

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Senior Commercial Lead		
Service	Strategy, Performance and Communication		
Reporting to			
Grade	8		
Evaluation ref:	NOM0347	Job Family ref:	
Role Purpose			
The Senior Commercial Lead provides strategic leadership and specialist expertise to drive high-quality contract management, commissioning, and performance across the Council's services. As part of the senior management group, the role ensures that services are delivered in line with the Council's priorities, statutory responsibilities, and transformation programmes, translating strategic aims into effective operational delivery. The postholder leads on the development and oversight of commercial and performance frameworks, ensuring that contracts, partnerships, and delivery models achieve value for money, meet agreed standards, and contribute to improved outcomes for communities. Working closely with Members, Directors, partners, and suppliers, the role provides authoritative advice on commissioning, commercial strategy, and service delivery, supporting effective decision-making at a senior level. The Senior Commercial Lead is responsible for managing complex contractual relationships, resolving risks and disputes, and driving continuous improvement through robust performance management and collaboration. By promoting innovation, strong governance, and effective partnership working, the postholder ensures that services remain responsive, sustainable, and aligned to the Council's strategic objectives.			
Accountabilities			
Determine or support the determination of the strategic direction of SC and partners agencies in relation to their specialist expertise Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council and partners both to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas. Advise the Council on their obligations and duties arising from the statutory/regulatory framework covering their specialist subject Shape and/or recommend Council policy concerning their specialist areas of activity Create, monitor and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services in their area of expertise. Commission and/or act as the Council's Lead Client in relation to services in their specialist areas.			

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Drive and operate partnership and co-operative working with other agencies/bodies to ensure the effective commissioning and/or delivery of services in their specialist areas.

Manage major programmes within their area of expertise or where their specialism is predominant.

Deliver major projects and resolve complex casework where required by the Director.

Specify and mentor the Continuous Professional Development of other professionals in their field.

Act as the commercial lead for a specific Portfolio (e.g. ECI, Children's, Adults/PHealth and Business) with responsibility on behalf of the Council for new business models and trading opportunities.

Provides commercial technical advice and guidance to SLT/Directors and senior managers across the Council wishing to commission/outsource/externalise/bring back in house/ services and provide specialist commercial input to related projects (such as Transformation and Core Council programmes). This includes devising key commercial principles (KCPs), key performance Indicators (KPIs) and service credits, application of the Pay Price Mechanism (calculating and approving payments), ensuring value for money, risk and liability management, quality assurance and benchmarking

Acting as a contact point/lead on behalf of the Council when dealing with legal teams for complex insourcing/externalisation and trading of services.

Provides contract and commercial advice to other business areas, to improve and embed good contract management

The role will include "step in" and take over managing the contract (either as a request by the service or an instruction from SLT) where there is an identified risk to the Council due to significant skills gap, lack of capacity or where relationship with supplier has broken down and/or remedial plan required.

Develop, support and mentor to ensure departmental managers understand and apply the contract management processes and toolkit effectively and appropriately to drive through and maintain best practice

Identifies and explores changes in legal, national or SC strategies or frameworks and proposes consequential changes to delivery specifications to accommodate these changes and potential impact of these changes in relation to the development of the commercial contract management role, current and emerging contracts.

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Provides contract management and performance leadership within Commercial and Business Services as well as within their Lead Portfolio's Business area (e.g. Adults for the LD SEV Ltd Contract, Children's for the BSF (PFI)). Works closely with others to ensure compliance regarding payment certification for key services and manages a regime of commercial and financial audit.

Responsibility and accountability for the Council in determining the effectiveness and performance of the services provided by the Strategic Suppliers and other providers.

Predicts and gives direction for contractual and commercial matters arising and negotiates variations and amendments to the contracts, reporting as appropriate to the Head of Service Commercial and Procurement, lead commissioners, Directors, members and partners.

Takes the lead in relation to commercial discussions to secure financial remedies/amendments to the contract concerned and the delivery of remedial actions.

Undertakes conflict resolution and exercises judgement as to when issues/concerns need to be escalated in line with the relevant framework.

Recommends the budget to deliver existing and future contracts providing costed analysis to support this and a forecast of the budget for a 3-year period based on actual project requirements, including estimating the requirement for any contingency funds and identification of how the budget will be shared. Operates within agreed budget and resource availability

Assists in services budget management providing supporting information to the finance team.

Keeps up to date on developments that may affect contract and commercial administration of the service and analyses changing internal and external influences to assess impact of, for example, new legislation.

Provides advice to Senior Managers on the identification of new commercial and service delivery models.

Prepares contract, commercial and performance reports to appropriate Governance Boards (as per the contract), Council Committees, SLT and Commissioning Boards, other senior professionals, Members and Legal Advisors.

Administers a regime within contracts to recover Council loss for any failures, which may arise through Supplier non-conformance.

Provides technical advice and support in relation to contracts, specifications and commercial matters.

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Acts as lead officer in commercial negotiations with Suppliers to resolve contractual disputes and manages effective and systematic procedures to contractually administer and manage change control processes.

Supports the Head of Service – Commercial and Procurement where the Council is in formal Dispute (e.g. Mediation, Adjudication, Arbitration, Claims through the Courts)

Prepares contract, commercial and legal reports when the Council is involved in Disputes with Suppliers (used by legal e.g. defending claims, supporting evidence required by barristers/QCs).

Delivers a performance management framework for the specific contracts responsible for identifying areas for improvement and developing necessary action plans in conjunction with the commissioning unit.

Develops and monitors progress against service plans for the service area to ensure that there is a co-ordinated strategy to generate synergies between commercial and procurement team/commissioning units.

Manages team budget expenditure, which includes service costs in connection with premises and calculation of contributions from Suppliers.

Creates and maintains a library of operations manuals and schedule of documents and rates for contracts responsible

Leads contract management and performance meetings and ancillary ad-hoc meetings in accordance with contract need

Knowledge / Experience / Qualifications / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
Providing clear technical advice on contract management and commercial policy options and policy development.	X	
Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of the statutory, policy and strategic commissioning and contract management framework within which specialist services operate and their context within local government as a whole.	X	
Good understanding and ability to develop and implement effective performance management and quality assurance frameworks.	X	

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Knowledge and understanding of implementing equality and diversity in commissioning and reviewing service delivery.	X	
An understanding and commitment to effective customer and community engagement leading to service redesign and change management.	X	
Experience		
Significant experience of working successfully with Members and Directors on complex issues and the development of strategic direction.	X	
Track record of operating complex contracts and managing supplier performance	X	
Leading in significant commercial negotiations, contract drafting and dispute resolution process.	X	
Experience of developing and delivering representational and communication activities that successfully deliver key messages to the public and internally.	X	
Demonstrable experience of partnership working, including the ability to influence and, where required, lead multi-agency projects and initiatives with particular reference to standard setting and whole service commissioning.	X	
Manage, develop and train direct reports in contract management and commercial activities	X	
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Evidence of work related continuing professional Development in their specialist field	X	
Relevant Degree or Professional Qualification		X
Skills		
Strong leadership and stakeholder management skills, with the ability to influence senior managers, Members, and partners to achieve strategic outcomes.	X	
Advanced commercial and contractual skills, including negotiation, dispute resolution, and managing complex supplier relationships.	X	

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Ability to develop and implement performance management and quality assurance frameworks to drive service improvement.	X	
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to interpret complex information and provide clear, evidence-based advice and recommendations.	X	
Ability to lead and develop teams, including mentoring and building capability in contract management and commercial practices.		X
Strong written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to present complex information clearly to a range of audiences.		X
Ability to identify opportunities for innovation and service improvement, including new delivery models and commercial approaches.		X

Working Conditions

Dimensions of the role

Manages contracts within their Portfolio area which range from £40m per annum (£220m for the term of the contract) to small contracts for one-off service (less than £100k each).

The individual would typically be responsible for “Tier 1 Contracts” of over £5m+ for the term of the contract

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council’s Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

- Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council’s strategic priorities and meet the Council’s financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.
- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Strategy, Performance & Communication Services teams.
- Lead Strategy, Performance & Communication teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.

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- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Create, monitor, and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Strategy, Performance & Communication service teams.
- Ensure that Strategy, Performance & Communication services place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customers, communities, and businesses.
- Support the delivery of the Councils' key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Strategy, Performance & Communication service.
- Support Corporate and Directorate and service specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.
- Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.

Date: