

Job description

Job Title:	Thames Valley Strategic Planning Director		
Directorate:	Place	Salary:	£108,047 - £126,093 per year
Section:	Thames Valley SDS	Grade:	S4 A-F
Location:	Time Square Bracknell	Work Style:	Flexible

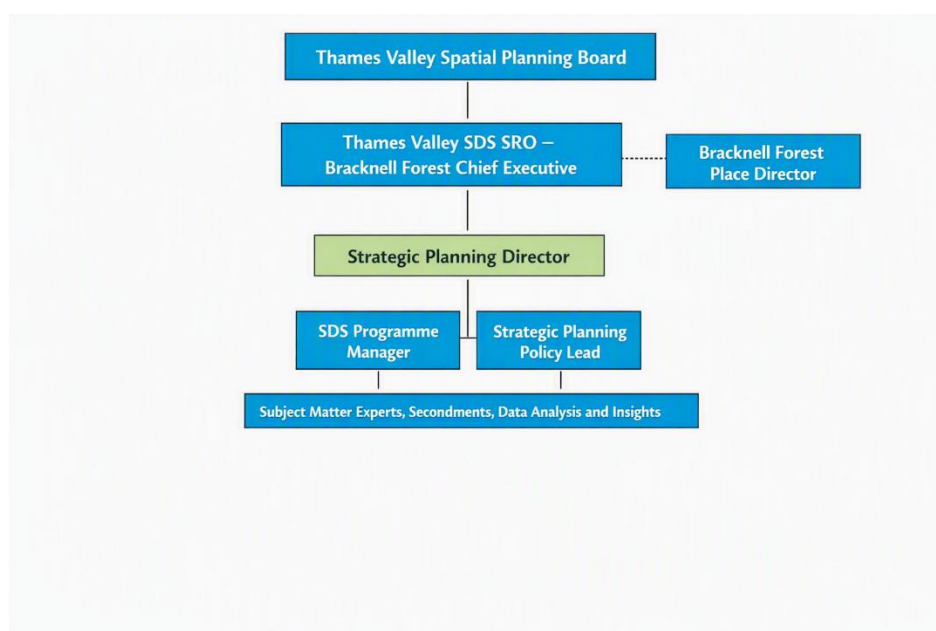
Key Objectives of the role

The Strategic Planning Director will provide strategic leadership for the development and delivery of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) and a long-term, place-based Investment Plan for the Thames Valley.

You will operate at the interface of spatial planning, infrastructure, economic development, housing, climate, and public investment, ensuring that growth across the Thames Valley is strategically coordinated, evidence-led, deliverable, and aligned with national policy and funding frameworks.

The role is pivotal in shaping a shared long-term vision for the Thames Valley, translating that vision into a robust spatial strategy and an integrated investment programme, and providing confidence to government, partners, investors and communities.

Designation of post and position within departmental structure



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Daily and monthly responsibilities

Spatial Development Strategy (SDS)

- Lead the preparation, adoption and delivery of a statutory Spatial Development Strategy for the Thames Valley, in line with national planning policy and emerging SDS legislation and guidance.
- Establish a clear spatial vision for growth, regeneration, infrastructure, environmental enhancement and climate resilience over a 20–30-year horizon.
- Ensure alignment and coherence between the SDS and:
 - Local Plans and Minerals and Waste Plans
 - National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
 - National Infrastructure and Investment priorities
 - National and Local Net zero, nature recovery, economic and land-use strategies
- Provide authoritative professional advice to elected Members, senior officers and partner boards on strategic planning matters.

Investment and Infrastructure Planning

- Lead the development of a Thames Valley Investment Plan that translates the SDS into:
 - Prioritised infrastructure programmes
 - Phased growth and regeneration propositions
 - Clear delivery and funding pathways
- Integrate transport, utilities, energy, digital, social infrastructure and green infrastructure planning into a single strategic framework.
- Align spatial priorities with:
 - Government funding programmes
 - Devolution settlements
 - Private and institutional investment opportunities
- Oversee development of strategic business cases and investment propositions that are credible to HM Treasury, departments, regulators and investors.

Evidence, Analytics and Land Use

- Ensure the SDS and Investment Plan are underpinned by a robust, transparent and proportionate evidence base, including:
 - Housing and economic needs
 - Infrastructure capacity and constraints
 - Land availability and deliverability
 - Environmental, carbon and climate risk analysis
- Oversee integration of natural capital, land-use and climate evidence into spatial decision-making.
- Champion innovative use of data, scenario testing and spatial analytics to support strategic choices.

Partnership, Governance and Influence

- Build and maintain strong working relationships across:
 - Constituent local authorities

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- Transport bodies and infrastructure providers
- Government departments and agencies
- Homes England, regulators and arm's-length bodies
- Universities, LEPs, businesses and institutional investors
- Provide leadership within complex multi-authority and multi-agency governance arrangements including the setting up and running of the Strategic Planning Board.
- Represent the Thames Valley at senior regional and national forums, influencing policy, funding and legislative development.

Leadership and Organisational Development

- Lead, motivate and develop high-performing multidisciplinary teams covering strategic planning, infrastructure and investment.
- Set professional standards and embed best practice in strategic planning, plan-making and delivery.
- Manage budgets, procurement and external consultancy commissions effectively.
- Promote a culture of collaboration, innovation and long-term thinking.

Key Outcomes

- A clearly articulated, adopted and defensible SDS for the Thames Valley.
- A credible, prioritised and deliverable Investment Plan aligned to the SDS.
- Improved coordination of growth, infrastructure and environmental outcomes across authority boundaries.
- Enhanced confidence from government, partners and investors in the Thames Valley as a place to invest.

Scope of role

Commitment to the Council's Equal Opportunities policy at all times.

Commitment to working within the bounds of the Data Protection Act and GDPR legislation at all times.

Such other duties as may from time to time be necessary, compatible with the nature of the post. It should be noted that the above list of main duties and responsibilities is not necessarily a complete statement of the final duties of the post. It is intended to give an overall view of the position and should be taken as guidance only.

Person specification

Key criteria	Essential	Desirable
Skills and qualifications	Professional qualification in planning, economics, infrastructure, environmental policy or a related discipline. Proven experience operating at a senior level with responsibility for strategic planning, spatial strategy, place-based growth or public investment. Demonstrated ability to set and lead a long-term spatial vision across a complex geography, translating that vision into adopted strategies and deliverable programmes. Deep understanding of UK planning policy and plan-making, strategic-scale growth and infrastructure planning, public investment and funding mechanisms. Proven experience of leading complex, multi-authority programmes, operating in politically sensitive environments, influencing senior stakeholders and decision-makers. Ability to integrate planning policy with housing, economic development, infrastructure, climate and land-use policy at scale. Substantial experience working effectively within politically led, democratic governance environments. Proven ability to support and influence elected Members, manage sensitive and contested issues, and maintain professional integrity in high-pressure settings. Experience navigating multi-authority, partnership or joint governance arrangements, building	Experience of SDS-style plans, regional frameworks or combined authority strategies, devolution or local government reorganisation contexts. Experience of working with HM Government and arm's-length bodies. Experience in developing large-scale infrastructure and investment pipelines. Experience representing an organisation or place at regional or national forums, influencing policy development beyond the local level.

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	consensus while enabling timely decisions.	
Competence Summary	Strong presentational and interpersonal skills, able to present complex information simply to a wide range of audiences, providing confidence and assurance	
Work-related Personal Requirements	The post is politically restricted. Contractual base as detailed on contract, but you are able to work on a flexible basis in line with our Agile Working Policy Able to travel across the county and work from various office locations within the county. All employees have responsibilities for health and safety – both for themselves, colleagues and the people we work with.	The post holder must hold a full UK driving licence (or valid equivalent). Non-UK licences must be converted to UK licences in the first six months of employment.
Other Work Requirements	Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to produce clear, high-quality reports for senior decision-makers. The ability to converse easily in spoken English, explain complex or technical information to members of the public and respond effectively to detailed or complex questions for an extended period of time.	
Role models and demonstrates the Council's values and behaviours	Our values define who we are. They outline what is important to us. They influence the way we work with each other – and the way we serve our residents and engage with our communities. We make our values real by demonstrating them in how we behave every day.	

All staff should hold a duty and commitment to observing the Council's Equality & Dignity at Work policy at all times. Duties must be carried out in accordance with relevant Equality & Diversity legislation and Council policies/procedures.