

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE:	Strategic Programme Manager, Skills Resilience, Health & Neighbourhoods
POST REF NO:	PREF106515
DEPARTMENT:	Inclusive Growth
DIVISION:	Inclusive Economy
UNIT:	Inclusive Economy
TEAM:	N/A
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Director of Inclusive Economy
GRADE:	M8 fixed term until 31st March 2029

PURPOSE OF POST:

Reporting to the Director of Inclusive Economy, the post holder will provide strategic leadership for the development, integration and delivery of Luton Council's Skills Resilience Programme, including leading the Council's approach to reducing the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), and driving the integration of skills, employment, health and economic growth within the Council's emerging neighbourhood delivery model.

The role will lead the strategic delivery, performance and continuous development of a portfolio of programmes funded through the three-year Skills Resilience Fund, ensuring alignment with the Council's wider objectives for inclusive growth, health improvement and community resilience. The post holder will oversee multidisciplinary teams, manage programme resources effectively and ensure delivery contributes to the ambitions set out in the Luton 2040 Vision, particularly the Jobs and Inclusive Economy mission.

A key responsibility will be to develop and drive a system-wide approach to tackling NEETS, neighbourhood working, employability and economic inclusion through a health and prevention lens. Working collaboratively across the Council and with education providers, employers, anchor institutions, health partners, government agencies and regional stakeholders, the post holder will establish and deliver integrated pathways into learning, employment and progression that respond to both resident needs and labour market demand.

Working closely with and supporting the Head of Employability & Skills, the role will help shape strategic direction, drive service transformation and ensure robust performance management across skills and employment programmes. The post holder will champion innovation, evidence-based decision-making and continuous improvement, ensuring services deliver measurable outcomes for residents, particularly those facing barriers to education, employment and training.

The post holder will be responsible for identifying emerging economic, health and labour market trends, securing external investment and commissioning high-quality skills, employment, health & wellbeing and business support interventions that maximise social and economic impact. They will ensure programmes remain responsive to local needs while supporting broader strategic priorities around health inequalities, economic participation and social mobility.

This role will provide influential leadership across the local system, shaping policy, strengthening partnerships and ensuring a coordinated neighbourhood-based approach to addressing skills, employment and health challenges. Particular emphasis will be placed on improving outcomes for young people who are NEET and other priority groups, supporting residents to access opportunities, improve their wellbeing and contribute to Luton's long-term economic prosperity.

ORGANISATION CHART:



PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:**%**

1. Lead the strategic development, transformation and delivery of Luton's Youth Employment and Participation Programme, supporting up to 3,500 young people aged 16-25 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The post holder will provide visible corporate and system leadership across the Council and wider partnership landscape, driving improvements in participation, employability, social mobility, economic inclusion and prosperity through innovative, evidence-led approaches. The post holder will hold direct accountability for significant programme budgets, investment planning, financial governance and resource deployment, ensuring maximum social and economic impact, value for money and delivery against corporate priorities. They will lead the design, commissioning, implementation and evaluation of innovative employability, participation, prevention and community resilience programmes, ensuring continuous improvement, organisational learning and adoption of best practice. The role will provide strategic leadership for the development of digital infrastructure, transformation and innovation programmes that enable residents to access seamless, integrated support through end-to-end digital pathways. This will include the creation of digital community models, data-sharing approaches and resident-centred solutions that improve accessibility, engagement, service integration, outcomes measurement and system intelligence across employment, education, health, welfare and community services. Working within a matrix management arrangement across Education, Public Health, Employability & Skills and wider Council services, the post holder will lead the design and implementation of new integrated delivery models that bring together employment, welfare, wellbeing, health and community support around resident need. They will champion place-based and preventative approaches that strengthen community resilience, reduce inequalities and improve long-term outcomes for residents and communities. The post holder will lead significant organisational and system-wide culture and behaviour change programmes, supporting the integration of health, employment, education and community services and embedding new ways of working that improve collaboration, accountability, innovation and resident outcomes. They will influence and shape the strategic direction of employment and health integration locally, regionally and nationally, ensuring Luton remains at the forefront of policy development, system transformation and service innovation.	40%
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Acting as a senior ambassador for the Council, the post holder will establish and maintain influential relationships with government departments, NHS organisations, education providers, employers, regional partnerships and voluntary and community sector organisations. They will represent the Council on strategic boards, partnership forums and policy-making bodies, shaping strategy, influencing policy development and securing commitment to transformational change that supports inclusive growth, health equity and economic participation.	
2. Provide the employability & skills strategic leadership for the Pathways to Thrive Programme, overseeing delivery of targeted employment and skills support for up to 800 residents. The post holder will ensure effective programme management, partnership development and performance monitoring to improve employment, skills, earnings and progression outcomes for residents facing barriers to opportunity.	30%
3. Lead the development and transformation of Luton's infrastructure system that connects employment and health integration, driving stronger partnership working, service alignment and data-led decision-making across the Council and wider local system allowing a new neighbourhood model approach to be delivered. The post holder will oversee the design and implementation of the infrastructure, governance and delivery models required to tackle health-related barriers to employment and economic participation, ensuring services are coordinated around resident need. The post holder will hold strategic accountability for income generation, investment attraction and resource maximisation across the service portfolio, securing significant external funding and leveraging partnership investment to deliver transformational programmes and sustainable service growth. They will develop and implement a long-term funding, commercial and investment strategy to support employability and better integrated working, identify and secure national, regional and local funding opportunities, and negotiate complex partnership arrangements that maximise financial sustainability and social value. The post holder will be accountable for generating substantial additional income and investment, maximising opportunities to support the Council's ambitions for inclusive growth, health integration, neighbourhood transformation, poverty reduction and improved resident outcomes, whilst ensuring robust governance, risk management and return on investment	15%
4. Working through the Council's neighbourhood delivery model, the role will lead place-based approaches within identified pilot areas, bringing together partners across health, skills, employment, community and economic development to improve outcomes for residents. Acting as the Inclusive Economy service lead within	10%

neighbourhoods, the post holder will champion preventative approaches, strengthen local pathways and ensure residents can access joined-up support that enables them to participate fully in the borough's economic growth and prosperity. The post holder will deliver a transformational community resilience approach to employability, welfare and wellbeing model at neighbourhood level based on asset- based community development principles. The post holder will take a lead on co-production initiatives across the portfolio to support personalised, intuitive and impactful employability delivery models across the system.	
Manage, develop, motivate and inform staff to support effective performance that meets statutory and operational performance indicators and targets in a customer focused and anti-discriminatory manor. Monitor and report on progress, output and quality. Responsible for the effective management and monitoring of budgets in compliance with the Council's financial regulations. The post holder will provide strategic leadership to multidisciplinary teams and partnership networks, creating a high-performance culture that promotes innovation, accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement, ensuring delivery of ambitious outcomes in support of the Council's long-term vision for an Inclusive Economy and the ambition to end poverty in Luton by 2040.	5%

Context

Luton Council has an ambitious vision to eradicate poverty by 2040 and create a town where residents can thrive, enjoy good health and wellbeing, and access opportunities throughout their lives. Delivering this vision requires a coordinated, system-wide approach to addressing the interconnected challenges of educational disengagement, economic inactivity, health inequalities and social exclusion.

Too many residents continue to face complex barriers that prevent them from fully participating in education, employment and community life. In particular, reducing the number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) remains a strategic priority for the Council and its partners and now forms part of the Skills resilience fund programme. Alongside this, there is growing recognition that poor health, wellbeing and wider social determinants can significantly impact an individual's ability to engage in learning, employment and skills development, requiring integrated and preventative approaches to support.

The Strategic Manager, Skills Resilience, Health Integration and Neighbourhoods will play a pivotal role in shaping and delivering the Council's response to these challenges. The post holder will provide strategic leadership for a portfolio of programmes and initiatives focused on NEET reduction, health integration and neighbourhood-based delivery, ensuring that services work collaboratively to improve outcomes for residents and communities.

Working across the Council and with a broad range of partners including health organisations, education providers, schools, training providers, employers, the

voluntary and community sector, government agencies and regional stakeholders, the post holder will lead the development of place-based approaches that connect services around the needs of residents. They will drive the integration of health, skills, employment and wider support systems, ensuring that individuals receive coordinated interventions that enable them to overcome barriers and reach their full potential.

A key element of the role will be supporting the development and implementation of Luton's neighbourhood model, using data, insight and partnership working to design and deliver targeted interventions within priority neighbourhoods. The post holder will help build the systems, governance arrangements and partnerships required to address local challenges, improve outcomes for young people and priority groups, and strengthen community resilience.

DIMENSIONS:

Supervisory Management: 3 x M4, 1 x M2 and multiple matrix arrangements.

Financial Resources: £4.5million resilience fund programme

Physical Resources:

Other:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION re: Physical Effort and/or Working Environment

Physical Effort:

Normal office activities

Working Environment:

Office environment with agile working

Person Specification: Strategic Programme Manager, Skills Resilience, Health & Neighbourhoods

This acts as selection criteria and gives an outline of the types of person and the characteristics required to do the job.

Essential (E) :- without which candidate would be rejected

Desirable (D):- useful for choosing between two good candidates.

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give <u>clear examples</u> of how you meet the <u>essential and desirable</u> criteria.				
Attributes	Essential	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Experience	Extensive leadership experience in an education, skills, health or employability environment	1,2	Experience of preparing strategic documents and action plans	1,2
	In depth experience of leading collaborative work across organisations to effect demonstrable service improvements.	1,2		
	In depth experience of undertaking change management, including workforce change.	1,2		
	In-depth experience of policy and strategy development, implementation, co-ordination and management, identifying and understanding the needs of service and designing services around those needs.	1,2		
	In depth staff management experience, including performance management, recruitment and personal development and proven experience in engaging and motivating staff to work at their best.	1,2		
	Demonstrable experience of budget management including financial planning budgetary monitoring and income generation, at Cost Centre Manager level.			

Skills/Abilities	Ability to clearly articulate a strategic vision, sense of direction and management expectations.	1,2 C		1,2
	Ability to negotiate effectively; prepares and applies sound and persuasive arguments to secure positive outcomes from negotiations.	1,2 C		
	Ability to apply research and learn from best practice elsewhere and use that learning to change/develop effective working practice.	1,2 C		
	Ability to communicate well orally and in writing; produce clear, succinct and well-structured written work which is constructive and persuasive and convincing. Conveys messages effectively, creating a positive impact on the audience.	1,2 C		
	Project management: has the ability to plan a project and manage stakeholders and partners to deliver contributions and deliver on time.	1,2 C		
	Proven high level visible leadership qualities and excellent interpersonal skills.	1,2 C		
	Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines: engaging staff and colleagues from different contexts.	1,2 C		
	Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines and achieve targets.			
Equality Issues	In depth knowledge and understanding of equality issues and legislation and the ability to integrate equality policies into strategies and service delivery.	1,2		
Specialist Knowledge	In-depth understanding of best practice in health, economic development and skills development and its application at local level.	1,2 C	Understanding of the national regulator inspection regimes for learning including Ofsted and DFE	1,2
	In depth understanding of working within a political environment.	1,2 C		

	Comprehensive knowledge of relevant national policy and context for economic development/skills development and the related national/local government interface.	1,2 C		
Education and Training	A relevant professional qualification in education or skills and/or equivalent recent, verifiable experience.	4	Management qualification	
	Evidence of continuing professional development in a management role.	4		
Other Requirements	Able and willing to attend Committee and Council meetings and meetings with other interests outside normal working hours	1,2		
	Able to attend site visits and meetings/conferences both inside and outside the Borough	1,2		
	Can think creatively and positively around innovation and change	1,2		

(1 = Application Form 2 = Interview 3 = Test 4 = Proof of Qualification 5 = Practical Exercise)

We will consider any reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equalities Act (2010) to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

The Job-holder will ensure that Luton Borough Council's policies are reflected in all aspects of his/her work, in particular those relating to;

- (i) Equal Opportunities
- (ii) Health and Safety
- (iii) Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (2021)