



## POSITION DESCRIPTION

# Director of Planning

*Local Government — Generic Template*

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**Prepared by GEM Executive**

Executive Search & Recruitment — Local Government & Not-for-Profit

## Position Details

|                       |                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Position Title</b> | Director of Planning                                                                  |
| <b>Reports to</b>     | Chief Executive Officer                                                               |
| <b>Directorate</b>    | Planning and Development (title varies by organisation)                               |
| <b>Position Type</b>  | Full-time, ongoing                                                                    |
| <b>Classification</b> | Executive / Senior Officer — Employment Agreement                                     |
| <b>Term</b>           | Contract in line with s.42 of the Local Government Act 2020 (typically up to 5 years) |
| <b>Location</b>       | [Council Name] — travel throughout the municipality and region as required            |

## Position Objective

The Director of Planning provides strategic and operational leadership across Council's statutory and strategic planning, building and development, and related regulatory functions. The role guides the shape and growth of the municipality by ensuring land use, development and planning outcomes are integrated with environmental, social, economic and community objectives.

As a member of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), the Director contributes to organisation-wide strategy and governance, and provides the Chief Executive Officer and Council with timely, expert and evidence-based advice to support well-informed decision-making. The role is accountable for driving service performance, financial discipline and continuous improvement across the Directorate, while fostering a positive, collaborative and high-performing workplace culture.

## Key Responsibility Areas

### Strategic and Statutory Planning

- Lead the development, review and implementation of Council's strategic planning framework, including the Planning Scheme, structure plans and land use strategies.
- Advise Council and the ELT on matters of strategic planning significance, including growth management, housing, and urban design.
- Oversee statutory planning functions, ensuring assessment and determination of planning applications is timely, consistent and legislatively compliant.
- Ensure land use and development approvals appropriately balance community, economic, environmental and heritage considerations.
- Represent Council at planning panels, tribunals (e.g. VCAT) and government forums as required.

### Building and Regulatory Services

- Oversee building services, local laws, environmental health and other regulatory functions within the Directorate.
- Ensure statutory compliance and consistent, risk-based enforcement of regulatory obligations.
- Maintain a customer-focused, “can-do” culture that supports efficient service delivery and positive community and industry relationships.

### Economic Development and Growth

- Advise Council on matters of strategic economic importance, and lead the development and implementation of Council's economic development strategy.
- Work collaboratively with industry, developers, government agencies and neighbouring councils to support sustainable growth and investment in the municipality.
- Support the planning and delivery of infrastructure and community facilities that enable job creation and economic resilience.

### Financial Management

- Develop and manage the Directorate's annual budget in accordance with Council policy and statutory requirements.
- Ensure the effective, efficient and transparent use of resources across all functions of the Directorate.
- Monitor financial performance against budget and report accurately and in a timely manner to the CEO and Council.
- Identify and pursue grant funding and external revenue opportunities where relevant to the Directorate's objectives.

### General Leadership

- Provide inspiring, values-based leadership to a multidisciplinary team, fostering collaboration, mentoring and coaching to build leadership capability and support succession planning.
- Model Council's vision and values, and ensure they are communicated and embedded throughout the Directorate.
- Champion organisational change, innovation and continuous improvement initiatives alongside the CEO and ELT.
- Ensure effective structures, delegations and performance management systems are in place so staff clearly understand their roles and accountabilities.
- Participate as a member of the Executive Leadership Team in advocacy and promotion of Council's goals and services to the community, government and industry.

### Risk, Governance and Compliance

- Foster a positive risk-aware culture and ensure effective implementation of Council's risk management framework within the Directorate.
- Identify, communicate and respond to known and emerging strategic risks in line with Council's risk appetite and policies.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, including the Local Government Act 2020, Planning and Environment Act 1987, and other applicable regulatory frameworks.
- Ensure critical functions have established, current business continuity plans.
- Support Council's obligations in relation to occupational health and safety, child safety and gender equality, including the Gender Equality Act 2020 where applicable.

### Emergency Management

- Contribute to Council's legislative obligations for emergency management, disaster response and recovery as required, including participation in relevant training and planning activities.

## Organisational Relationships

| Relationship                  | Details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Reports to</b>             | Chief Executive Officer                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Direct reports</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manager Statutory Planning</li> <li>• Manager Strategic Planning</li> <li>• Manager Building and Regulatory Services</li> <li>• Manager Economic Development (title and structure vary by organisation)</li> </ul>                                |
| <b>Internal relationships</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillors</li> <li>• Chief Executive Officer and Executive Leadership Team</li> <li>• Other Council Directorates and staff</li> </ul>                                                                                                           |
| <b>External relationships</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State and Federal Government departments and agencies</li> <li>• Development industry and industry associations</li> <li>• Local community groups and ratepayers</li> <li>• Neighbouring councils and regional bodies</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul> |

## Accountability and Extent of Authority

- The Director has full authority to manage the Directorate in accordance with Council policy, delegations and the direction of the Chief Executive Officer.
- The Director is accountable for the effective and efficient operation of the Directorate within available resources, and for achieving agreed performance objectives.
- The Director is expected to apply initiative and innovative thinking in pursuit of organisational objectives and long-term strategic direction.
- Expenditure outside an approved budget requires consideration and approval by the Chief Executive Officer.
- The Director is not authorised to appoint or dismiss employees outside of Council's delegated authority framework.

## Judgement and Decision Making

The role principally involves problem solving and policy development, drawing on specialist analytical tools, prior experience and contestable procedures. Innovative and creative approaches are often required.

The incumbent must be a strategic thinker who demonstrates sound judgement across a diverse range of complex and sometimes politically sensitive situations. Decisions may carry broad economic, political, legal and social consequences, and must have regard to Council objectives, policy, relevant legislation and statutory requirements.

## Specialist Skills and Knowledge

- Sound understanding of the Local Government Act 2020, Planning and Environment Act 1987, and other legislation relevant to the Directorate's functions.
- Knowledge of strategic and statutory planning principles, urban design and environmentally sustainable development.

- Understanding of economic development principles as applied within a local government context.
- Experience in community and stakeholder engagement, including familiarity with IAP2 principles.
- Sound financial management and budgeting skills, with the ability to manage complex, multi-year programs.
- Understanding of the political, legal and socio-economic context in which local government operates.

## Qualifications and Experience

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### Mandatory

- Tertiary qualification in Town Planning, Urban Design, Economic Development, Commerce or a related discipline are highly desirable.
- Significant experience in a senior management role, ideally within local government or a comparable regulatory or planning environment.
- Demonstrated experience managing people, budgets, stakeholders and complex projects.
- Current Driver's Licence.
- Satisfactory National Police Check (and Working with Children Check where required by the position).

### Desirable

- Post-graduate qualifications in management, business or a related field.
- Experience presenting to Council, planning panels or tribunals such as VCAT.
- Experience in a growth-area or regional council context.

## Key Selection Criteria

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### Leadership and Management

- Highly developed leadership and people management skills, with the ability to build capability, drive performance and lead through change.
- Strong strategic planning and corporate management skills, aligned to organisational goals and financial parameters.

### Interpersonal and Communication Skills

- Superior written and oral communication skills, including the ability to present persuasively to Council, the community and external stakeholders.
- Ability to negotiate, influence and build cooperative relationships with Councillors, staff, industry and the community.
- High level of enthusiasm, maturity and sound judgement, particularly in complex or politically sensitive situations.

### Judgement, Financial and Risk Management

- Demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgement and decisiveness in problem solving.
- Corporate-level financial management skills, including budget development and cost control.
- Understanding of risk management principles and their application within a regulatory and planning environment.

## General Information

- Council is an equal opportunity employer, committed to a safe, harmonious and inclusive workplace, and to eliminating all forms of discrimination.
- Pre-employment checks may include a National Police Check, Working with Children Check and/or medical assessment, as relevant to the position.
- Successful applicants must provide proof of eligibility to work in Australia prior to commencement.
- This is a generic template position description. Details including reporting lines, direct reports, remuneration and specific accountabilities should be tailored to reflect the requirements of the individual council and role.

## Acknowledgement

I have read and understood the responsibilities, duties and expectations outlined in this Position Description. I acknowledge that this document may be reviewed and updated to reflect changes in the role or organisational requirements.

|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Employee Name</b>             |                         |
| <b>Employee Signature / Date</b> |                         |
| <b>Manager Name</b>              | Chief Executive Officer |
| <b>Manager Signature / Date</b>  |                         |