Solutions Architect– Strategic Development

Role Profile:	Senior Manager
Grade:	Hay B
Accountable to:	Business Solutions Manager
Accountable for:	Indirect responsibility for others within an assigned group

Role Context & Purpose

The Solutions Architect role will make a significant contribution to the delivery of West Sussex County Council's vision of new ways of working and achieving value for money from our IT assets. In particular, the Solutions Architect will help realise business benefits from Information Technology for the whole organisation through the application of technical expertise to evaluate IT solutions, change and strategies proposed by the County Council's Outsourced IT provider.

This role has a particular emphasis on data and information architecture. Working within the agreed enterprise information architecture, the post holder will ensure that all change delivers a data and information architecture relevant to the business area that will drive benefit. The exploitation of existing systems, in particular SAP and Sharepoint, and the use of master data and relevant metadata constructs will be key to the success of this role.

The Solutions Architect role is key to ensuring the timely delivery of innovative solutions to the IT components for any change/transformational projects, which will realise significant business benefits. The post holder will work alongside the outsourced service provider to ensure that solutions are appropriate to the County Council's requirements, that solutions meet WSCC strategy and the Council's architecture in respect of information, applications and technology and also that the solution provides optimum value for money.

The role will ensure that WSCC has the right architecture in place and will act as the IT architecture design assurance subject matter expert for WSCC, while working in partnership with the third parties to deliver business benefit through change and innovation. The post holder will therefore maintain a broad technical skill base to enable close working with the outsourced service provider to ensure compliance and exploitation of any past or future investment. The post holder will focus on delivering design assurance to any change element that will impact our information or technology architectures. The role will work closely with the role of IT Business Partner to ensure that any business projects are aligned to the agreed IT Information and Technology roadmap.

To manage a large team and resources or a large scale activity providing a service, either operational or strategic support in nature, often requiring co-ordination with other teams closely related functions. Including the performance management of the service and/or people responsible for and the development of the future shape of service provision. To build relationships and influence activities, including working across and outside of the organisation to improve services.

Key Accountabilities

The specific accountabilities of this flexible role may alter from time to time in order to meet the needs of the business/client, but accountabilities will include (or be equivalent in nature to) those listed below:

- Delivery of a challenging customer focused service, managing a large team or large scale activity to meet defined performance indicators and business strategies.

- Formulation and development of policies, processes and guidance, taking into account views of stakeholders, and gaining appropriate ownership and approvals. Including applying complex theories and detailed technical knowledge to devise approaches from first principles.

- Contribution to the successful implementation of policies, processes & guidance. Including interpreting procedures/practices to satisfy short and medium term operational requirements.

- Providing expert advice and guidance on complex issues verbally and/or through written reports. Including professional advice/support across the department and/or organisation and tackling difficult problems of a technical, professional, resource or people related nature.

- Analysis and evaluation of complex information and identification of innovative solutions through the detailed grasp of involved procedures and practices.

- Direct responsibility for a budget (typically around £2 million), and/or advisory impact on projects relating to the role's specialism/other externalised expenditure of up to £8m.

- Developing the shape of future service provision and budgets, typically planning on a time horizon of around a year. Including reviewing and recommending changes to systems, processes, procedures and practices; the implications of which will likely extend beyond own service.

- Contribution to the realisation of service, group or team service improvements through the identification, design and implementation of developed solutions which enable the organisation to be successful.

- Effective and efficient management of resources including staff where applicable. Including operational resource deployment and recommending future resource needs over the short term.

- Management of service delivery or specific reviews, projects and programmes on service/directorate provision through the use of effectively managed resources, within appropriate constraints.

- The development of effective relationships with managers or partners across the wider directorate, other parts of the organisation and external organisations. Including working with, advising and influencing key stakeholders in specialist field including Members, Chief Executive and board, senior managers and other key partners. Maintaining national and local networks and partnerships.

- Meeting statutory, national, regional and local obligations in service delivery through own work and managed staff.

- Supports equality and diversity and respects customers, clients and other members of staff regardless of gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or ethnic origin.

- Remain up to date and compliant with all relevant legislation, organisational procedures, policies and professional codes of conduct in order to uphold standards of best practice.

Solutions Architect
Person Specification

This section outlines the key criteria that must be addressed when submitting an application for employment or registering with West Sussex Futures as shortlisting for interview will be based on information supplied here.

Level of Knowledge

- Expert specialist, theoretical knowledge relating to the service specialism.

- Detailed practical knowledge of complex theories including relevant technical knowledge to formulate and develop policies, processes and guidance.

- Sound practical and theoretical knowledge of the political environment of local government and partner organisations.

- Sound and practical knowledge of Sharepoint or equivalent solutions.

Qualifications and Professional Membership

- Post graduate professional qualification relevant to the role; or equivalent level of significant experience demonstrating applied application of the above levels of knowledge in a relevant setting.

- Relevant chartered status of a professional body or equivalent high level experience of involved practices.

Experience

- Expert relevant experience in specialist area, including sound relevant operational experience.

- Significant post qualification experience in dealing with significant and complex issues.

- Experience of delivering or co-ordinating a quality service to others.

- Experience of managing / leading staff.

- Experience of managing a budget and contributing to financially related decisions on high level spending.

- Exposure to shaping and supporting initiatives in a political environment – **_desirable._**

Skills

Key Skill 1
Ability to make sound pragmatic problem solving decisions, which will have a wider service impact. Including the ability to analyse and make judgements based on

principles to tackle difficult problems of a technical, professional, resource or people related nature.

Key Skill 2
Sound partnership working skills including the successful co-ordination of partners to deliver objectives.

Key Skill 3
Ability to challenge existing practices and identify innovative solutions.

Key Skill 4
Effective research, evaluation and interpretation skills to derive conclusions and plan over the short to medium term.

Excellent communication skills with ability to successfully influence and persuade others and negotiate effective business solutions.

Effective people management and performance management skills with the ability to provide direction, leadership and support to individuals and teams.

Ability to set timescales and objectives and review effectiveness of service delivery.

Project management skills including the ability to apply project management principles and practices to complex issues.

Sound and accurate IT and keyboard skills, for general office duties, for example producing reports and monitoring budgets.

WSCC Management Capabilities

All managers need a comprehensive range of skills and knowledge, but seven capabilities have been identified as critical for WSCC moving forward. They are detailed below and apply to all managers (NJC 10 to Chief Officer C).

Capabilities will be considered when a candidate is successful at securing an interview, and for continued development at Performance and Development Reviews.

The seven Management Capabilities are:

- **Customer, partnerships and stakeholder engagement**
- **Financial management**
- **Political awareness and governance**
- **Business planning and performance management**
- **Creativity and innovation**
- **Employee engagement**
- **Managing and leading change**

WSCC Living the Promise Behaviours

This section will be assessed when a candidate is successful at securing an interview, and for continued development at Performance and Development Reviews. (The Living the Promise Behaviours are not required to be addressed at application.)

We expect everyone in the Council to demonstrate the Living the Promise Behaviours, regardless of grade, level or role. They describe how we work with our customers, colleagues and partners.

Further information on the Living the Promise Behaviours can be found on the West Sussex County Council website.

Solutions Architect

Examples:

1. The Solutions Architect will assess and evaluate requirements work in partnership with the outsourced IT provider to develop solutions. The post holder will possess sufficient technical knowledge and understanding in order to review and understand business and customer requirements, to understand the solutions proposed by the outsourced IT service provider and to evaluate this against WSCC information, applications and technological architecture, business requirements and affordability. The post holder will therefore possess sufficient knowledge and understanding of available solutions and technology in order to ensure WSCC is able to achieve value for money and performance.

2. The solutions architect role will have a vital function in ensuring the maintenance and development of the county council's architecture and strategic direction. For example, the IT service provider may wish to change the architectural direction in both technology and applications for WSCC. The role of the Solution Architect would act as the WSCC technical subject matter expert to assess the impact on WSCC of any such change in direction. The Solution Architect would advise the appropriate Governance in WSCC of the impact of any such change and recommend a way forward.

3. In its outsourcing arrangements the Council retained responsibility for information and data architectures. The role enables the Council to manage this responsibility by mapping existing data and information usage, proposing rationalisations, developing key resources, such as master data and metadata taxonomy, and providing assurance that change proposals have taken into full and proper consideration impacts on information and data architectures.

4. The solution architect will be responsible for monitoring opportunities and threat to WSCC and will be responsible for seeking out opportunities to exploit the investment WSCC has already made in Applications and Technology. As an example we have made a significant investment in Microsoft SharePoint. The solution architect should be fully aware of its capability and seek opportunities to develop this platform to deliver benefit to WSCC and its employees.