



North Northamptonshire Council

Three key Assistant Director roles

How often in a local authority role do you get the chance to have a blank sheet of paper and start afresh? That is what is so exciting.'

Rob Bridge, the Chief Executive of the newly-formed North Northamptonshire Council, is invigorated by the challenge of leading one of the two new unitary authorities that emerged from the reorganisation of Northamptonshire and its districts.

It's so new, there isn't yet a fully developed corporate plan, just a draft vision and a blueprint to put services in place and set out how the authority would work.

'Once we've held the elections, and the new council is elected, we need to develop the corporate plan which will set out the strategic objectives and priorities of the new Council,' Rob says.

The corporate plan and the election of the members to the new council are the only gaps left to fill. While most of the senior leadership team has been appointed, North Northamptonshire is now looking for three assistant directors to complete the line-up.

There is an Assistant Director of Accountancy role, which will also be the Council's Deputy 151 Officer. The other two roles are in adult social care: an Assistant Director of Commissioning and Performance and an Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Wellbeing.

'If you want the opportunity to be part of

something exciting, to help build a council of the future that makes a real impact on a place, its communities and businesses...'

Rob says: 'then we welcome your application.'

When it comes to the place, North Northamptonshire is still finding its feet. 'People knew what Northamptonshire was, but most probably won't know what North Northamptonshire is yet,' the Chief Executive explains.

'They will know the local towns and villages very well.' He suggests it is really important to maintain the engagement the former councils had with the local communities.

'The trick for us is to make sure that, as a new unitary, we don't lose sight of how important it



Rob Bridge – Chief Executive, North Northamptonshire Council

is to build trust with our local communities, and that we stay connected with them.'

He is also clear that North Northamptonshire is not one homogeneous mass.

'We've got rurality, we've got leafy suburbs, we've got more urban areas, and of course we've got areas of deprivation, but there is no one-size-fits-all approach. For us, it's about shaping a vision for North Northamptonshire, one that everyone can relate to.'

'We want to keep the uniqueness of each place – we are going to focus on those town strategies – as well as that strategic overarching view about the whole place.'

There are substantial economic opportunities too, sitting as it does right in the middle of the Oxford/Cambridge economic arc. Creating the two new unitaries in place of the old county council and seven district councils has shifted the conversation, giving North Northamptonshire a more coherent voice.

Rob says: 'We have the chance to really push for appropriate growth. We want to grow the place for everybody, with the right skills, the right housing, the right job opportunities and the right green space.'

'The new unitary will create a single voice with all our partners to really make a difference.'

As well as building external relationships with the community and local partners, Rob is pulling together 3,200 staff from the former county and district councils to work together.

'It is quite challenging, but exciting and invigorating as well' he says.

'We are creating a culture where you have to have humility. You have to have the drive to improve and to contribute to a no-blame culture where you need to be accountable and to take responsibility. And you have to be driven as you will need to be working at pace, but you will have fun along the way!'

'I have always said that we are not looking for solo artists, we're looking for people that can really add to an orchestra.'

'We want to be high performing; we want to be an excellent council. We want people to come in with that mindset, coming here to work hard because it's not going to be easy, but it is going to be really exciting, and we want our staff to enjoy and take pride in their work.'

It is striking that the values he outlines are so strong – but it is not a reaction to what went wrong. He is adamant that the Council will not define itself by the past. 'I truly believe that's how you make a successful council,' the Chief Executive says.

Instead, he is very much looking towards the future.

'It's a really exciting time. We've got a really good team of people. The successful candidates will be joining a driven, focused team that wants to make a difference. It is like our advert says. Join us in building the council of the future for our local communities and businesses.' ■