, Partners and Community

- Builds strong working partnerships across the public, private and voluntary sectors to enable the service to be delivered in an outcome-focused and efficient way
- Promotes community cohesion and Kingston's commitment to valuing diversity, ensuring the development and implementation of effective social inclusion
- Acts as ward councillors' management point of contact for a specified locality, working in partnership with Members to improve and develop engagement

with residents, helping councillors navigate the organisation and signposting them to the right place to resolve issues.

Digital/New Ways of Working

- Continually looks for ways to improve and modernise our service to customers, including developing and implementing digital/automated processes and eliminating paper wherever possible.
- Champions the use of new technologies, particularly Google, to enable modern working practices to thrive.

Delivery

- Develop and implement the Council's estates strategy and asset management plans.
- Leads the provision of comprehensive, professional and innovative asset management services to the Council and to lead the work of a team of a multi-disciplinary professional staff responsible for Kingston's property assets.
- Understand the return on its assets and develop strategies for optimising financial and social value returns.
- Maintain and invest in the improvement and adaptation of our property assets to meet operational service needs.
- Ensures that a culture of excellence in property and asset management exists across the operations of Kingston's property estate.
- Leads, negotiates and manages the Council's property acquisitions and disposals where required, to ensure expected financial returns are achieved.
- Leads the development and implementation of strategies and policies for the most effective management and use of the Kingston's property assets.
- Proactively finds appropriate solutions to complex property problems and issues.
- Works with a range of internal and external partners to ensure that Kingston's property assets are utilised effectively.
- Has a client role where partnerships and delivery models that deliver the wider strategic aims of the council, including new homes delivery and regeneration projects relate to the Council's property assets.

The person

Demonstrable Experience in the following:

- Significant experience of working in a range of property disciplines including strategy development and implementation.
- Strategic budget management and management of assets at a portfolio level.
- An understanding of how Council's work and assets can be used as a catalyst for wider organisational change.
- Formulation, development and delivery of a range of asset strategies
- Facilitating and managing successful partnerships
- Proven experience of management at a senior level including ability to change culture, improve performance and increase the financial returns of the service

- Proven ability to understand complex issues and provide timelines, reports outlining the issues involved and making recommendations

Qualities

- Visionary - Will have their own vision and the ability to share and improve this in collaboration with a range of people and groups
- Leadership - Will lead and inspire teams to deliver the best outcomes for residents
- Strategic - Can see the bigger picture and understand business risks and opportunities
- Collaborative – Collaboration and partnership are second nature
- Business-like - Considers that the best outcomes are achieved by a culture of financial planning, commercial acumen, and customer service rigour.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

- Embeds issues relating to equity, equality diversity and inclusion into all aspects of professional and managerial role, including service delivery

Corporate responsibilities

Kingston Council requires Corporate Heads of Service to undertake and support a range of important corporate responsibilities including:

- Data Protection
- Election duties
- Engagement & Collaboration
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding – protection of vulnerable adults and children
- Volunteering/social impact
- Complaints handling and investigation
- Emergency planning and business continuity
 - Participates on an on call rota, acting as the Council's tactical manager and taking over from the Major Incident Team (MIT) Officer, when required. Delivers the strategic objectives set by Council Gold. Coordinates and supports the Major Incident Team and other services responding to the emergency incident. Covers all associated activities required as Council Silver (as outlined in the London Emergency Services Liaison Panel - Major Incident Procedure Manual)
 - Owns and reviews business continuity plans and arrangements for their service areas and participates in business continuity training and exercises

NB. The requirements of this post include attending meetings and other events outside normal hours as expected with a post of this nature and the postholder will need to manage their work life balance flexibly to meet the needs of the role.

The person

In order to successfully deliver the responsibilities of the role, you will need to:

- Understand and demonstrate that you are able to adapt the Council's transformational and leadership approach and contribute to the collective leadership required to continually develop this
- Have exceptional leadership skills, modelling a strong performance culture and constructively building achievement, confidence and skills in others
- Question and challenge conventional thinking, with a continual eye on the bigger picture in terms of the corporate context and external environment
- Display commercial confidence and the financial management skills to bring about demonstrable improvements in efficiency, value for money and income generation
- Be politically astute and able to build high levels of credibility and impact quickly, working within networks to delivering through and with others
- Role model agility and adaptability in mindset and ways of working
- Have significant experience and a proven track record of achievement in leading and managing property-focused services and activities
- Work successfully with elected members, partners and key stakeholders including residents, businesses, communities, partner organisations and other public services
- Have a degree or equivalent professional qualification, preferably in a relevant discipline
- Demonstrate commitment to own personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the role
- Demonstrate a high level of innovation and creativity.

Our leadership competencies

Leadership

- Inspire a sense of purpose and direction to achieve the successful delivery of outcomes for the Kingston community
- Track record of leading a team, functions, services and programmes of comparable scope, size and complexity
- Ability to demonstrate successful leadership experience and positive outcomes at a senior strategic level within an organisation of similar complexity
- Ability to build a strong and capable team, confidently setting the direction and clearly articulating the measures of success

Partnering for Excellence

- Proven ability in brokering and leading complex, high level partnerships
- Proven ability to deliver transformational change and achieve improved outcomes through public or private sector partnerships
- Ability to apply commercial judgement to make decisions that will deliver cost efficient and effective results for Kingston Council and the Kingston community

Communication and Influencing

- Demonstrate the sensitivities at operating in a political environment, balancing policy with local needs

- Experience of working successfully with elected Members and navigating a complex political landscape at a sub-regional level
- An ability to understand and respond to the complex, evolving economic and social environment within which Kingston Council operates

Putting the Customer First

- Demonstrate a strong commitment to service excellence, customer care and continuous improvement
- Identify and understand the needs of both internal and external customers by providing excellent customer service in all areas of Council business

Being the Best

- Provide the freedom and support to improve the performance of Kingston by challenging the status quo and providing enough scope for staff to experiment with new or innovative solutions