

Guidance for LPAs: Setting up your team

Created: March 2024



Department for Levelling Up,
Housing & Communities



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3. Seven core functional areas
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5. Job description templates
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This guidance is not prescriptive and may ultimately be adopted with variations in your LPA.



Setting up a team

This guidance is intended to support Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to stand up the right team and resources for their project to achieve the best possible outcomes.

Getting the team and resources in place up-front is an important step forward in clarifying time commitments, expectations of team members, and allocating funding more effectively.

Guidance is based on what other councils who have been successful in implementing similar projects or improvements have done and on wider market data for job descriptions (JDs).

All the information here is based on “best practice” however this may look different for each council depending on their specific project, resource, complexity and commitment.



Hiring Considerations

Will we be able to fill these roles with **permanent (FTE) staff?** (consider the following)

- Whether there any staff that could currently fill this role via: a role change, role split, through upskilling, promotion or secondment
- It may be quick to move existing staff into the role but consider that their old posts may need to be backfilled
- Consider the typical timelines within the council for hiring permanent staff (factoring in job levelling processes etc.)
- Current capacity of your HR team and hiring partners to assist in a timely manner
- Whether the salary for the roles identified will align with council guidelines or whether market supplements will be needed

Will we be able to (or need to) fill these roles using the **FTC market?**

- How long will this FTC likely be needed? Is this temporary or would you want the role to continue beyond the project?
- It may be faster to hire from the FTC market.
- Consider that other councils have found it difficult to recruit 12month contracts but easier to recruit for an 18-24month contract
- It may be more costly in the long term to hire FTC rather than FTE
- It's often easier to find specific skills for hire in the FTC market

Could we **share the role with another council (if similar)** to bring the cost down?

- Consider this option if certain roles are out of budget or not required 5 dpw

Useful Resources

- [Public Practice](#) (Recruitment support - typically 6-9 months to recruit once the council has signed up)
- [LOTI](#) (Tech JD database for councils, useful for benchmarking salaries and responsibilities)
- [Role profiles and JD's](#) (JD's, based on what other councils have used)
- Other agencies and outsourced service providers

Seven core functional areas

There are 7 key functional areas within the project team that should be considered. These have been identified based on how LPAs implementing similar projects have been working over the previous 12-18 months.

It is important to note that **functions are not the same as roles** - the functions do not necessarily have to be carried out by one individual per function (although they could be).

Councils may have a single person carrying out a number of functions - this is how many LPAs have been operating so far. **You may not require all of these functions to setup your project.**

There are also [supporting functions within the council that you will need to engage at different points of the project.](#)

Project Leadership

Responsible for oversight, strategic guidance and ultimate success of the project.

Delivery Management

Responsible for ensuring timely delivery and day-to-day operations and management for the project.

Integrations, Data & Infrastructure

Responsible for integrations between new and existing technology landscape, for meeting data standards & maintaining integrity of tech infrastructure.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Responsible for design, implementation & quality management of tracking data collection, managing tests, and reporting & analysis.

Content Subject Matter Experts

Responsible for providing expert feedback and guidance on planning policy, the planning application process and the scope of the planning system as required.

BOPS Product Area

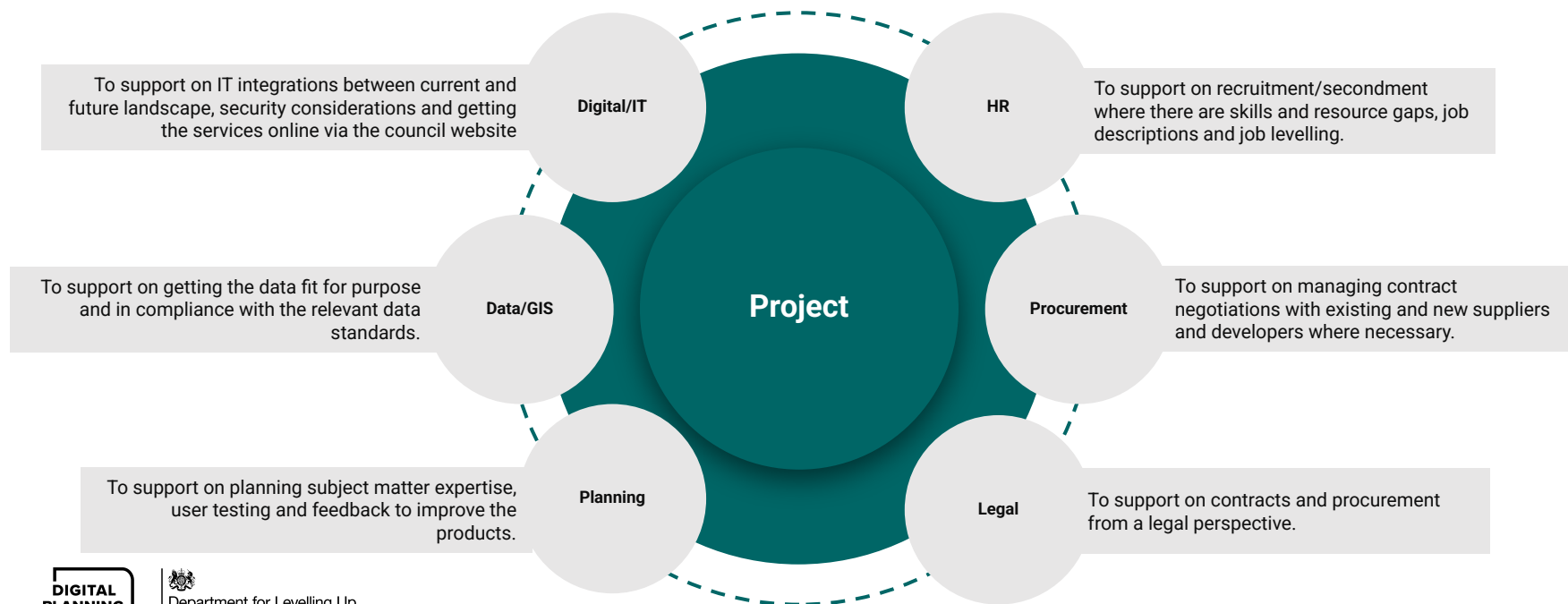
Responsible for working closely with internal council development teams for BOPS in order to deliver on new features and fixes.

PlanX Product Area

Responsible for working closely with internal council development teams for PlanX in order to deliver on new features and fixes.

Support functions to engage before starting

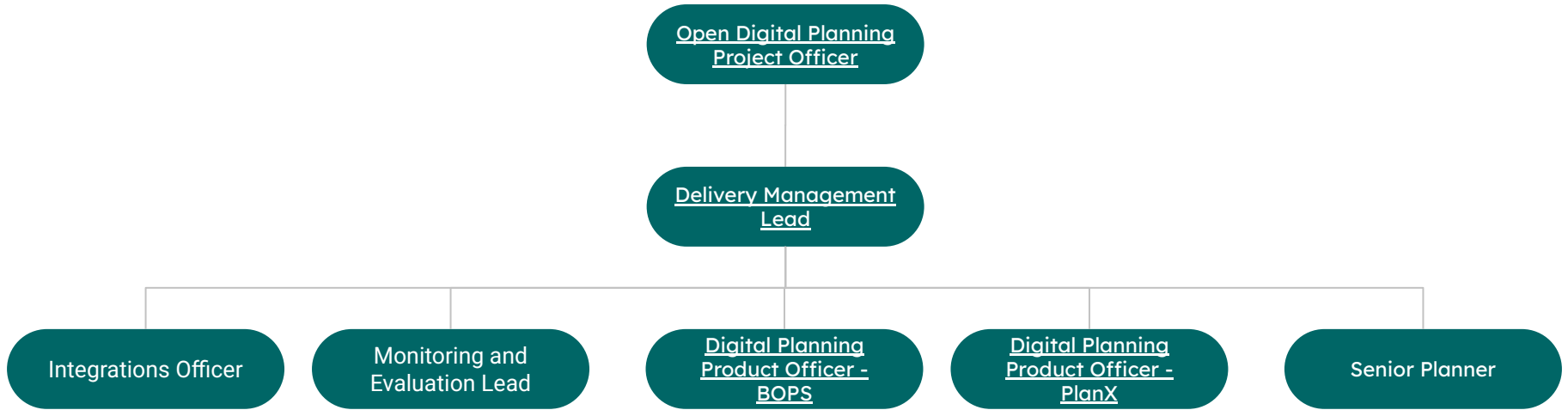
There may be other teams within your council that you will need to liaise with for support in various aspects of the project. It is recommended to start to form these alliances early on. A first step would be to provide them with an overview of the project and the type of support you may need later.



Job Description templates

Functional Area	Description	Links to Job Description Templates	
Project Leadership	Responsible for oversight, strategic guidance and ultimate success of the project.	Project Officer	
Delivery Management	Responsible for ensuring timely delivery and day-to-day operations and management for the project.	Delivery Management Lead	
Integrations, Data & Infrastructure	Responsible for integrations between new and existing technology landscape, for meeting data standards & maintaining integrity of tech infrastructure.	Integrations Officer	Data/GIS Officer
Monitoring and Evaluation	Responsible for design, implementation & quality management of tracking data collection, managing tests, and reporting & analysis.	Monitoring & Evaluation Lead	
Content Subject Matter Experts	Responsible for providing expert feedback and guidance on planning policy, the planning application process and the scope of the planning system as required.	Senior Planner	
BOPS Product Area	Responsible for working closely with internal council development teams for BOPS in order to deliver on new features and fixes.	Digital Planning Product Officer - BOPS	
PlanX Product Area	Responsible for working closely with internal council development teams for PlanX in order to deliver on new features and fixes.	Digital Planning Product Officer - PlanX	

Indicative Team Structure



This guidance is not prescriptive and may ultimately be adopted with variations in your LPA.

LPA Case Studies

Learn from other LPAs based on the different approaches they have taken within their council and planning teams in order to develop and implement their projects.

Southwark Council

Team structure case study #1

Southwark Council have been running a project with the aim to adopt both PlanX and BOPS software.



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Team overview

Our new RIPA/BOPS team: Overview

- Our proposed team will cover the range of capabilities and experience that are required to deliver a success partnership for the RIPA/BOPS project.
- We have reviewed the functional profiles prepared through the recent project alignment workshops and will assign dedicated roles to the functional profiles
- Our approach is to ensure a dedicated RIPA/BOPS team is centrally located within the division's new Digital Planning team with strong links to Development Management, Planning Policy and Shared Services (admin)
- The team will be filled using existing staff and new staff that we will need to recruit on fixed term contracts. We have submitted a bid to Public Practice to seek to fill a project delivery role

A mix of existing staff and FTC

Functionally aligned roles

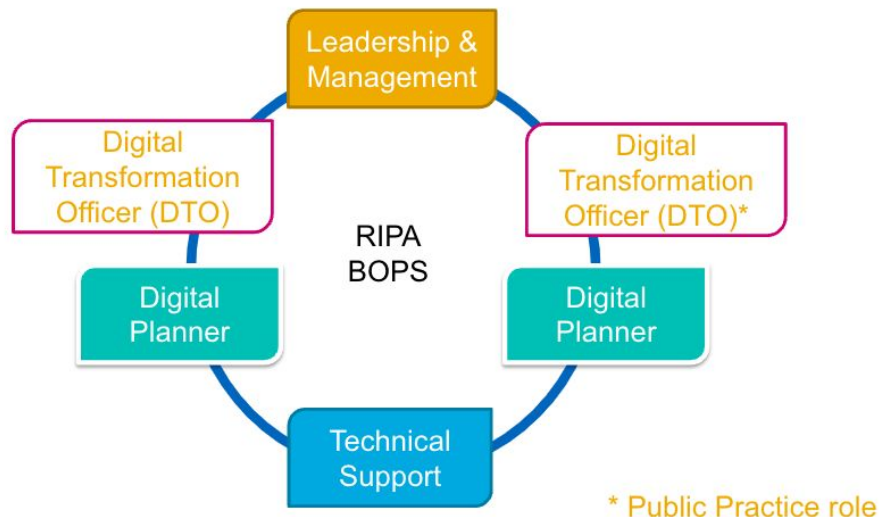
Using Public Practice for recruitment

 @lb_southwark  facebook.com/southwarkcouncil

Roles & Structure

An overview of the indicative structure proposed by Southwark

Our new RIPA/BOPS team: Roles and structure



Governance

Sharing knowledge/stakeholder engagement

As part of delivering and investing new digital services within the planning division, the RIPA/BOPS team will share progress, learnings and products with key stakeholders across the council. We will do this using the follow methods:

- Invitations to project show and tells and sharing of social media content (i.e. videos)
- Digital Board meetings (Quarterly)
- Updates to Planning Group Managers meetings (Weekly, as needed)
- Lead cabinet member briefings (Fortnightly, as needed)
- Strategic Director briefings (Quarterly, as needed)
- Engagement with IT, digital transformation, GIS teams as needed
- The preparation of process mapping/guides that can be shared with other boroughs/partners

Buckinghamshire Council

Team structure case study #2

Bucks Council have been running a project with the aim to adopt both PlanX and BOPS software.

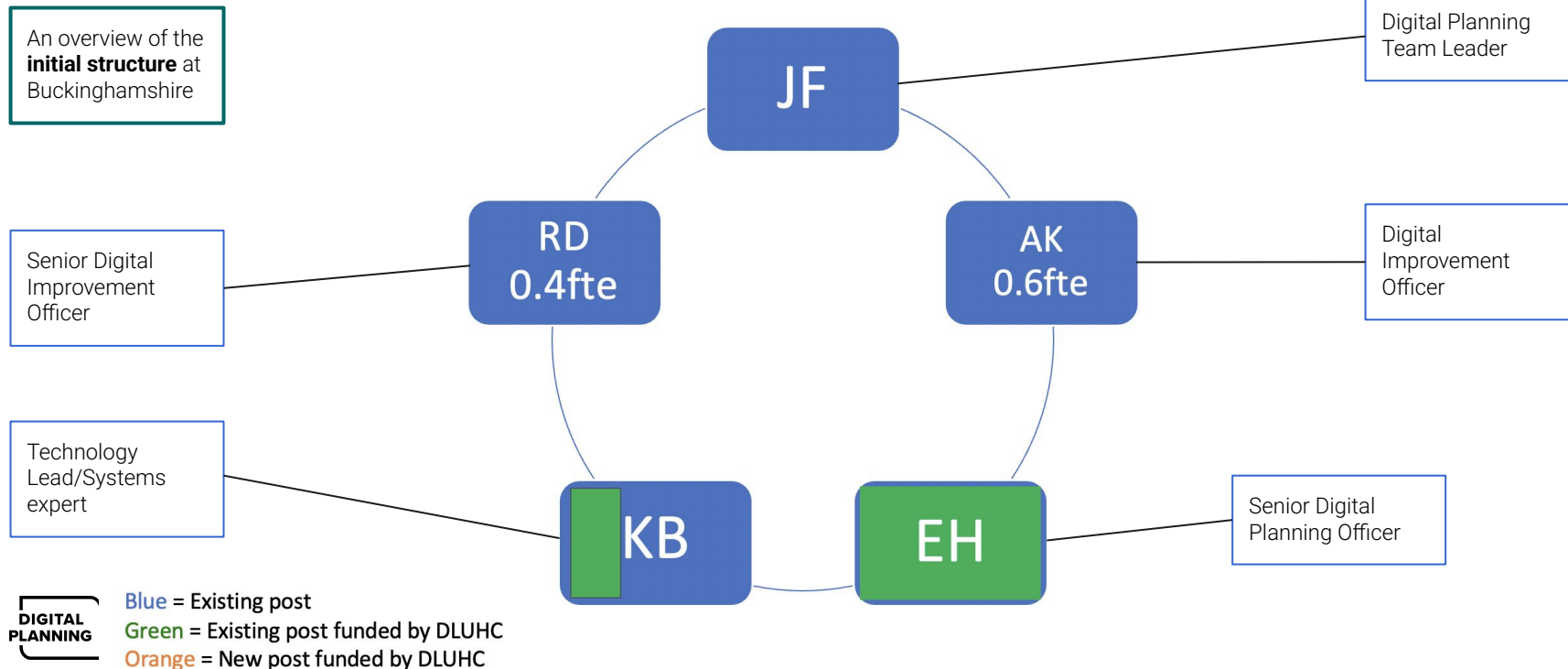


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Initial Roles & Structure

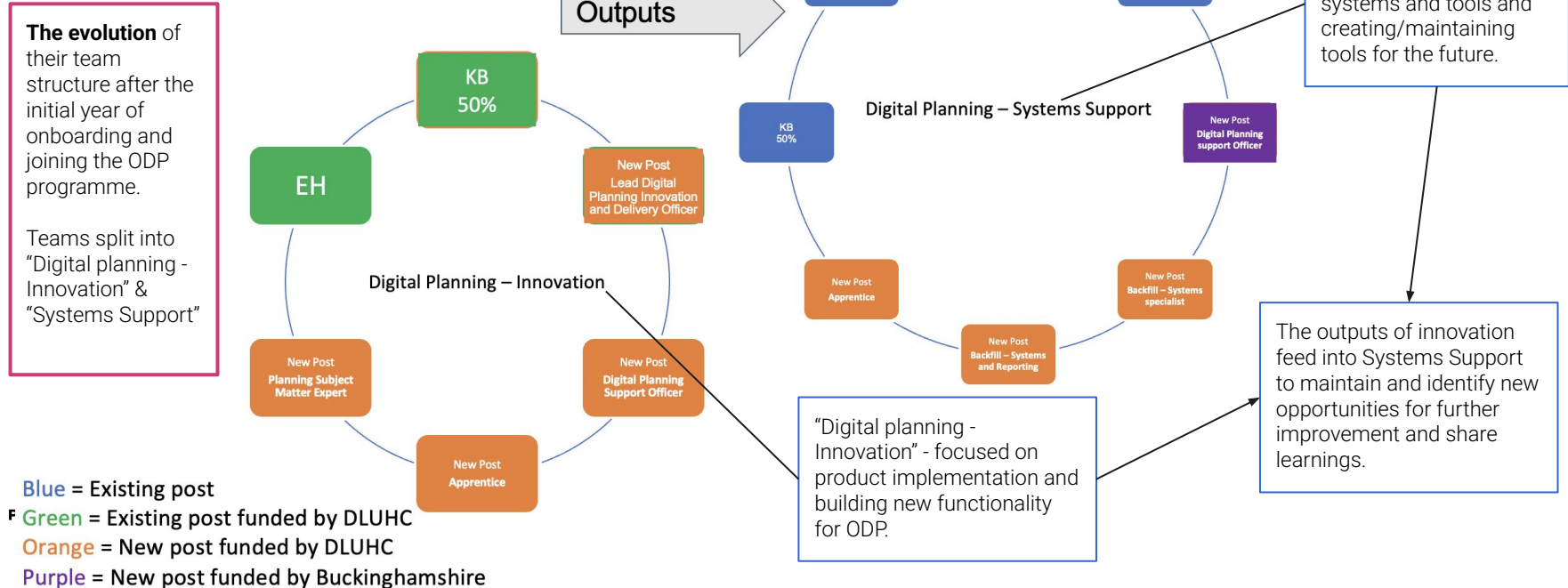
Digital planning team May 2021 to Dec 2021



Evolved Roles & Structure

8 fte x New funded backfill or project posts
1 fte x Continued funding for Emily Hadley
0.5 fte x Continued funding for Kevin Buckthorpe

Digital planning team Dec 2021 onwards



Appendix

Project Leadership

Indicative time commitment:
2~3 days per week

The person/s delivering this function are responsible for oversight, strategic guidance and ultimate success of the project at the council.

Key Experience

- Have experience of the internal processes (and nuances) of their organisation to support delivery
- Have experience of transformation, digital, service design or innovation
- Be experienced in senior stakeholder engagement
- Be able to communicate and champion the value of the programme, its goals and objectives
- Believe in the mission and vision of digital planning and not be constrained by convention

Main Responsibilities

- Report project progress/issues to members, directors and relevant boards
- Main point of contact for DLUHC programme
- Recruitment and performance management staff working on the project
- Liaise with other council lead officers regarding any project issues
- Internal stakeholder management
- Responsible for procurement activities finance and contract management
- Tracking of funding usage and future funding proposals as required
- Meet DLUHC project management requirements
- Onboarding activities and sharing of learnings to support new partner councils as required
- Internal reporting requirements
- Be an ambassador of the programme externally and internally
- Attend regular workshops/working groups with other partners councils and DLUHC

Delivery Management

Indicative time commitment:
~5 days per week

The person/s delivering this function are responsible for ensuring timely delivery and day-to-day operations and management for the project.

Key Experience

- Relevant agile project management experience in a technical environment
- Budget management
- Stakeholder management

Main Responsibilities

- Servant leadership of the team to enable delivery of PlanX/BOPS within the council
- Responsible for day to day operations of the project
- Schedule meetings, regular cadences and build ways of working for the council project
- Closely follow the development of PlanX and BOPS in order to manage the implementation road map within the council project
- Support all aspects of project delivery as required
- Communications - LinkedIn / blogging and council web comms / producing content
- Support /deliver external showcases and presentations as required by the council or DLUHC
- Responsibility of coordinating testing of new systems/functionality with planning officers or the right individuals/teams within the council
- Responding to enquiries from within the council in relation to and/or from DLUHC, other support partners and
- Support recruitment of team members
- Supporting with onboarding of new team members and other councils - includes writing guides and creating other supporting materials
- Supporting monitoring & evaluation e.g. running reports, attend the monitoring and evaluation working group
- Escalates / communicates related issues and questions to the relevant team members at the council e.g. for integration, data and infrastructure
- Monitoring and mitigation of risks within the council project
- Supporting any funding proposal developments
- Tracking and reporting project spend to DLUHC

Integrations & Infrastructure

Indicative time commitment:
3~5 days per week

The person/s delivering this function are responsible for integrations between new and the existing technology landscape, for meeting data standards & maintaining integrity of tech infrastructure.

Key Experience

- Previous experience of working as a technical lead in a mid-sized project
- Have knowledge of the council's infrastructure and systems
- Be able to communicate technical complexity in plain english for lay people
- Relevant technical experience in the fields of Integrations/Data/Infrastructure
- Identify opportunities and solutions that support the vision and mission of the project not constrained by convention

Main Responsibilities

- Responsible for Integrations, Data standards and related activities and maintaining technical infrastructure for planning
- Understanding the technical elements of PlanX and BOPS
- Support Monitoring & Evaluation by providing the relevant data and reporting, ideally through a BI tool
- Payment processing (GovPay set up)
- Technical IT system advice as related to the project and how it will work with the council's existing landscape
- Responsible for future proofing the solution where possible
- Technical set-up of dual running systems for parallel testing of new and existing planning software(s)
- Peer support and shared learning related to data, integrations and infrastructure both internal and externally into the wider programme
- IT integration and technical work from specialists as needed for all affected line of business systems
- Ensure all web requirements are met for the project (e.g DNS / proxies / access)
- Collaboration with Information Governance / ++
- Creating and maintaining the required documentation for the project within the council
- Report on any risks and issues in a timely manner
- Attend regular working group with other technical leads from other partner councils

Monitoring & Evaluation

Indicative time commitment:
3~5 days per week

The responsibilities of this role span technical, service management and resource management skill sets, and require a degree of authority or support needed to secure support from areas with the council. As such, it may be carried out by more than one person, but the split of responsibilities and experience/skills should be clear.

The person/s delivering this function are responsible for designing and carrying out Monitoring and Evaluation of the impact of the project.

Key Experience

- Previous experience of working as monitoring and evaluation lead / data analyst in a mid-sized project
- Relevant technical experience in data collection, transformation and analysis, including database, web analytics, manual & user survey methods.
- Have knowledge of the council's infrastructure and systems
- Be able to communicate technical complexity in plain english for lay people
- Identify opportunities and solutions that support the vision and mission of the project, not constrained by convention

Main Responsibilities

- Responsible for data collection, Integrations, standards and activities related to monitoring and evaluation
- Data quality management: reviewing accuracy, precision, and coverage of collected data. Gap analysis and leading work to improve.
- Understanding the technical and user interaction elements of data collection from the variety of sources associated with planning software services
- Responsible for future proofing the solution where possible
- Technical and Operational set-up of data collection and how it will work with the council's existing landscape
- Technical and Operational set-up of dual running systems for parallel testing of new and existing planning software(s)
- Peer support and shared learning related to M&E both internal and externally into the wider programme
- Securing, briefing and accepting work from technical specialists as needed to deliver M&E scope.
- Collaboration with Information Governance
- Creating and maintaining the required documentation for the project within the council
- Report on progress, risks and issues in a timely manner
- Attend regular working group with other M&E leads from other partner councils
- Be an evangelist of M&E methods within the council

Communicate results with council leadership and the M&E community

Content Subject Matter Experts

Indicative time commitment:
~2 days per week

The person/s delivering this function are responsible for providing expert feedback and guidance on planning policy, the planning application process and the scope of the planning system as required.

Key Experience

- Have knowledge of planning policy, the planning application process and the scope of the planning system
- Able to translate complex policy in plain english to non-planning people
- Experience working with digital planning software understanding of pros/cons of such software

Main Responsibilities

- Test PlanX/BOPS functionality and features with a user centred lens in order to provide feedback to the development and project team
- Develop scenarios and edge cases to test the tool thoroughly
- Share the knowledge of how the system works - especially with policy colleagues
- Ensure that content is legally compliant
- Provide specific guidance and examples of case law or applications
- Provide current templates / data schemas / guidance docs
- Advise on BOPS/PlanX content as needed
- Champion the products and the programme both inside and outside the council
- Provide insight and answer questions (including knowing the right specialism e.g. validation to get if not their own - knowing who to ask) to support product development
- Research policy and legislation matters
- Liaise with content team/people/person to review content changes
- Attend testing sessions and provide timely feedback
- Reviewing feedback spreadsheets and contributing to trellos

Working up ideas / solutions / prototypes

BOPS Product Area

Indicative time commitment:
3~5 days per week

The person delivering this function have a working knowledge of BOPS. It is recommended that this is 1 dedicated individual focused solely on BOPS implementation and development. The role holder should be accustomed to leading digital product development or innovation.

Key Experience

- Have knowledge of planning policy, the planning application process and the scope of the planning system
- Able to translate complex policy in plain english to non-planning people
- Experience working with digital planning software understanding of backend systems and pros/cons of such software

Main Responsibilities

- Prioritise user feedback on BOPS functionality
- Be the main point of contact for their council in relation to BOPS development
- Capture and provide feedback / issues related to the tool both to the programme and/or development partners as required
- Attend regular working groups with other individuals focused on BOPS in partner councils
- Test BOPS functionality in collaboration with relevant SME's and users in the council, logging any bugs / issues to resolve
- Be an ambassador of the project and specifically BOPS externally and internally
- Update project leadership on progress and any issues
- Liaise with the appropriate internal teams (e.g IT, GIS) to support the delivery of any features / resolve issues
- Creating content for show & tells
- Project board management for BOPS (e.g Trello)
- Ensuring successful completion of UAT at each relevant stage of the implementation
- Contractual conversations with relevant 3rd party developers regarding BOPS as required
- Keeping up to date with BOPS roadmap

Communicate tactical/strategic decisions with leadership

PlanX Product Area

Indicative time commitment:
3~5 days per week

The person/s delivering this function have a working knowledge of PlanX. It is recommended that this is 1 dedicated individual focused solely on PlanX implementation and development. The role holder should be accustomed to leading digital product development or innovation.

Key Experience

- Have knowledge of planning policy, the planning application process and the scope of the planning system
- Able to translate complex policy in plain english to non-planning people
- Experience working with digital planning software understanding of UX and pros/cons of such software

Main Responsibilities

- Prioritise user feedback on PlanX functionality
- Be the main point of contact for their council in relation to PlanX development
- Capture and provide feedback / issues related to the tool both to the programme and/or development partners as required
- Attend regular working groups with other individuals focused on PlanX in partner councils
- Test PlanX functionality in collaboration with relevant SME's and users in the council, logging any bugs / issues to resolve
- Be an ambassador of the project and specifically PlanX externally and internally
- Update project leadership on progress and any issues
- Liaise with the appropriate internal teams (e.g IT, GIS) to support the delivery of any features / resolve issues
- Creating content for show & tells
- Project board management for PlanX (e.g Trello)
- Ensuring successful completion of UAT at each relevant stage of the implementation
- Contractual conversations with relevant 3rd party developers regarding PlanX as required
- Keeping up to date with BOPS roadmap

Communicate tactical/strategic decisions with leadership