

Senior Leader Post Specification

Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title:** Chief Innovation, Technology and Digital Officer
- **Date:** 5 May 2026
- **Tier Level:** Tier 3, Level 1

Purpose of this Post

The Chief Technology, Digital and Innovation Officer is the Council's strategic leader for technology- and digitally enabled transformation. The post holder will accelerate the organisation's modernisation, harness digital and data to improve services, and drive innovation that enables Westmorland and Furness to become a forward-thinking, resilient and insight-led Council with strong, coherent and proactive internal and external communications that support transformation, culture and public confidence.

They will ensure the Council has the digital foundations, capabilities and culture required to deliver excellent, inclusive and efficient services—empowering residents, supporting staff, and enabling communities to thrive in a rapidly changing world.

As a member of the Senior Leadership Team, the role holder will provide leadership, direction and insight to shape and develop a high performing, efficient, enabling and fair Council; developing the Council's priorities and strategy using available resources to deliver excellent and inclusive services that empower the residents and communities of Westmorland and Furness to thrive and flourish.

Key Job Specific Accountabilities

- Act as a strategic partner within the Senior Leadership Team, driving organisation-wide transformation and contributing to corporate planning that enables the Council to evolve into a modern, forward-thinking and inclusive organisation delivering excellent outcomes for residents.
- Provide strategic leadership of the Council's digital, data, customer and technology functions, setting direction aligned to corporate priorities and national good practice, ensuring a coherent, integrated and future focused approach that enables the Council to operate efficiently, securely and in a way that meets the evolving expectations of residents and staff.
- Lead the Council's digital transformation, organisational change and corporate PMO functions, bringing together ICT project delivery and wider business transformation functions into a single, coordinated transformation portfolio that accelerates improvement, strengthens governance, and ensures benefits realisation across all directorates.
- Sponsor and assure the delivery of foundational ICT capabilities (including digital infrastructure, cyber security, architecture, core systems, networks and end-user technology) and wider transformation opportunities, ensuring the Council has modern, reliable and resilient technology needed to improve services, reduce risk and support innovation.
- Provide senior leadership to Customer Services and Business Support, ensuring these functions evolve through digital tools, automation, channel optimisation and modern service

design to provide accessible, responsive and cost-effective support for residents and internal services.

- Provide senior leadership to the Council's Communications, PR and Media function, ensuring high quality strategic communications aligned to corporate priorities, integrated campaigns, clear internal leadership messaging and effective reputation management.
- Ensure that corporate communication, digital channels and engagement approaches are aligned with customer strategy and service design, enabling clear accessible and consistent messaging to residents, staff and partners.
- Champion a whole-Council digital culture, promoting user-centred design, service co-design, data-driven decision-making, continuous improvement, and the adoption of technology that enables staff to work in modern, flexible and productive ways.
- Strategic leadership of the development and implementation of the Council's digital and data strategy, ensuring alignment to corporate priorities, legislative and regulatory requirements, national standards, and local service needs. Ensure coherent and effective governance and benefits realisation of the strategy delivery.
- Sponsor the development of a single, integrated data architecture and intelligence capability, ensuring that high quality, secure and accessible data supports strategic planning, operational decision making, performance improvement and transparency.
- Hold organisational accountability for cyber security, resilience and information governance, ensuring robust governance and assurance and that national requirements are met. Undertake the statutory role of Senior Information Risk Owner.
- Work collaboratively with directors and partners to identify opportunities where technology, automation, AI, digital tools and improved processes can measurably improve service outcomes, reduce manual effort, increase productivity and support preventative approaches.
- Provide clear leadership for innovation, scanning sector trends, emerging technologies and best practice, and supporting the organisation to test, adopt and scale new approaches safely, responsibly and at pace.
- Ensure digital, ICT, data and transformation resources are used efficiently and effectively, managing budgets responsibly and promoting investment that delivers clear benefits for residents, staff and communities.
- Lead and develop high-performing teams across the digital, data, technology, customer and transformation functions, creating a modern, compassionate and learning culture that empowers staff and strengthens capability across the organisation.
- Build and maintain long-term constructive relationships with key stakeholders — including technology suppliers, national bodies and policy groups, public sector digital networks, national bodies, regulators and local partners — to position Westmorland and Furness at the forefront of digital innovation, transformation and funding opportunities.
- Support Cabinet and Members in translating political ambition and policy priorities into coherent digital and transformation initiatives, providing strategic advice that aligns service design, technology and organisational change.
- Actively promote high standards of health, safety and wellbeing across the service and wider Council, sharing areas of best practice and challenging areas of concern.

- Provide leadership in risk management, emergency response and business continuity both corporately and as part of your directorate, being available for response rotas as required.

Knowledge / Skills / Experience required

- Proven track record providing senior leadership of technology, digital and transformation functions in a large complex organisation.
- Deep knowledge of ICT operations, enterprise architecture, networks cloud technologies, cyber security and service resilience.
- Significant experience delivering organisation-wide transformation, benefits realisation and large-scale change.
- Expertise in digital service design, customer experience, automation, AI, data governance and analytics.
- A strong understanding of effective customer services and business support functions, with a track record of improving customer experience, channel shift and service redesign enabled by digital tools.
- A solid grasp of how communications, media or engagement functions operate in a complex organisation, including familiarity with strategic communication principles, reputation management and contemporary digital engagement practices.
- A strong understanding of relevant legislation, regulatory standards and national frameworks relating to digital, data, cyber, accessibility and information governance.
- Evidence of continuous professional development and up-to-date knowledge of digital, technology and transformation best practice.
- Significant experience of leading diverse and multifaceted teams at a senior level within a complex and diverse organisation, bringing activities together to achieve an aligned objective.
- Experience of developing high-performing leadership and operational teams, building an inclusive, accountable and learning culture that supports professional excellence, innovation, staff wellbeing and organisational resilience. Ensure effective workforce planning, succession development and capability building across all service areas.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, with oversight of substantial budgets, contracts and technology investments.
- Strong political and organisational acumen, with a proven ability to work collaboratively across the Senior Leadership Team and wider organisational boundaries, advising Elected Members and shaping whole-council priorities. Able to build consensus across services, partners and stakeholders, and to take a corporate, future-focused leadership perspective that aligns the Council's long-term aspirations with sustainable, effective service delivery.
- Provide strong performance and assurance oversight across all service areas, establishing robust service plans, performance frameworks and reporting mechanisms that ensure statutory compliance, high-quality service delivery, transparent decision-making and continuous improvement.

- Excellent knowledge of the impact of underlying demographic, social or political drivers, and strong understanding of the formal and informal politics at the regional and national level and what this means for the Council.
- Degree and post graduate qualifications (or willing to work towards a post graduate qualification if not already gained) in relevant disciplines, and/or leadership and management qualifications.

Context and Scope

Westmorland and Furness Council is still a relatively new unitary authority and continues to evolve as it embeds its structures, ways of working and organisational culture. The Council has moved beyond its initial transition phase and is now focused on maturing as a modern, agile and inclusive organisation that delivers excellent services and improved outcomes for residents and communities.

The Council is undertaking a sustained transformation programme to ensure services are designed and delivered in ways that are efficient, future-focused and responsive to local needs. This includes modernising systems and processes, enhancing digital and data capabilities, developing a skilled and flexible workforce, and adopting approaches that support prevention, sustainability and long-term financial resilience.

The post holder will play a central role in this next phase of organisational maturity. They must be able to lead confidently through ongoing change, balancing the need for stability, safe delivery and strong governance with the ambition to innovate, modernise and embed new approaches. They will need to foster collaboration across services, directorates, partners and communities, helping the organisation shift from integration to genuine transformation.

As a senior leader, the post holder must ensure that the Council's plans, strategies and service models continue to evolve in response to changing local needs, resident expectations, national policy, regulatory requirements and the wider economic and environmental context. They must be comfortable navigating complexity and ambiguity, building confidence across teams and partners, and driving improvement, inclusion and long-term sustainability.

Traits, Motives and Competencies

People-Centred, Needs-Led Leadership

- Apply needs-led leadership to service design and day-to-day delivery
- Use resident insight, data and feedback to adapt services.
- Promote inclusive, compassionate practice within teams.

Integrity, Accountability & Trust

- Model honesty, openness and fairness in operational leadership.
- Ensure team-level accountability for delivery and compliance.
- Build trusted relationships through consistent, ethical behaviour.

Strategic Clarity & Purpose

- Translate strategic objectives into clear service-level plans.
- Communicate priorities and expectations to teams effectively.
- Align resources to deliver agreed outcomes.

Collaborative System Leadership

- Build effective multi-agency collaboration in service delivery.

- Share insight and learning openly across teams.
- Contribute to coherent cross-council working.

Innovation, Digital & Improvement Mindset

- Apply digital tools and improvement methods to operations.
- Encourage innovation within teams and support new ways of working.
- Learn from mistakes and embed improvements into everyday practice.

Delivering Outcomes, Performance & Financial Stewardship

- Deliver measurable outcomes and monitor service performance.
- Manage budgets effectively and identify efficiencies.
- Use data to drive improvement and strengthen prevention.

Resilience, Adaptability & Personal Leadership

- Maintain team resilience during operational pressures.
- Demonstrate self-awareness and commitment to personal development.
- Support team wellbeing and psychologically safe environments.