



**North Kesteven District Council**

**Head of Housing & Property Services**

**Candidate Information Pack**

**April 2017**

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**Welcome Letter and Introductory Video**

**Overall context**

As a council, we have a sound and clear vision, and a strong/ambitious plan for how we want to shape the Council over the next three years. That plan is based around priorities focusing on economy, housing, community and ensuring the on-going viability of the Council. This gives every employee and our elected members clarity of purpose over the next three years.

**Political context**

There is strong cross-party consensus for the three-year plan in a council where members chart the direction, strategy and vision. We have a new council leader in place, who is keen to build on the solid performance and reputation of NK and take it into an exciting new era. Traditionally, we have been a politically stable council; the previous leader announced her retirement recently, after holding the role for 15 years, with 33 years experience as an elected member. The political mix is currently 28 conservative and 15 independent, split into four groups. Our next elections are due in 2019, when all seats will be up for election.

We operate under what is known as a ‘strong leader’ model, with an executive and three scrutiny committees

**Highlights**

* We have a sound and viable finance strategy that supports our development plans for the next three years; the period after that is, of course, challenging, but allows us three years to prepare
* NK has been deemed the safest council in England for the third year running
* We have a series of exemplar housing schemes (both refurbishment and new build)
* We have created a new joint venture housing company (Lafford Homes)
* We are building a new £4m Depot
* Our Council Tax policy is focused on growing business rate and revenue generation
* Our Local Plan is about to be formally adopted and covers three districts – Lincoln, West Lindsey and NK
* We have a very strongly proactive approach to partnership working
* We have a strong leadership and management team, and we have achieved Investors in People (IiP) status
* Our capital programme over the next three years is £53.5m
* We are a national obesity pilot (one of only four chosen this year), exploring a systems approach, working with local health bodies and Public Health England

**Please** [**click here**](https://youtu.be/38rcx99QeIM) **for an introductory video from Phil Roberts, Corporate Director, talking further about the role.**

**About North Kesteven District Council**

The District of North Kesteven is a large, diverse, rural area, stretching from the Witham in the east almost to the Trent in the west and from the sparsely populated villages to the south of Sleaford to the more densely-populated Lincoln fringe in the north.

North Kesteven is one of seven districts in Lincolnshire and covers an area of 92,244 hectares (356 square miles).  The District is characterised by small settlements and large areas of arable farmland; 90% of land in the district has been classified as agricultural.

There are around 100 communities in the North Kesteven District. The population of the District is 109,906 (Office for National Statistics mid year population estimate 2013). There are two towns with approximately 17,671 people in Sleaford and 13,884 in North Hykeham (Census 2011). Almost 40% of North Kesteven’s residents live in communities in the Lincoln “fringe”, the area immediately surrounding Lincoln City (including North Hykeham) and about 15% live in Sleaford. Of the remaining 45%, about half live in 57 communities with fewer than 1,000 people and the other half live in communities, not in the Lincoln fringe, with more than 1,000 people.

The Council has earned a reputation in recent years for ambitious growth and investment and has seen particular development in the field of creative and environmentally focused businesses which has benefitted both the Council and the area, both financially and in terms of much needed employment. The Council is widely recognised as a high performing, value for money organisation, and in particular for the quality of services it delivers. Despite this progress, the Council still faces many challenges over the next few years.

The District has lower house prices than the national average which helps to attract people into NK, but has the effect of pricing many local people out of the housing market. The challenge is to ensure the provision of low cost affordable homes suitable for all sections of the community and providing a range of tenures. The draft core plan for Central Lincolnshire includes policies for affordable housing, based on an aspiration for 20% affordable housing. The rising cost of fuel for homes and cars is driving fuel poverty in NK, whilst the UK commitments to reducing carbon footprint, moving towards a low carbon economy and developing renewable energy is a key area of focus for the district. Minimising waste and maximising recycling remain significant priorities, and maintaining a clean, green and safe environment is a key issue. The particular challenge will be to promote low cost solutions, which combine low carbon approaches with a reduction in cost for residents and businesses.

The Council is also recognised for innovation in delivering challenging priorities for the district. NK was the first council in the country to achieve 50% recycling, and the first to build energy efficient straw-built council houses.

NK’s Corporate Plan 2016-19 ([available by clicking here](https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/your-council/facts-and-figures-about-the-council/council-performance/the-nk-plan-2016-19/)) sets out to deliver effective & efficient public services that meet the needs and priorities of local people and support growth in the district. A range of services are currently commissioned in partnership with the private sector (leisure services, recycling, housing repairs) as well as other public sector organisations (council tax, NNDR, benefits, waste, procurement, legal services).

Finally, the Council’s philosophy is that of a partner and a community leader, working to ensure that North Kesteven continues to be a great place to live, work and visit.

**Please see the end of this pack for links to additional information**

**THE ROLE**

**PURPOSE**

**Specifically:**

* Ensure strong strategic leadership of housing and property functions at NK
* Ensure a consistently excellent quality of service levels to all customers/citizens

**Role splits naturally across the following areas:**

* Housing needs & homelessness
	+ Note this excludes the ‘enabling role’; the bias is towards ‘service delivery’
* Traditional Housing Revenue Account (HRA) issues; e.g. Tenancy Services, Housing Repairs, etc
* Housing Renewal; DSG; and disabled adaptations
* Strategic Property Investment including Housing Development
* Responsibility for the Council’s entire asset base (not just HRA)
* Developing Lafford Homes (our jointly owned housing company)
* Wellbeing Support Service (delivered under agreement with Lincolnshire County Council)

**In more depth:**

The core purpose of the role is to provide leadership on all aspects of the Council’s landlord services. The key role for the Service relates to our investment strategy with Housing and Property Services having the largest share of the Council’s capital programme at approximately £25m in the current financial year. The main focus of this is the new build programme and we have extremely ambitious plans to meet the growing levels of housing need within the District. We have a target to deliver 200 new council properties over the next 3 years and have just completed our 150th property since building recommenced. These skills are already in house and we need to maintain momentum to ensure delivery against this target.

Central to the post will be the on-going improvement of the customer experience and a focus on improving our already excellent performance levels across a wide range of indicators. Our customers expect a high quality of services and you will need to be committed to meeting these requirements.

Overall, the Housing Service is in a strong position, with a robust Housing Revenue Account Business Plan ([available by clicking here](https://www.n-kesteven.gov.uk/residents/housing/strategies-policies-and-service-standards/housing-strategies/)), which demonstrates long-term viability for the service and supports an exciting investment programme.

**CONTEXTUAL ISSUES IMPACTING ON THE ROLE**

* Business plan (see DropBox)
	+ This is in place; has been reviewed and updated; and is deemed to be effective
	+ That said, a key issue that has been identified is the need for a greater focus on Value for Money (VFM)
	+ It is not that standards are not high (indeed, our Housemark data are all upper quartile)
	+ However, with the Government’s introduction of a rent-reduction scheme, we have less income, and accordingly, need an innovative approach to make up the shortfall
* Maintaining the pace in a building programme totalling 200 properties over the next 3 years
* Housing needs remain high
	+ Last year, we were recognised as an authority for having replaced more properties in proportion to those lost through right to buy
	+ To assist in maintaining this pace, and recognising the need to invest in the local market and the under-developed private rental market, we created a housing company - Lafford Homes, which is currently on-site
* Looking for further Partnership opportunities
	+ This links closely to the drive for VFM in order to reduce both procurement and development costs
* Looking for further Development opportunities
	+ Seeking to build for sale through the General Fund, so generating additional resources to support our other activities

**KEY PRIORITIES/OBJECTIVES**

**Immediate**

* Review the new build programme, ensuring that it links appropriately with the available level of investment
* Secure scope for greater investment by driving through a review of value for money
* If not yet completed (we are currently seeking an extension to our Wellbeing scheme through a procurement process), review and see the latter through to successful completion
* Build strong partnerships with other local authorities to enable further opportunities for joint procurement/development, and thus creating still more scope for investment
* Be ready for Universal Credit as its range expands and impacts on customers

**Medium/Longer Term**

* Develop strong working relationships within the current housing team
	+ Ensure that the current structure is effective and working in the best interests of customers
	+ Aim towards delivering a seamless ‘Council to customer’ level of service
* Maintain high levels of service across housing and property functions
* Ensure that new housing in the district is built to a high standard: ‘Fabric First’
* Ensure that existing housing in the district is refurbished to a high standard: ‘NK Home Standard’

**KEY RELATIONSHIPS**

# Role reports to:

* Phil Roberts, Corporate Director

**Other key relationships**

* Internally
	+ Corporate Management Team
	+ Executive Board and members
	+ Lead Housing members within the council
		- There will be a close working relationship with Cllr Stewart Ogden, Lead Member for Housing
	+ Colleagues in planning, finance, housing strategy & the Anti-Social Behaviour unit
* Externally
	+ NK’s various development partners
	+ The County Council and other local government partners
	+ The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
	+ Central government
		- The Council has established some good relationships here as a result of our preliminary work on devolution

**THE TEAM SUPPORTING THE ROLE**

* You will manage a team of 4 section heads, plus a shared PA
	+ All the members of this team have been with us some time, and have substantial experience
* This team manages 98 full-time equivalent staff
	+ Our technical resources are highly regarded by our peer authorities

**PERFORMANCE IN THE ROLE WILL BE JUDGED BY:**

**Hard criteria**

* A series of performance targets, including, but not limited to:
	+ Financial
	+ Delivery of the capital programme
	+ Service performance outputs

**Soft criteria**

* Success in swiftly settling down in the role
* A sense (gained from feedback from colleagues and demonstrated behaviours) that you have succeeded in developing and embracing a shared understanding of NK’s values
* The strength of partnership working (gained from feedback from partners/colleagues, and exhibited behaviours)

# THE PERSON

It is important that in your supporting statement, you seek to address and provide evidence, as far as you can, for each of the criteria identified in Part One of the person specification below. The preliminary interview will further probe these criteria as well as exploring Parts Two and Three.

**PART ONE – ‘Hard’ attributes**

**Essential experience/track record**

A demonstrable, successful and proven track record of:

* Credibility in a senior managerial role within a housing environment
* Experience in either tenancy management, property management, or both
* A clear understanding of law, policy and good practice surrounding housing
* Reassurance in managing significant sums of money. In NK, this will include:
	+ Capital expenditure of £25m in the next year
	+ Rental income of around £15m/year
* An ability to ‘horizon scan’ and be aware of the direction of travel/current and upcoming issues at a national level, and an ability to adapt and advise the Council on policy issues accordingly

**Desirable – experience that would be superb/great to have, although not strictly essential**

A demonstrable and proven track record of:

* Knowledge or experience of working in local government, and an ability to work within a political environment
* Experience of both tenancy management and property management
* Previous experience as a Head of Service

**PART TWO - ‘Soft’ attributes**

To survive and thrive in this organisation, you must…

* Understand and support North Kesteven’s values around cooperative working, and be willing to adapt to that environment; in practice, this means:
	+ Flexible
	+ Being prepared to work within NK’s strong strategic direction, and be able to contribute to that strategy
	+ Having an ability to empathise and work with peers in a ‘no blame’ culture
	+ Seeing the customer/citizen as ‘king’ and our citizens/communities being at the heart of all we do
	+ Committed to providing and receiving peer to peer support
	+ A professional demeanour, with all stakeholders
	+ Being enthusiastic, approachable, open and honest
	+ Being strongly empathetic
	+ You just get on and deliver because you have the highest of standards, for yourself and those who support you
	+ Above all, you are, by deliberate choice, a committed and resolute team player

**PART THREE – Issues around ‘fit’**

Having recorded the video clip mentioned at the beginning of the pack, we posed a range of questions, first to his colleagues, and then to Phil himself, to whom the role reports:

**Chemistry and ‘fit’**

**Colleagues - what is Phil, personally, like to work with?**

* Open and accessible
* Enjoys a one-on-one relationship
* Fairly exacting
* Very well organised
* Committed, with high expectations and standards, particularly around work ethics
* An expectation of personal responsibility and delivery against targets
* Does not run with a ‘blame’ culture – encourages a ‘learning’ culture
* Very supportive
* Good strategic thinker
* Very solutions and outcomes focused
* Honest about strategy and principles, and clear about what is necessary from staff and colleagues
* Very caring about the team; collaborative; fosters a good team spirit
* Very professional
* Will do things for the right reasons, focusing on the ultimate goal
* Sense of humour

**Phil – tell us about your style and what is important to you**

* Strategy led and outcomes focused
* A collaborative and team-based approach
* An expectation of personal responsibility and delivery against targets
* And it’s true; I don’t do a ‘blame’ culture; I run with a ‘learning’ culture

**What works less well with you?**

* People who cannot build and maintain a trustworthy relationship
* Someone that wants to shut themselves off from the rest of the team
* A ‘hunter-killer’/aggressive type; an ambition to ‘change the world’ is fine, just so long as we do it together; an ‘unguided missile/loner’ will simply not fit in and not work well in an environment that whilst highly professional, still manages to have something of a family feel’ to it

**Any other points that you’d like to reinforce?**

* The role really needs a thorough (rather than superficial) understanding and appreciation of HRA finance and housing capital programmes
* You need to be naturally innovative; we are really looking to push the limits and boundaries here at NK; there are no ‘holy grails’ – we are willing to discuss, research, look at and contemplate anything
* Past exposure to/experience of working with elected members will most certainly be helpful
* An inherent ability to ‘flex one’s style’ will really help
* And to repeat – ‘solutions focused’

**What might this person be doing right now?**

* Could be an aspiring team leader looking for their next move in local government
	+ Someone seeking an organisation that is going places and is not afraid of being innovative
* Could be someone at the other end of their career, perhaps down-sizing and/or looking for somewhere less bureaucratic and in a nice part of England but where you can get still get ‘stuck in’ to a meaningful role
* Could be someone in a housing association or in the private sector with previous experience working in or alongside local government, looking for a change of scenery
	+ In this case, however, you would need to be someone who is able to convince us that you can make the transition between sectors and operate within the political environment of local government

**If this person has all the ‘hard experience’ noted above, then they will likely have many options for their career. In that case, why would they want to come here to North Kesteven and to this role?**

Any, some or all of the following:

The Organisation

* North Kesteven, as an authority, is very forward thinking
* Local government and the public sector is facing very challenging times, but we always look for opportunities to work within that environment/context to innovate and succeed
* We offer lots of potential to make a real difference for our communities
	+ We are ambitious
	+ We are financially stable and have the resources to invest
	+ This is a great opportunity to deliver something ‘on the ground’
* We have elected members who really are ready to listen and engage
* The role offers you a chance to get your teeth into ‘investing’ into providing safe and secure accommodation
* We employ high performers and try always to be the best
* Being financially sound allows us the space for innovation and personal development
* We try and flip challenges into opportunities, rather than being reasons not to do things
* We have a strong strategic vision that is approved and supported by the full Council, and this is an opportunity to be part of implementing that vision

The Place

* It’s a great area in which to live and work
* There is a great quality of life
* Education/schools are top notch
* House prices are low relative to many areas in England
* We are the safest (in terms of crime) district council in England

The Role

* Professionally and intellectually, there are some key challenges in the services that should engage you sufficiently to come and make a real difference, with a genuine ability to achieve a lot
* We will challenge you constructively, support you, and ensure that you have opportunities to grow within the role
* You’ll be working with a strong peer group, and a good and supportive corporate management team
* You will have the support of a very experienced and effective team
* We’ve got a big, exciting capital programme that you will lead

The Rewards

* The non-financial rewards have been outlined above
* Remuneration is competitive
* We offer a good package to assist in re-location
* Generous terms and conditions; we still have private healthcare, essential car allowance, and a good pension

Health & Wellbeing as an employer

* We take the health and wellbeing of our employees very seriously

# TERMS AND CONDITIONS

**Summary information about the key pay and terms and conditions and associated matters**

**Salary**

A range of £61,294 to £65,540

**Holidays**

Annual holiday entitlement is 33 days (36 days after 5 years service in Local Government), plus a further 8 public holidays.

**Private Health Care**

You will be entitled to join the Council’s private health scheme.

**Car Allowance**

You will be entitled to an essential car user allowance.

**Pension**

You will have the opportunity to join the Council’s Occupational Pension Scheme (the Local Government Superannuation Scheme).

**Relocation assistance**

This will be provided depending on individual circumstances.

**HOW TO APPLY**

This guidance contains important information to help with your application.

**General Conditions**

We recognise and welcome our responsibility to remove any barriers in our Recruitment and Selection process for disabled people. We have tried to do this, but if you have a disability and identify any barriers in the job description please tell us of these in your application. We are committed to making reasonable adjustments to the job wherever possible and it would help us to know your needs in order to do this.

**To apply for this role, we would like you to provide the following:**

* A motivation statement (ideally no more than 2 sides of A4), which explains why you are applying for this role and the contribution, style, skills and experience you will bring to it.
* A supporting statement, providing evidence/examples of how you match the 5 key requirements of the role as outlined in Part One ‘essential’ section of the ‘role profile’, and where possible, the three key requirements of the role as outlined in the ‘desirable but not essential section of the ‘role profile’.
* A comprehensive, up to date and current CV ensuring all gaps in employment and education history are fully explained.
* Contact details of three referees so that we are able to take up your references if you are shortlisted for initial officer panel interview (referees will not be contacted without your permission).
* A completed Equal Opportunities monitoring form (see below). We are keen to ensure that our jobs are accessible to all members of the community and use this data to monitor our progress in doing this.

The equal opportunities and monitoring form can be found at the end of this pack. This is a word document that you need to complete and return to us.

Please ensure you return the above documents by the end of the closing date, Monday 15th May 2017, to **NK1051@davidsonpartners.com**

* Following long listing, you will be contacted directly with an update on the status of your application. In line with the timetable below:
	+ Those candidates who are longlisted will be invited to an initial screening interview with our advisors, Davidson & Partners
	+ A long-shortlist will then be selected for initial Officer interview plus additional assessment; in advance of this interview, you will also have the chance to have an informal telephone conversation/meeting with Phil Roberts, to whom the role will report
	+ A final shortlist will then be selected for interview by a panel of elected members.

Please ensure that you let us know in your covering letter if there are any specific dates that present you with a problem.

**Closing date** Monday 15 May

**Longlisting** Friday 19 May or Tuesday 23May

 [To be confirmed]

**Preliminary Interviews** Monday 29 May thru Wednesday 07 June

**Shortlisting** Friday 16 June

**Informal meetings/conversations** Monday 19 June

Tuesday 20 June

**Officer Panel & additional**

**assessment of long-shortlist** Thursday 22 June

**Final Member Panel** Wednesday 28 June

If you have any specific queries about the role, or wish to have an informal and confidential discussion, then please call or email our advisors at Davidson & Partners:

Hamish Davidson: hamish.davidson@davidsonpartners.com

 M: 07932 698 807

 Jack Williams: jack.williams@davidsonpartners.com

 M: 07885 670 504

 Aidan Rave: aidan.rave@davidsonpartners.com

 M: 07810 656 046

**Further Information**

[Click here for a Dropbox folder where you can download further information documents](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/c29v7o231oivsi9/AACIfanqzSiq5AgIRFcP52CFa?dl=0)

*If you have any issues accessing the files in the Dropbox folder, please email* *jack.williams@davidsonpartners.com* *and we will send you the files as attachments.*

**Diversity Monitoring Form**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Role: | Head of Housing & Property Services, North Kesteven District Council |
| Reference Number: | NK1051 |
| Where/how did you first learn about the role? |  |

**We are committed to employing a workforce that reflects the community we serve. Please help us to monitor our progress by completing the details below. Your information will be treated confidentially.**

**Gender**

What is your gender?

Male [ ]  Female [ ]  Prefer not to say [ ]

**Pregnancy and Maternity**

A woman is protected under section 18 of the Equality Act 2010 and cannot be treated unfavourably because of her pregnancy

If you are a woman, are you pregnant, on maternity leave or returning from maternity leave?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Prefer not to say [ ]

**Disability**

The Equality Act 2010 says that a disabled person is someone with a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

Examples include cancer, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, heart conditions, hearing or sight impairments, or a significant mobility difficulty and mental health conditions or learning difficulties.

In relation to the definition above, do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Prefer not to say [ ]

**Age range**

18-24 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 65+ Prefer not to say

[ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]  [ ]

**Religion or belief**

Please tick the box from the list below which best describes your religion or belief:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Christian | [ ]  | Hindu | [ ]  | Jewish | [ ]  |
| Muslim | [ ]  | Sikh | [ ]  | Buddhist | [ ]  |
| No Religion | [ ]  | Prefer not to say [ ]   |  |  |

Any other religion, please specify:

**Gender Reassignment**

The Equality Act 2010 defines a transsexual person as someone who *“is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex”.*

In relation to the definition above, do you consider yourself to be transsexual?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]  Prefer not to say [ ]

**Ethnic Origin**

Please tick the box from the list below which best describes the ethnic group to which you belong:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **White** | **Black** | **Asian** |
| British | [ ]  | British | [ ]  | British | [ ]  |
| English | [ ]  | African | [ ]  | Indian | [ ]  |
| Scottish | [ ]  | Caribbean | [ ]  | Pakistani | [ ]  |
| Welsh | [ ]  | Any other Black background, please specify:       | Bangladeshi | [ ]  |
| Irish | [ ]  | Any other Asian background, please specify:       |
| Northern Irish | [ ]  |
| Gypsy or Irish Traveller | [ ]  |
| Any other White background, please specify:       |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Mixed** | **Other ethnic group** | Prefer not to say | [ ]  |
| White and Black African | [ ]  | Chinese | [ ]  |
| White and Black Caribbean | [ ]  | Arab | [ ]  |
| White and Asian | [ ]  | Any other ethnic group, please specify:       |
| Any other Mixed background, please specify:       |

**Sexual orientation**

Please tick the box from the list below which best describes your sexual orientation:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Gay man | [ ]  | Gay Woman/Lesbian | [ ]  | Heterosexual/Straight | [ ]  |
| Bisexual | [ ]  | Prefer not to say | [ ]  | Other | [ ]  |

***Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.***